

22nd Annual Minnesota Book Awards Preliminary Round Judge Position Overview

Summary of Assignment: The preliminary round judges read all of the titles submitted for consideration in their category, then meet with their panel to select four finalists in that category. The number of books nominated varies from category to category and from year to year. Depending on their assigned category, judges can expect to review 20-65+ books.

The Minnesota Book Awards is committed to having a broad base of experience on the panels including diversity of professional experience, educational background, ethnicity, age, sex and location of residency in the state. Previous judges are welcome to apply as are qualified candidates new to judging. The overall make up of individual panels changes from year to year.

Preliminary round judge candidates should have experience and a comfort level with reviewing a large volume of books within a relatively short period of time. This is a volunteer assignment, but mileage reimbursement for travel to the judging session is available to individuals living outside the Twin Cities metropolitan area.

Support Provided to the Volunteer Judges:

- The Friends of the Saint Paul Public Library provides judges with returnable copies of all the books that have been nominated. These books will be distributed to the judges in batches as soon as the judges are selected and as books are nominated. The Friends will do its best to ensure judges receive all of the titles in their category well in advance of the panel session on January 30, 2010.
- A detailed handout, including the criteria for evaluating books, is provided to all judges at the time they receive the first set of books to be read in their category.
- Each panel of judges at the January 30, 2010 selection meeting is assigned a facilitator who will be present throughout deliberation. The facilitator does not participate in the deliberation or selection process, but is there to ensure the discussion adheres to the Minnesota Book Awards criteria and guidelines, and that a decision is made in a timely manner.

Eligibility to Be a Volunteer Judge:

- To be considered for assignment as a volunteer judge, applicants must have professional or volunteer experience, or interests, which qualify them to be a sound evaluator of books in the award category they are interested in judging.
- Judges must be available to attend the selection meeting the afternoon of Saturday, January 30, 2010. This meeting will be held at Open Book, the home of The Loft Literary Center in Minneapolis. Each panel of three judges will meet at this time to select the four finalists in their assigned category. Judges need to be well prepared, having thoroughly reviewed and taken notes on all of the nominated books in advance of this session. (Please note: notes should NOT be made directly in the copies of the books provided by The Friends of the Saint Paul Public Library.)
- Writers who have a book nominated for the Minnesota Book Awards in a given year may not serve as judges in that same year. Employees of publishers may only serve as judges for categories in which the publisher in question is not submitting a book that year. Any other potential conflict of interest situations should be immediately brought to the attention of The Friends of the Saint Paul Public Library.
- Judges must have the ability to respect a policy of confidentiality (books under consideration are not to be discussed with anyone other than the other judges on the panel), keep the Minnesota Book Awards criteria in mind at all times (literary merit, audience appeal, and

originality), read beyond their own preferences and personal tastes, and engage in respectful deliberation.

Recognition of Volunteer Judges:

- Award winners will be announced at the Minnesota Book Awards gala on April 17, 2010 at the Crowne Plaza Hotel – Saint Paul Riverfront. Each judge has the opportunity to request two complimentary tickets to this event.
- Judges will be acknowledged in the Minnesota Book Awards gala program.

The Minnesota Book Awards is a statewide project of The Friends of the Saint Paul Public Library in partnership with the Office of the Mayor of Saint Paul and the Saint Paul Public Library. Visit The Friends at www.thefriends.org.