

Southern Books Competition Committee

Purpose: To sponsor the Southern Books competition for the Southeastern Library Association.

Duties:

1. To appoint a jury for the competition.
2. To utilize the competition to award excellence in book making.
3. To publicize the competition and the award through the association channels.
4. To exhibit the awards winners at biennial conferences.
5. To advertise and coordinate traveling exhibits of each group of winners.

History: This committee was officially created as Committee Z in 1952, with Lawrence Thompson (KY) as chair and composed of Richard Harwell (GA) and John Cook Wyllie (VA). They appointed a jury of three charged to select "on the basis of typographical design and general excellence as examples of the book maker's art" the outstanding books from Southern presses and publishers that year. Although sponsored by SELA, it has always included publishers from 16 states from the Southwestern and Southeastern area plus the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico. In 1963 the committee chose to appoint a director to handle the details of the judging process. It now functions as a small committee with the chair serving as chair/director.

Criteria: Awards books are selected annually according to these criteria:

1. Design of book
 - a. Overall aesthetic appeal
 - b. Compatibility and effectiveness of materials used and type face selected
 - c. Suitability of the design for the matter of the book
2. Printing
 - a. Quality of the presswork
 - b. Evidences of fine craftsmanship
3. Binding
 - a. Quality of materials
 - b. Suitability of materials for volume submitted
 - c. Craftsmanship in the execution of the binding

Southern Books Competition Committee Chair

Purpose: To direct and manage the contest.

Duties:

1. To announce the competition through library and publishing journals.
2. To contact publishers who have previously participated, as well as newcomers to the field.
3. To select three judges to make the appraisals.
4. To collect the entry fees and send to Executive Secretary.
5. To see that all entries are sent to the Chair of the jury.
6. To prepare a hand list of the winners to be distributed at the conference and to accompany the traveling exhibits.
7. To place the original copies of winning titles in the archives collection at the University of Kentucky.
8. To prepare and present to the winning publishers a handsome certificate on behalf of SELA.
9. To coordinate the traveling exhibit.

History: During the first twenty years of the contest, Lawrence S. Thompson served as director. From 1974 until 1980, Frank J. Anderson of Wofford College had this responsibility. The first two juries were composed of three Southerners; since then, jurors have been selected from outside the South to ensure objectivity. It has been found to be practical to select them from a common geographic area for ease of meeting together. They are paid a small honorarium for their time and expertise.

SOUTHERN BOOKS COMPETITION

The number of awards is not limited and have varied from ten to thirty per year. Winners of both years of the biennium are displayed at each SELA conference. A traveling exhibit of the winners is available to institutions and organizations. It has been borrowed throughout the South, Canada, Scandinavia, Soviet Union, and South Africa. A permanent archive is maintained in the Special Collections Department, University of Kentucky Library at Lexington. Information about the collection should be addressed to the chair of the committee. A list of winners from 2004 to present is available on SELA's web site at <http://selaonline.org/about/southernbooks.htm>.