

The William C. Morris YA Debut Award
Committee Manual
October 2020

Definition

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

The integrity of the work as a whole
Its proven or potential appeal to a wide range of teen readers

Purpose

The William C. Morris Award will:

Recognize authors who make a significant impact on the field of young adult literature who are publishing their first books.
Emphasize the importance of fresh new voices writing for teens.

first week of December, with the winning title announced at the following ALA Midwinter Conference/ New January Event. The winner and honor authors will be recognized at an ALA or YALSA Conference.

Committee Members

A committee of YALSA members will consist of nine members including the chair, plus an

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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.

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Division Consultants and Communication

YALSA will assign an oversight committee liaison to deal with questions from the chair and the committee regarding procedures and personnel. The chair will communicate fully with the board liaison and with the staff and leadership of YALSA.

Working with the Chairperson

The YALSA oversight committee liaison will work with the chairperson to review the procedures of the committee and to make recommendations for improving the process during the working year. The oversight committee liaison will also work with the chairperson to resolve procedural and personnel issues as they arise.

Working with Committee Members

Committee members may consult with the YALSA oversight committee liaison should there be unusual issues that the chairperson cannot resolve, particularly if there are issues regarding the chairperson's performance of duties.

Committee Calendar

November	Incoming chairperson reviews committee ethics, policies, procedures and manual in preparation for coming year
December	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Chairperson reviews committee roster and initiates committee member introductions• Chairperson sets expectations with the committee and explains his/her management style. These expectations should include an agreement among committee members about a consistent virtual meeting time, at least once a month. Committee members are expected to prioritize attendance at these virtual meetings as highly as they would in-person meetings at ALA Annual or ALA Midwinter/ New January Event.• Chairperson recommends reading and other preparations, as appropriate, to prepare the committee members for their task, providing particular support to members who have not served on an award committee before
January	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Outgoing & incoming chairpersons touch base to share information and discuss any business or issues that will carry over into the next year• Chairperson touches base with oversight and staff liaisons to address any initial questions or concerns
February	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Chairperson holds a virtual meeting to discuss the process, policies and procedures. Members should have bec. Membeyho

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	<p>from publishers, they are encouraged to acquire eligible titles through their own library systems or through ILLs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chairperson submits quarterly chair report by Feb. 15th. • Committee members and chairperson participate in virtual training facilitated by YALSA president • Chairperson works with Program Officer for Conferences & Events to schedule meetings for ALA Annual
March, April, May	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee reads, suggests and discusses titles. • Chairperson submits quarterly chair report by May 15th. • Chairperson reminds committee members to submit final nominations for Annual discussion no later than June 1.
June	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee prepares to discuss nominated titles at Annual. Titles that are nominated after June 1 will be discussed later in the year, to prevent last-minute nominations from causing unnecessary stress. • Chairperson sends out Annual meeting agendas and confirms times and location of committee meetings with members.
ALA Annual	<p>Meeting agendas should include a discussion of each nominated title and a discussion of the remainder of the process.</p> <p>Two straw polls are recommended to follow the discussions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Should each title be considered for the award? 2. A vote for the titles in your top 5 today. <p>Chairperson takes advantage of face to face setting to mentor any committee members who may need support or guidance in terms of improving committee performance.</p>
July, August, September, October	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chairperson submits quarterly chair report by Aug. 15th. • Chairperson works with Program Officer for Conferences and Events in August to set up meetings for Midwinter/ New January Event. • Committee members read, suggest, and discuss titles. Committee members continue to nominate titles.
Late October/ early November	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chairperson sets up virtual meeting times with YALSA staff liaison, and shares procedures with committee members. Chairperson reminds the committee that the last day to submit nominations is November 1. • Chairperson may be asked by YALS editor to write an article for the spring issue about the award
November	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • November 1 is the final day to submit nominations. • Chairperson submits quarterly chair report by Nov. 15th.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mid-November: virtual meeting is held to discuss the nominated titles. • Mid- to late-November: virtual meeting is held to vote on the shortlist, which will consist of up to 5 titles.
Late November to early December (depending on when YALSA needs final list)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chairperson writes annotations for the shortlist titles. Booklist Consultant reviews and makes suggestions on the annotations. • Chairperson sends out Midwinter meeting agendas and confirms times and locations of committee meetings with members. • Chairperson sets expectations for other aspects of Midwinter/ New January Event involvement: attendance at Youth Media Awards Monday morning and Morris/ Nonfiction Awards Reception immediately following the Youth Media Awards. It is recommended that Sunday evening be kept free since the shortlist publishers traditionally host a dinner for the shortlist authors and committee members.
Early December	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • YALSA publishes the annotated shortlist. • Chairperson coordinates promotion of the shortlist with the Hub blog manager, the Awards & Lists Marketing Taskforce Chairperson, and committee members.
ALA Midwinter Meeting/ New January Event	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee meets to decide the winner from the shortlist of up to five titles. The winner will be announced at the Youth Media Awards Monday morning. • Chairperson works with the Program Officer for Conferences & Events to draft and submit a press release. • Attend and participate in the Youth Media Awards • Attend and participate in the Monday-morning reception and celebration that follows the Youth Media Awards. Chairperson introduces the Morris Award winner and finalists and presents them with their awards during the reception.
After ALA Midwinter/ New January Event	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chairperson works with the Hub blog manager and the Awards & Lists Marketing Taskforce chairperson to promote award winners • Chairperson touches base with the incoming chairperson to share information and discuss any ongoing matters

Eligibility

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.

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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.

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.

Books must have been published between November 1 to October 31 of the year preceding announcement of the award. (For the 2021 award, books must have been published between November 1, 2019 and October 31, 2020).

Edited works and anthologies are not eligible.

The shortlist may consist of up to five titles.

The award may be given posthumously provided the other criteria are met.

The winner and shortlisted book authors are encouraged to attend an award ceremony following the announcement of the award at ALA's Midwinter Meeting/ New January Event.

If during a specific year, no title is deemed sufficiently meritorious, no award will be given that year.

The chair, with assistance from designated YALSA staff, is responsible for verifying the eligibility of all nominated titles.

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.

To be eligible, a title must be widely available in the US to libraries and teens.

Titles that are self-published, published only in eBook format, and/or published from a publisher outside of the US will not be considered eligible until the first year the book is available in print or distributed through a US publishing house.

Appendix A offers further, detailed guidance on eligibility questions.

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, character and/or

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publisher (we felt this fit the requirement of being “available in print through a US publishing house”).

Author had previously co-authored a play, the only copy of which was at the Library of Congress, suggesting it had been sent in for copyright registration but not actually published.

Author had previously done some very small print run (less than 50) poetry compilations through their graduate school.

Author’s first publications were government documents.

Author had edited, but not been sole writer of a travel book for one of the big travel book series.

Author had another book listed in Worldcat but no libraries held that book; when we checked with the publisher, we learned that the book had been promoted in their catalog but cancelled before official publication.

The book was the debut of a fiction writer, but someone with previous publications did the illustrations. Since this was a prose novel, not a graphic novel, the call was that the illustrator did not count against the novel’s eligibility.

The book was available as an ebook last year, but came out in print this year.

Eligibility is determined by the book’s first year in print

The author had a thesis/dissertation appearing as a publication in WorldCat. It was determined that the author was eligible, as this was an academic requirement for the degree and technically an unpublished manuscript (even if that school’s library had cataloged and bound a copy).

Eligibility Due to Audience

The criteria for the award specifies Young Adults as ages 12-18 and that books for younger children or adults are not eligible. As publishing does not always adhere to strict guidelines

Appendix B: Frequently-Asked Questions

What is the true time commitment for this committee?

The committee term lasts from when you accept the position in October or November to the end of ALA Midwinter in January or February, so up to 16 months. There are obviously peaks and troughs of time commitment within that term, though. In addition to attending ALA Annual and ALA Midwinter (or the New January Event), there are usually monthly virtual meetings that last at least an hour, plus the time commitment of not only reading on average 70-100 titles a year, but also potentially rereading titles under discussion. It is very important to pace yourself and create a balance between seeking out new titles to nominate and reading titles already nominated so that you don't end up overwhelmed.

When will the books start to arrive?

It can take almost a month for titles to start arriving after the chair provides committee contact information to the publishers. You may not receive any books until February or even early March,

ALA Annual usually runs from Thursday to Tuesday in late June. You should plan to be there from at least Friday through Monday. The chair will determine as early as possible how often you need to meet (1-2 days, usually) and where and at what hours, in coordination with the committee's ALA liaison, and will communicate those details to you a month or so before the conference as one of the deciding factors will be how many titles you need to discuss. Early registration for ALA Annual is usually made available soon after ALA Midwinter/ New January Event. Your ability to register early is of course dependent on means and reimbursement policies at your home library, but I would recommend registering early not only because early bird registration is cheaper, but also because you then have the ability to book your hotel early (but don't have to pay for it/confirm until very close to the conference). There are usually 2 HQ hotels, and those room blocks and some of the better and more affordable options book up quickly. It is sometimes worth picking a double room in advance and then determining if you have someone you can share with before the best options run out. Similarly, if you are not a morning person one or both of the HQ hotels are often the site of publisher breakfasts to which you may be invited, so it's that much faster to go downstairs. They are also sometimes the site of dinners or dessert parties, if you are not a night person. At least one is also usually quite close to the conference center, if that appeals to you. You should think about what's most important to you over the course of the conference in terms of convenience, proximity, etc. It's also worth noting that Morris committee meetings will likely take place in an HQ hotel rather than the conference center as they are confidential.

You will likely start to receive publisher invitations for dinners, etc (see above) in March/April. When thinking about what you want to attend, keep these things in mind: you will likely have short lunch breaks on days you meet as a committee, which would make off-site lunch invitations a challenge unless you arrange a longer lunch break with the chair - who may be willing to accommodate as they too receive invitations. Similarly, you will need to make sure that you are able to make it on time to committee from any breakfasts to which you are invited. Dinner is not usually an issue as committee meetings break up by 5. However, there are several events that you might want to keep your calendar clear for that happen every ALA Annual, including the Printz reception, the Newbery Caldecott Legacy Banquet, and the Coretta Scott King awards breakfast. The dates for those will be published when registration goes live so you'll have time to plan. It's also possible that your committee will want to meet as a group for a meal (lunch or dinner, or both) - while this is not required it is one of the nice things about working so closely together for a year!

Depending on when you arrive and depart, you may have less time than you think to visit the exhibit floor and attend sessions, especially if you are locked in committee discussions for two full days. Annual is an overwhelming, busy, and wonderful experience - it just requires a bit of strategy in advance to make the most of it!

What will ALA Midwinter/ New January Event be like and how do I plan for it?

Most of the advice above about early registration, publisher invitations, etc, is the same, but there are a few Morris-relevant differences for ALA Midwinter. First, the Youth Media Awards (YMAS). These happen first thing in the morning on the Monday of Midwinter. As a committee, you are likely to gather even earlier - as early as 6 - to call the selected author and inform them, to take group pictures, and to get settled in the auditorium. It is common to select some sort of group

