

**SCHNEIDER FAMILY BOOK AWARD  
MANUAL**

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## **Contents**

Foreword

Background Information on the Award and the Jury

History of the Award

History of the Medal

Jury Function Statement

Jury Membership

Terms and Definitions

Criteria

Jury Work

General Statement Concerning the Work Year

The Working Calendar

Jury Member Responsibilities

Jury Chair Responsibilities

ALA Staff Liaison Responsibilities

Recommended Reading

# **Schneider Family Book Award Manual**

## **Foreword**

Remarks from Donor Katherine Schneider, Ph.D., L.P., ABPP  
On the occasion of the first presentation of the Schneider Family Book Award  
ALA Annual Conference  
Orlando, Florida  
June 29, 2004

When I was growing up, the librarian at the Michigan Library for the Blind was my hero. He sent me books in Braille and on records from the Library of Congress collection. To be here among librarians who daily enrich people's lives with information in printed, audio, and electronic formats is a dream come true. That special librarian and my mother who read me many books that were not available in Braille or on records whetted my thirst for knowledge. The upshot of that thirst was a Ph.D. from Purdue and a very satisfying thirty-year career as a clinical psychologist.

During my father's last illness he joked that I would probably give away my inheritance. I agreed I would, so we needed to find a cause we could agree on—I came up with the Schneider Family Book Award for children's books about the disability experience. My mother taught the deaf before marriage and worked tirelessly to mainstream their blind child before it was mandated by law. My father worked in the pharmaceutical industry so information about diseases, conditions, and treatments was dinner table conversational material at our house. Extended family members have lived with alcoholism, attention deficit disorder, diabetes, and fibromyalgia.

In the 1950s when I was in grade school, the only media mentions of blind people were of Helen Keller, Louis Braille, and the seven blind men who went to see the elephant. Other disabilities fared no better. Fifty years later we're here to celebrate the fact that the situation has dramatically improved. The Schneider Family Book Award committee had many wonderful children's books to consider, which represent the experiences of the one out of seven Americans who have a disability. The disability experience in these wonderful children's books is a part of a character's full life, not the focus of the life.

# **Schneider Family Book Award**

## **Background Information on the Award and the Jury**

### **History of the Award**

Dr. Katherine Schneider and her family endowed this American Library Association Award in 2003. Cheryl Malden was the ALA awards liaison tasked to form a committee and to establish the criteria for the award. The committee selected three winners in early 2004 to be honored at the ALA Awards presentation at ALA Annual.

The American Library Association (ALA) staff liaison arranged for the President of ALA to announce the 2005 Schneider Award winners at the ALA Youth Media Award Press Conference where all ALA children's literature awards are officially announced.

### **History of the Medal**

Children's book awards traditionally have a medal signifying excellence for publishers to place on award-winning book covers. As there is no universally recognized symbol or sign designating disability, it was difficult to create a medal reflecting the purpose of the Schneider Family Book Award. The original jury worked with a graphic designer and responded to publisher feedback to create a circular seal similar in size to other ALA literary awards. Boys and girls holding hands encircling a small world symbolize the ideal of equal treatment for all children everywhere. The colors silver and blue were selected to differentiate this seal from the usual gold of others. The words at the top of the medal, Schneider Family Book Award, are repeated in Braille at the bottom in homage to Dr. Schneider.

### **Jury Function Statement**

To select three books annually that artistically express the disability experience in conformance with the terms, definitions, and criteria established for the Schneider Family Book Award.

### **Jury Membership**

1. The Jury shall be comprised of seven American Library Association members with experience in book selection and knowledge of disability experiences.
2. Jury members are appointed by the staff liaison and the Chair of ALA Awards, from the Office of Governance of ALA, who also appoints the Jury Chair.
3. The Jury shall include one current member from each of the following ALA divisions:
  - ALSC, the Association for Library Service to Children
  - YALSA, the Young Adult Library Service Association
  - ASCLA, the Association of Specialized and Cooperative Library Agencies

4. One member shall be the children's or young adult librarian from the Library of Congress, NLS/BPH, who is an ALA member and who may serve for unlimited terms. Alternatively, a librarian from the NLS network of state libraries may be appointed to fill this position on the committee.
5. The normal term on the Jury shall be one year with the option of                      reappointment for one additional year, from June to June.
6. Previous members may be reappointed after a two-year hiatus.

### **Terms and Definitions**

Three awards are given annually to recognize and honor books for their distinguished portrayal of people living with a disabling condition.

- younger children, ages 0 to 8
- middle grades, ages 9 to 13
- teens, ages 14 to 18.

1. The person with the disability may be the protagonist or a secondary character.
2. Definition of disability. Dr. Schneider has intentionally allowed for a broad interpretation by her wording, the book "must portray some aspect of living with a disability, whether the disability is physical, mental, or emotional." This allows each committee to decide on the qualifications of particular titles. Books with death as the main theme are generally disqualified.
3. The books must be published in English. The award may be given posthumously.
4. Term of eligibility extends to publications from the preceding year, e.g. 2013 awards are given to titles published in 2012.
- 5.. When a picture book wins the award, the \$5000.00 will be divided equally between the author and illustrator.

## **Criteria**

### 1. Content

- May be fiction, biography, or other form of nonfiction.
- Must portray the emotional, mental, or physical disability as part of a full life, not as something to be pitied.
- Representation of characters with disabilities should be realistic, avoiding exaggeration or stereotypes.
- Person with disability should be integral to the presentation, not merely a passive bystander.
- The theme must be appropriate for and respectful of the intended audience age.
- Information on a disability must be accurate.

### 2. Style

- Should be well written
- Should be engaging with distinctive use of language for plot and character development and setting delineation.
- Book should be judged on its own merit as a self-contained entity, not as part of a series, and irrespective of supportive materials such as a CD or other supplemental material.

### 3. Illustration and Design

- Text and images should complement or enhance each other, with differentiated contrast between text, pictures, and background.
- Format and typeface must be of age appropriate size, clearly readable, and free of typographical errors.
- Layout should be easy to follow, enhancing the flow of the story or information.

## **Jury Work**

### **General statement concerning the work year**

The Schneider Family Book Award committee functions from June to June of the following year. The chair and the committee should be appointed by ALA Annual Conference.

Much of the Schneider jury work will take place via an ALA virtual service. Members are responsible for providing the ALA office with the correct contact information. Members are responsible for staying current with jury work.

## **The working calendar**

ALA Annual: Chair and Jury in place.

Post Annual – Dec 1: Nominate/suggest and request reading copies of appropriate titles.

- The ALA office will ask publishers to send requested books to the Jury members. The ALA office is responsible for maintaining up to date list and contact information.
- Jury members will participate in ongoing Jury discussions.
- Anyone may submit a title for consideration.

October 20<sup>th</sup> is the last day to request reading copies via the ALA office staff.

November (1-15 approximately) a phone conference call will be held to vote for a short list of books members consider worthy of an award.

- To supplement the virtual discussion, conference calls or virtual meetings take place to vote for short list.
- Chair will compile titles and develop a “Consideration List” and send it to all committee members via the listserv.

ALA Midwinter

- Meeting held at mutually agreed time on Friday afternoon to select the winners
- The Jury will meet on Sunday to confidentially notify winners.
- The Jury will meet to prepare press release
- Attend press conference held on Monday morning. The Jury will meet in a specific area designated by the ALA Press Office for pictures and walk in as a group and sit in an assigned area.
- Post Midwinter the Jury will work on citations.

June. ALA Annual.

- Attend luncheon hosted by Dr. Schneider for the current Schneider Family Book Award winners, their publishers, the ALA liaison, and Jury members.
- The Schneider Family Book Award plaques are presented to the winners at the ALA Awards ceremony, Sunday before the ALA President’s Program
- Award/President’s Reception, Sunday, 5:30 – 7:00 p.m.

## **Jury Member Responsibilities**

- Read the Schneider Family Book Award Manual to understand the specific aims and criteria of this award before reading books under consideration.
- Search for books to bring to the Jury’s attention by reading professional journals and publishers’ catalogs, and by networking with colleagues individually or through listservs.

- Read and evaluate all books mailed to Jury members.
- Obtain reviews on books under consideration for additional points of view.
- Participate in scheduled Jury meetings.
- Attend ALA Midwinter convention to vote for award winners. Maintain confidentiality until the press conference.
- Attend the press conference at ALA Midwinter announcing Youth Media Awards.
- Attend Dr. Schneider's luncheon honoring the current winners at ALA Annual.
- Attend ALA Award Ceremony, if possible.

### **Jury Chair Responsibilities**

- Coordinate with the ALA liaison to schedule telephone conferences and the ALA Midwinter Jury meeting.
- Develop an agenda for Jury meetings.
- Inform members of the results of short list votes.
- Encourage Jury members to participate during all deliberations.
- At ALA Midwinter:
  - Accompany ALA liaison to the Public Information Office (PIO) briefing, usually held on Friday at 5 pm.
  - Chair the jury deliberations.

### **ALA Staff Liaison Responsibilities**

- Works with incoming ALA Award Chair to appoint Jury members.
- Updates web site.
- Updates ALA Handbook of Organization.
- Submits books to Jury members.
- Requests books from publishers for Jury to review.
- Updates publishers contact list.



- Arranges conference calls or virtual meetings.
- Maintains the closed discussion list.
- Ships books to Midwinter.
- Ensure that one copy of the winning books are available for ALA publicity
- Obtains contact information of possible winners from publishers before Midwinter.
- Schedules Midwinter meeting time and place.
- Attends Schneider committee/jury meeting at Midwinter.
- Arranges for telephone calls to winners at Midwinter.
- After the winners are announced at the Midwinter press conference, meets with publishers if they are exhibiting to give them sample seals.
- Notifies Katherine Schneider of winners immediately after Midwinter.
- Requests additional copies of winning books from publishers.
- Sends Dr. Schneider two copies of each winning book.
- Coordinates logistics with publishers for winners to attend ALA Annual in June.
- Mails each Schneider winner a letter confirming attendance at ALA Annual and encloses sample seals.
- Arranges the luncheon sponsored by Katherine Schneider for winners, their editors, and jury members.
- Ships each winner their panel from the ALA Awards display.
- Sends each winner photos from the Awards Presentation.
- Attends ethnic caucus conferences to promote the Schneider Family Book Award.

### **Recommended Reading**

#### **Judging submissions:**

Evaluating Materials about Children with Disabilities”

<http://faculty.libsci.sc.edu/walling/evaluationcriteria.htm>

## **How to Spot a Great Picture Book**

Dilys Evans has been providing advice to young artists since 1978, when she founded Dilys Evans Fine Illustration. Below is a summary of that advice—10 characteristics that she believes all outstanding picture books have in common. Use it as a guide as you evaluate the picture books in your collection.

1. **In the Beginning Was the Word**  
The pictures must be truly inspired by the story.
2. **Preparation Is Paramount**  
The artist knows his or her characters, subject, and the setting inside and out.

3. **A Great Cover Is a Great Start**  
If the cover art is compelling, it will make the viewer pick up the book and turn the pages.
4. **The Artist Sets the Scene before the Story Begins**  
The inside flap offers a great opportunity to set the stage for the story or introduce a character.
5. **The Endpapers Involve the Reader**  
Endpapers are another opportunity to add to the story or overall design of the book.
6. **The Medium Is the Message**  
The perfect choice of medium to illustrate the text should convey every mood and nuance.
7. **Every Picture Tells the Story**  
Every image is central to the story and moves it forward to the next page.
8. **The Book Is a Form of Dramatic Art**  
Every scene must be carefully chosen to dully illustrate the drama and excitement of the story as it unfolds.
9. **Art and Type Should Be a Perfect Marriage**  
The typeface should seem to be almost an extension of the art itself.
10. **White Space Rules!**  
White space is a compositional element and not just a background to present the art.

**School Library Journal**, September 2005

**Information about Dr. Schneider:**

**To the Left of Inspiration: Adventures in Living with Disabilities** by Katherine Schneider. Dog Ear, c 2006.

“Wisconsin patron establishes awards for outstanding children’s books” and  
“Children’s book award founder urges sharing of knowledge and perceptions”  
page 5 and pages 8-9 [http://www.loc.gov/nls/newsletters/news/2003/jul\\_sep.txt](http://www.loc.gov/nls/newsletters/news/2003/jul_sep.txt)

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