

SCHNEIDER FAMILY BOOK AWARD MANUAL



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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.

Foreword Continuation for Third Edition of the SFBA Manual
June, 2021

Seventeen years after the Schneider Family Book Awards started, much has changed and much remains the same. Seventy-some books have received this award and because of its ALA prestige have been read by thousands of children, parents, teachers, librarians and grandparents. Good stories with disability content have become more common—enough so that the juries for the SFBA have to work harder each year to pick out the best of the best. Library schools mention

the award along with other fine children's book awards. A dissertation has been written on the award.

Even with these great developments, much remains the same. Disability is a kind of diversity that is mentioned, if at all, as an afterthought in Equity, Diversity and Inclusion efforts. Writers with disabilities still have difficulties getting published. Books are often not "born accessible" but have to be scanned or recorded for those with print disabilities. The mantra of the disability movement, "Nothing about us without us" has not been fully realized.

Many thanks and best wishes as we march onward!

Further Information about Dr. Schneider

- *To the Left of Inspiration: Adventures in Living with Disabilities* by Katherine Schneider. Dog Ear, c 2006.
- Q &A with Katherine Schneider: <https://ncdj.org/2015/12/q-a-with-katherine-schneider-author-retired-clinical-psychologist-and-sponsor-of-ncdjs-disability-reporting-award/>
- Dr. Schneider's blog: <https://kathiecomments.wordpress.com/>

Background Information on the Award

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 Jury and to establish the criteria for the award. The Jury 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. Honor books were recognized beginning in 2019 and are indicated with the same seal but in a red color.

Award Criteria

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 12

teens, ages 13 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 Jury to decide on the qualifications of particular titles. Books where the character with a disability dies 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. 2021 awards are given to titles published in 2020.
 - The Jury will use the U.S. copyright date unless the book has already been considered by a past Jury based on the original copyright date.
5. Winning authors will receive a \$5,000 monetary award. When a picture book or graphic novel wins the award, the \$5000.00 will be divided equally between the author and illustrator.
6. Winning and honor authors & illustrators will all receive a plaque from ALA.
7. In the event no book is chosen during deliberation which meets the award criteria, the Jury may choose to not give an award or honor in a category.

Criteria

1. Content
 - May be fiction, biography/memoir, or general 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.
 - Information on a disability must be accurate.

- Discussions about accessibility, e.g. Braille, audiobooks, born accessible, to all readers should take place during deliberation.
 - The experiences of the character with disability should be analyzed for authenticity.
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.
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

Jury Function Statement

To select winning younger children (0-8), middle grades (9-12), and teen (13-18) books, annually and if the Jury so decides, Honor Book(s) per category, 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 composed of not more than nine members, including one chair (or two co-chairs), and an optional ex-officio American Library Association member with experience in book selection and knowledge of disability experiences.
2. Jury members are appointed by the staff liaison and current chair/co-chairs of the Schneider Jury.
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
 - The committee will consult the children's or young adult librarian from the Library of Congress, NLS/BPH. Alternatively, a librarian from the Library of Congress, NLS/BPH or from the NLS network of state libraries may be appointed to fill a position on the Jury.

4. The normal term on the Jury shall be two years with the option of reappointment for additional year(s), from June to June, contingent upon active contributions to and participation in committee responsibilities.

General statement concerning the work year

The Schneider Family Book Award Jury functions from late spring to ALA Annual of the following year. The chair/co-chairs and Jury members should be appointed after ALA Midwinter.

Much of the Schneider Jury work will take place virtually. 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

After ALA Midwinter: Chair/Co-chairs and Jury in place.

Early Spring – Dec 1: Nominate/suggest and request reading copies of appropriate titles.

- The chair/co-chair will contact publishers to send qualifying books to the Jury members. The ALA office is responsible for maintaining up to date list and contact information.
- Chair/co-chair will keep track of received and requested titles.
- Jury members will participate in ongoing Jury discussions.
- Anyone may submit a title for consideration.

December 1st is the last day to request reading copies.

Three or more virtual meetings will be held to discuss/vote and discuss Jury business.

- To supplement the virtual discussion, conference calls or virtual meetings take place to vote for short list.
- By the end of December, the Jury will have a short-list of books to consider.

ALA Midwinter, January

- Meeting held at mutually agreed time on Friday to select the winners
- The Jury will meet on Sunday to confidentially notify winners.
- The Jury will meet to prepare a press release.
- The Jury will 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.

ALA Annual, June

- 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 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 books mailed to Jury members.
- Obtain reviews on books under consideration for additional points of view.
- Read the supplemental resources shared by the chair/co-chair.
- Participate in scheduled Jury meetings.
- Attend ALA Midwinter 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.

Jury Chair (or Co-Chair) Responsibilities

- Coordinates with the ALA liaison to schedule Jury meetings.
- Develops an agenda for Jury meetings.
- Informs members of the results of short list votes.
- Encourages Jury members to participate during all deliberations.
- Keeps a spreadsheet of acquired and requested books.
- Monitors digital discussion of the books.
- Shares and maintains the Recommended Supplemental Reading for the Schneider Family Book Award Jury.
- Requests books from publishers for Jury to review.
- Arranges conference calls or virtual meetings.
- At ALA Midwinter:
 - Accompanies ALA liaison to the Public Information Office (PIO) briefing, usually held on Friday at 5 pm.
 - Chairs the Jury deliberations.

ALA Staff Liaison Responsibilities

- Works with incoming Schneider Chair/Co-Chairs to appoint Jury members.
- Updates website.
- Updates ALA Handbook of Organization.
- Submits books to Jury members.

- Updates publishers contact list.
- Maintains the closed discussion list.
- Ships books to Midwinter.
- Ensures that copies 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 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.

June 2007, June 2014, Updated January 2022