

CO-3

MPLA AWARDS COMMITTEE
REPORT
JULY 2007

Since the conference, the committee has discussed two main issues. First, an evaluation of the awards we currently give out at the conference and second, a discussion of the Board Choice Award.

CONFERENCE AWARDS.

GENERAL COMMENTS ABOUT AWARDS

1. We should consider some awards, such as the Carl Gaumer, to be given every other year.
2. We should survey the awards given by the states, such as Intellectual Freedom, and then we might consider giving the awards as the "best of the best" from the twelve states.

SPECIFIC AWARDS

1. Carl Gaumer Library Champion Award: "To be given to the individual, organization or company whose positive support of the Mountain Plains Library Association is demonstrated by constant conscientious endeavors towards libraries, library staff, trustees and professional activities."

The wording of this award is problematical. It isn't clear whether this award is for supporting MPLA, libraries and organizations within MPLA or both.
The word "conscientious" should be changed.

2. MPLA Distinguished Service Award: To be given to an MPLA member who has made notable contributions to the library profession or has furthered significant development of libraries in the Mountain Plains region, or has performed exemplary service for an extended period of time. In the case of retired individuals, the nominee may be a past member of MPLA.

We think this award should be narrowed to "made notable contributions to the library profession or the MPLA"

3. MPLA Legislative Leadership Award: To be given to an individual or group (state legislature, city council, board of education, etc.) in recognition of exemplary legislative leadership or support for growth and development of a library or libraries in the MPLA area within the last two years.

This award duplicates ones given by many states and it is difficult for any legislation on the state or city level to have an impact on the entire MPLA region. It should be eliminated or become a "best of the best" award".

4. MPLA News Media Support Award: To recognize the news media organization in the MPLA region making the strongest effort, either in a single presentation or in ongoing coverage, within the past two years, to promote libraries and library activities to the community. Criteria will include amount and effectiveness of coverage and manifestation of a positive commitment to generate public interest in a library or libraries.

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5. MPLA Literary Contribution Award: To be given to an author whose published writings are most successfully furthering an understanding and appreciation of the Mountain Plains region. The author need not reside in the region, and the selection may be based on either a single work or a body of works. Nominees will be evaluated on the basis of literary worth, readability, and evidence of responsible research.

In today's climate what does "published writings" mean? Does it include electronic only, such as blogs? We have had columnists win this, so we assume it is not limited to books, but could include magazine articles, newspaper columns, etc.

6. MPLA Beginning Professional Award: To recognize an MPLA member, who as a librarian/media specialist within the first five years after receiving a library/media masters degree, has made a positive impact on the quality and role of library service. Factors such as innovative programming and planning, use of resources, and special projects will be considered.

This should be based on service to MPLA.

7. MPLA Youth Services Excellence Award: To be given to a library that exemplifies excellence in library services to youth. This excellence can be demonstrated through one or more of the following: reference and information services, access to technology, reading promotion, youth participation, collaborative efforts, education support, staff and volunteer development, intergenerational activities, programs and services that address special needs patrons; programs and services that emphasize the library's role in a state, region or local municipality. (Executive Board 4/2000)

This award duplicates ones given by many states and it is difficult for any legislation on the state or city level to have an impact on the entire MPLA region. It should be eliminated or become a "best of the best" award".

8. MPLA Intellectual Freedom Award: This award is given to an individual or group making significant contributions to the enhancement of First Amendment rights. The recipient should have demonstrated a clear understanding of the principles, nature, responsibilities, and implications of the First Amendment. The recipient should live within the Mountain Plains region or be a non-resident whose contribution has a demonstrable effect on the Mountain Plains region. The recipient should have applied that understanding of the principles in one or more of the following ways: In defense of the First Amendment principles in the face of a serious

challenge to those principles though not necessarily limited to libraries. In support of the First Amendment principles through an active role in: 1. Formulating programs which develop people's ability to deal with a full range of opinion/controversy and with the issues associated with such controversy, or 2. Developing, or materially assisting in the development of a legal base for the continued enjoyment of freedom of mind, its strengthening, and its defense, or 3. Expanding the philosophical foundations of the principles or contributing to a better understanding of them.

It appears that this award mentions a "demonstrable effect on the Mountain Plains region" for someone living out of the MPLA region, it does not have the same limit on someone within the region. If that it not the intent it should be re-written to be clearer. However, this award duplicates ones given by many states and it is difficult for any legislation on the state or city level to have an impact on the entire MPLA region. So it could also be considered for elimination or become a "best of the best" award"/impact on the region.

BOARD CHOICE AWARDS

In 2006 Judy Zelenski identified 29 Board Choice Award winners. Of those, 14 had renewed and 15 had not renewed (14 of these are from 2005; 1 from 2004)

We had some discussion that there are too many of these awards to be meaningful and the number should be cut. One possibility would be to cut to seven and they be given by the members of the Administrative committee. We could then up the amount given each winner, so that in addition to conference registration there would be a stipend for travel. Ideally, this stipend would be matched by the winner's institution.

These awards should be recognized in several venues during the conference, such as having all the award winners and their nominators at one or two tables at the Awards Banquet, at the membership meeting, in an ad in the program, displayed prominently at the MPLA booth. They should also be recognized at their state meetings, through ads in the programs and a display at the MPLA table. If for some reason the award winner is unable to attend the MPLA Annual meeting, we should send them a "We missed you. Wish you were here" packet containing a conference program, handouts from the conference, and other "goodies".

In addition, to increase their participation in MPLA there should be a formal mentor program which brings them into MPLA. This program would provide regular meetings, in person, by phone, or online. During these meetings the mentor would encourage their participation in MPLA committees, giving presentations at MPLA conferences or state conference that have MPLA-sponsored programs and writing articles for the newsletter.

These awards should be announced prior to the beginning of the membership year and in sufficient time that the award winners can make plans to attend the annual conference. This could be accomplished by having the winners notified in October of each year and the official announcement made in late November/early December.