

**YALSA Board of Directors Meeting
2007 Annual Conference
Washington, DC, June 21-27, 2007**

Topic: First Time YA Author Award Proposal

Background: A second draft of this proposal was presented for Board comment at Midwinter. A fourth draft is presented here for Board discussion and approval. The goal is to take a final draft to the ALA Awards Committee for their approval on Monday June 25, 2007, so the first award can be given in January 2009.

Action Required: Action

William C. Morris YA Debut Award

Award Overview:

What: An award celebrating impressive new voices in young adult literature. The award honors a debut book by a first time author writing for teens.

Why: The award honors William C. [Bill] Morris, whose life was devoted to literature for children and young adults.

YALSA Format for Award Proposals:

I. Proposed Name of Award: William C. Morris YA Debut Award

II. Definition & Purpose of Award

William C. Morris was an influential innovator in the publishing world and an advocate for marketing books for children and young adults. Bill Morris left an impressive mark on the field of children's and young adult literature. He was beloved in the publishing field and the library profession for his generosity and marvelous enthusiasm for promoting literature for children and teens.

The William C. Morris YA Debut Award celebrates the achievement of a previously unpublished author, or authors, who have made a strong literary debut in writing for young adult readers. The work cited will illuminate the teen experience and enrich the lives of its readers through its excellence, demonstrated by:

- Compelling, high quality writing and/or illustration
- The integrity of the work as a whole
- Its proven or potential appeal to a wide range of teen readers

III. Rationale for Award:

Books written and published for young adults [aged 12-18] are as varied and interesting as the teenagers who read them. Although many of these books published each year are written by experienced and reputable, previously published authors, there are also, consistently, authors that make a significant impact on the field of young adult literature who are publishing their first books. The authors of these books deserve recognition for their achievement. We believe it is valuable to use the strength of our organization's reputation and expertise to widely publicize and forthrightly honor these "first-time" books and their authors. It would be our hope to also encourage new authors to write and publish for teens.

An estimated 3,000 YA titles are published annually. An informal survey of publishing staff indicated that approximately 10% of the titles on their lists were debuts. This should provide an acceptable pool of titles for an award committee to consider. This number of debut authors also indicated the importance of fresh new voices writing for teens.

IV. Number & Frequency of Award

The Morris Award will be awarded annually at ALA's Midwinter Youth Media Awards. A shortlist of up to five titles will be announced the second Monday of December. The release of the shortlist will be coordinated with YALSA/ALA staff to publicize the award and the shortlist.

Note: The shortlist will help raise awareness of the award and allow for new promotion and marketing to raise awareness about debut books for teens, ALA and YALSA.

V. Administration of the Award

A committee of YALSA members will consist of nine members including the chair, plus an administrative assistant if the chair so requests [see below]. The Vice President/President Elect will appoint the chair and the eight members of the committee.

Members are required to attend all committee meetings and to actively participate in discussion via a closed electronic discussion list. Only committee members attending the Midwinter committee meetings are eligible to vote. Committee members are required to read widely from books eligible for nomination. If a member is unable to complete the entire term, the President of YALSA will appoint a replacement.

Committee members must not solicit publishers for free personal copies of books. If members receive, or are offered, unsolicited copies of books from publishers, they may accept the titles. Committee members must not solicit publishers for favors, invitations, etc. If members receive these, however, they will use their own judgment in accepting. Publishers understand that such acceptance in no way influences members' actions or selections.

The chair is a voting member of the committee with all the rights and responsibilities of the other members. In addition, the chair presides at all meetings of the committee and serves as facilitator of both discussion and committee business. The chair of the committee or the administrative assistant will contact publishers to obtain copies of nominated titles for all committee members. The chair will serve as list owner of an electronic discussion list created through the YALSA

office solely for use by the committee, and will take responsibility for list maintenance. The chair has responsibility for any contact with publishers.

If the chair desires, the Vice President/President-Elect of YALSA may appoint an administrative assistant in consultation with the committee chair. The administrative assistant will assist the chair in duties that may include the following: contacting publishers on behalf of the chair/committee, maintaining the database of nominations, tabulating votes, and other such duties assigned by the chair. The administrative assistant is a non-voting member of the committee, and must be a YALSA member.

VI. Screening of Nominations

Eligibility:

1. The award and honor book winner(s) must be authors of original young adult works of fiction in any genre, nonfiction, poetry, a short story collection, or graphic work.
2. The award winner(s) must not have previously published a book for any audience. Books previously published in another country, however, may be considered if an American edition has been published during the period of eligibility.
3. Works of joint authorship are eligible, but only if all contributors meet all other criteria. For example, graphic works created by an author and an illustrator are eligible, but only if both contributors have never published before.
4. Books must have been published between January 1 and December 31 of the year preceding announcement of the award.
5. Edited works and anthologies are not eligible.
6. The short list may consist of up to five titles.
7. The award may be given posthumously provided the other criteria are met.
8. The winner and short-listed book authors are encouraged to attend an award ceremony at the ALA Annual meeting, following the announcement of the award at ALA's Midwinter Meeting.
9. If during a specific year, no title is deemed sufficiently meritorious, no award will be given that year.
10. The chair, with assistance from designated YALSA staff, is responsible for verifying the eligibility of all nominated titles.
11. To be eligible, a title must have been designated by its publisher as being either a young adult book or one published for the age range that YALSA defines as "young adult," i.e., 12 through 18. Books published for adults or for younger children are not eligible.

Criteria:

This award recognizes excellence by a first time author writing for young adults.

The winning title must exemplify the highest standards of young adult literature and must be well written. The book's components [story, voice, setting, accuracy, style, characters, design, format, theme, illustration, organization, etc.] should be of high merit.

Popularity is not the criterion for this award, nor is the award based on the message or content of the book.

The book must have teen appeal or have the potential to appeal to teen readers.

In the sum of all the criteria, does the book represent the highest achievement in a debut work for young adults?

Nomination and Voting Procedures:

- Both field and Committee nominations will be accepted for books that meet the published criteria.
- Publishers, authors, agents, or editors may not nominate their own titles.
- Field nominations must be seconded by a committee member prior to December 1.
- Nominations may be accepted from the field and from committee members up to December 1.
- Final selections are made at the ALA Midwinter Meeting during a series of committee meetings closed to the public.
- Only committee members attending the ALA Midwinter Meeting will be allowed to vote.
- Members can vote only on books they have read.

Nomination Form [to be available online]:

Author:

Title:

Publisher:

Publication Date:

ISBN: (use hyphens)

Select category (Fiction, Nonfiction, Poetry, Anthology)

Brief annotation describing book:

Brief statement explaining why you think this title is a candidate for the William C. Morris YA Debut Award in terms of its literary merit and the criteria in the guidelines.

Name:

Address:

Library Affiliation:

Email:

Voting Procedures:

Up to five titles may be selected for the award shortlist. The shortlist will be determined by a majority vote to be conducted via an online poll of the committee members.

The award winner will be selected at the ALA Midwinter Meeting following committee discussions.

The title receiving at least two thirds of the majority vote will be declared the winner. The remaining books will be considered short-listed.

Annotations and Press Release

The committee is responsible for writing the annotations for the winning title and remainder of short list as well as working with appropriate YALSA staff to develop a press release. Both the annotations and the press release will include discussion of the literary merits of the titles. The annotations and press release must be written prior to the Monday ALA Youth Media Awards press conference; specific instructions will be sent to chair from ALA’s PIO.

The press release will be posted online via YALSA and ALA’s appropriate web resources and disseminated to trade and general media outlets. The short list will also appear in a spring issue of *Young Adult Library Services* and other trade publications deemed appropriate.

VII. Presentation of Award

An announcement will be made at the ALA Midwinter Youth Media Awards Press Conference. Presentation of the award will occur at the ALA Annual Conference at a program and/or reception created by YALSA for this express purpose. The winner of the award will be recognized by a gold seal, which will be sold for placement on the cover of the book. Silver seals will be created for those short list titles, which were not selected as the winner.

VIII. Form and/or type of Award

Framed certificate and a \$2000 cash award

IX. Funding, Expenses, Revenue

Startup costs, the cash award and funding to promote the award will come entirely from the Morris Endowment Spending Account.

Expenses

William C. Morris Debut Award	FY2009	FY2010	FY2011	FY2012
Cash award for honoree	2000	2000	2000	2000
Creation of plaque for honoree	100	100	100	100
Creation & production of seal	5000	0	5000	0
Administrative costs/PR/staff time	2000	400	400	400
TOTAL EXPENSES	9100	2500	7500	2500

Revenues

William C. Morris Debut Award	FY2009	FY2010	FY2011	FY2012
Seal sales	2000	3000	4500	6000

X. Catalog Description of Award

The purpose of the William C. Morris YA Debut Award is to annually honor the best book published for young adults by a first-time author, as selected from a shortlist of five books by first-time authors. This original work will enrich the lives of readers through its excellence, which is demonstrated by the high quality of its writing and/or illustration, the integrity of the work as a whole, and its proven or potential appeal to a wide range of teen readers.

XI. Evaluation of Award Program

Evaluation will be the responsibility of the YALSA board to initiate and oversee. A review after the first year of the committee's work will include:

- Support as determined by submissions: measuring the number of annual submissions, the number of publisher requests and the number of publishers.
- Funding: funding for start-up costs, marketing and promotion, the monetary gift, seal sales, etc.
- Administration: the effectiveness of committee policies and procedures, committee size, etc.
- Member feedback regarding the award and its role in assisting library workers with readers' advisory and collection development.

Award evaluation will be the responsibility of the YALSA Board with input from the committee chair and designated YALSA staff.