

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## Texas A&M's R. Malatesha Joshi Receives ILA's Highest Honor

NEWARK, DE | July 1, 2025—The International Literacy Association (ILA) has named R. Malatesha Joshi, professor at Texas A&M University, as the recipient of its 2025 **William S. Gray Citation of Merit**, the Association's highest individual honor. The award recognizes Joshi's lifelong contributions to literacy research, leadership, and advocacy on an international scale.

Joshi is among the following distinguished educators and researchers recognized through ILA's 2025 Awards and Grants program, which celebrates innovation, service, and scholarly excellence in the field of literacy. The 2025 cycle also marks the revival of ILA's **International Citation of Merit**, last awarded in 2014, and the debut of the **Carrice Cummins Outstanding Preservice Educator Award**, named in honor of the former ILA president and longtime literacy advocate.

Douglas Fisher, another past president of ILA, and longtime collaborator Nancy Frey, received this year's **Diane Lapp & James Flood Professional Collaborator Award** in recognition of their joint contributions to the field.

### International Citation of Merit

*Guofang Li, The University of British Columbia*

Recognized for excellence in advancing global literacy through scholarly leadership and policy impact.

### Carrice Cummins Outstanding Preservice Educator Award

*Mallory Bourquard, Louisiana Tech University*

Honoring exemplary leadership and promise in preparing future literacy professionals.

### Diane Lapp & James Flood Professional Collaborator Award

*Douglas Fisher & Nancy Frey, San Diego State University*

Recognizing outstanding teamwork in research and professional practice advancing literacy.

### Jerry Johns Outstanding Teacher Educator in Reading Award

*Angie Zapata, University of Missouri*

Awarded for her exceptional work preparing educators in the science and craft of reading.

### Maryann Manning Special Service Award

*Michelle Fazio Brunson, Northwestern State University*

Acknowledging her extraordinary commitment and service to the literacy community.

### Albert J. Harris Award

*Elena Forzani; Julie Corrigan; D. Slomp; J. Randall*

*"Prioritizing Equitable Social Outcomes with and for Diverse Readers: A Conceptual Framework for the Development and Use of Justice-Based Reading Assessment." Educational Psychologist, 59(4), 291-314.*

**Dina Feitelson Research Award**

Jackie E. Relyea; James S. Kim; P. Rich; J. Fitzgerald

*"Effects of Tier 1 Content Literacy Intervention on Early -Grade English Learners' Reading and Writing: Exploring the Mediating Roles of Domain -Specific Vocabulary and Oral Language Proficiency."*

Journal of Educational Psychology, 116(7), 1172–1195 (2024)

**Timothy & Cynthia Shanahan Outstanding Dissertation Award**

Katherine A. Valentine, Michigan State University

*"Understanding Patterns of Production in Upper Elementary Writing."*

**Constance McCullough International Research Grant**

Jennifer Chinenye Emelife, University of Toronto

*"Rethinking Literacy in Contexts of Displacement: Nigerian Displaced Youth as Knowledge Creators."*

**Helen M. Robinson Grant**

Kaha Abdi, The Ohio State University

*"Critical Muslim Geographies: Personhood and Place in Afrikan Diasporic- Community Literacy Events."*

**Jeanne S. Chall Research Fellowship**

Anthonia O. Awhinawhi, University of South Carolina

*"Bridging the Gap: Supporting the Reading Development of Bilingual Neurodivergent Adolescents."*

**Nila Banton Smith Teacher as Research Grant**

Chinwe L. Onwujuba, Pflugerville ISD, TX

*"Discursive School and Home Literacy Practices That Promote Reading Identity."*

**Steven A. Stahl Research Grant**

Kimberly Hughes, Texas Woman's University; Pre-K Teacher, Richardson ISD

*"Supporting Preschool Writers' Multimodal Composing Development: A Formative Experiment."*

"This year's recipients exemplify the powerful impact that research, collaboration, and educator preparation can have on advancing literacy for all," said Nicola Wedderburn, ILA's executive director. "We're proud to recognize these leaders and their lasting contributions to the field."

The ILA Awards and Grants program supports the work of literacy educators and researchers across the globe. For more information and a complete list of award and grant recipients, visit [www.literacyworldwide.org/awards](http://www.literacyworldwide.org/awards).

**About the International Literacy Association**

The International Literacy Association (ILA) is a global advocacy and membership organization dedicated to advancing literacy for all through its network of more than 300,000 literacy educators, researchers, and experts across 75 countries. With over 60 years of experience, ILA has set the standard for how literacy is defined, taught, and evaluated. ILA collaborates with partners across the world to develop, gather, and disseminate high-quality resources, best practices, and cutting-edge research to empower educators, inspire students, and inform policymakers. ILA publishes *The Reading Teacher*, *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, and [Reading Research Quarterly](http://www.literacyworldwide.org/reading-research-quarterly), which are peer reviewed and edited by leaders in the field. For more information, visit [literacyworldwide.org](http://literacyworldwide.org).

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