

**Ohio Library Council  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

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ITEM NO.: **3.B**

MEETING DATE: **Sept. 16, 2022**

SUBJECT: **OLC Awards and Honors  
Committee Recommendations**

SUBMITTED BY: **Awards & Honors  
Committee**

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**REPORT FOR ACTION**

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At the March 11, 2022, Board of Directors meeting, the OLC Board referred background information on the James Cook Book Award to the OLC Awards and Honors Committee for further consideration, discussion and to make recommendations.

As directed by the Board, the Awards and Honors Committee began initial conversation regarding organizational awards and met for discussion at their May 31 in-person meeting.

The direction that the Awards & Honors committee would like to go in, and the principles that will guide the committee's future discussions and decisions, are:

- The committee agrees that OLC awards should go to people, not books, and that the recipients of Ohio Library Council awards should be those who are working, or have worked in, Ohio libraries.
- Named awards lose meaning over time (the committee struggled to recall any details about the individuals currently memorialized by OLC awards – Diana Vescelius and John Phillip.)
- The OLC Board should find and recommend alternatives to current named award categories (particularly where there might be overlap with a similar award from another organization) and/or for future named award requests. Examples include:
  - John Phillip Outreach / Association of Bookmobile and Outreach Services
  - James Cook Book Award / Ohioana Book Awards
  - Library Board Resolutions
  - Acknowledgement on individual library websites
  - Local memorials

Furthermore, nominations for OLC awards have declined over the past few years. There are a number of ideas about rethinking and/or merging a few categories to reduce the overall number of OLC awards.

The Awards and Honors Committee met again on Sept. 1 to discuss the number of awards currently offered by the Ohio Library Council. The committee's primary objectives were to:

- merge award categories wherever possible to reduce the overall number awards
- remove memorialized names from the current slate of OLC award categories
- ensure that the awards remained inclusive and reflective of the various people and work performed in Ohio's libraries

Out of those meetings comes three recommendations for the Ohio Library Council board to consider:

1. Merge three current categories (Ohio Friends of the Library Recognition, Trustee/Board of Trustees Award of Achievement, and John Philip Outreach and Community Engagement) to create one single category, *Local Advocate Award*, that recognizes exceptional service to a library community through sustained advocacy, innovative leadership, and/or imaginative

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and effective activities which increase community awareness of the library and its mission, vision and core values. (The focus of this award is advocacy on a local level whereas the Citizen of the Year award focuses on statewide contributions.)

2. Add “community engagement and/or outreach performed by a library employee” to Service Excellence criteria. This broadens the Service Excellence category to include part of the John Philip Outreach Award not reflected in the Local Advocate Award. The focus of this award will be on service excellence by a library employee whereas the Local Advocate Award is for those who are *donating* their time/talents/passion to libraries.
3. Remove names from existing categories.
  - Change Diana Vescelius Emerging Leader Award to Emerging Leader Award.
  - Change John Philip Outreach and Community Engagement Award to Outreach and Community Engagement Award. (Pending approval on the first two recommendations, this category might no longer exist thus making a name change unnecessary.)

Common issues, principles, and guidelines that the Awards & Honors committee has discussed in recent years are:

- Ohio Library Council awards should recognize and celebrate the innovative and dedicated people who make Ohio’s libraries successful.
- Number of OLC award nominations have declined in the last decade.
- Named awards lose connection to the honoree over time.

These recommendations address recent issues while continuing to honor the committee’s and the Council’s objective to recognize and celebrate the innovative and dedicated people who make Ohio’s libraries successful and vibrant.