

ALA American Library Association

Intellectual Freedom Round Table

Eli M. Oboler Memorial Award

www.ala.org/rt/ifrt/oboler

In the words of the ALA Memorial Resolution for Eli Oboler, passed at the 1983 Annual Conference, Eli “served the library profession with the highest distinction, as University Librarian at Idaho State University for over three decades, as member of the ALA Council from 1951 to 1959 and again from 1977 to 1981, as president of the Pacific Northwest Library Association ... as president of the Idaho Library Association,” and most significant as “one of the profession’s most eloquent champions of intellectual freedom ... as a member of the Intellectual Freedom Committee, as chair of the Intellectual Freedom Round Table, and as a founder and vice-president of the Freedom to Read Foundation.”

He was our “loyal gadfly” who “constantly and impatiently demanded the dismantling of all barriers to freedom of expression.” His principal means of pursuing this noble task was his writing; he was a prolific and eloquent author of hundreds of articles, reviews, and books, many of which have been and are destined to remain widely influential. In the spirit of this achievement, this award is to be granted to what the selection committee judges to be the best published work in the area of intellectual freedom to appear in the two-year period ending in the December prior to the Annual Conference at which the award is granted.

To be considered, the work must meet the following criteria:

- It must be an article (including a review article), a series of thematically connected articles, a book, or a manual published on the local, state, or national level, in English or in English translation. It need *not* have appeared in the library press.
- It must have as its central concern one or more issues, events, questions, or controversies in the area of intellectual freedom, including matters of ethical, political, or social concern related to intellectual freedom.
- It must also be demonstrably relevant to the concerns and needs of members of the library community, including the worlds of publication (print and non-print) and communication.
- It must meet high standards of literary quality, accuracy, and responsibility. While the primary focus of evaluation will be the work itself, the judges may find other considerations relevant. These may range from the use of particularly effective illustrations to recognition for the difficult nature of the background research or the subject itself, or for special courage or persistence displayed in writing and publishing the work.
- The work must have been originally published within the two-year period ending the December prior to the ALA Annual Conference at which it is granted. For example, the 2022 award will be granted to an article or series of articles published in 2020 and 2021. Books published in 2021 and 2022 will be considered for the 2023 award. This award was given first at the 1986 Annual Conference in New York, for writing which appeared in print in the two years 1984 and 1985.

