

**Policy Manual**  
**for Sequoyah Book Awards Committee & Donna Norvell Book Award**  
**Oklahoma Library Association**

Revised 2019

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## History of the OLA Sequoyah Book Award

The Oklahoma Library Association honors Sequoyah for his unique achievement in creating the Cherokee syllabary, the 86 symbols representing the different sounds in the Cherokee language.

Sequoyah, Cherokee for “Lame One”, was the son of a Cherokee mother and a white trader father, and was also known by his English name, George Guess. His statue is one of the two representing Oklahoma in the U.S. Capitol in Washington, D.C. A cabin built by Sequoyah, as part of a United States government grant, still stands near Sallisaw. This grant was the first grant given for literary achievement in the United States.

The first Sequoyah Children’s Book Award was given in April 1959 at Northwestern University at Alva, Oklahoma, making this award the third oldest in the nation. The 1988, the first Sequoyah Young Adult Book Award was given. In 2008 the book award was changed to “Intermediate Award”. In 2008 a High School Award was created and was first awarded in 2010. Awards are given annually, usually as an event at the Oklahoma Library Association Annual Conference.

## Donna Norvell Oklahoma Book Award History and Criteria

The Donna Norvell Book Award was established in 2005 by the Oklahoma Library Association and is given annually, with the first award given in 2006. The Donna Norvell Book Award honors a book that has made a significant contribution to the field of literature for children through second grade. This award is a librarian’s choice award and is selected by the librarians who are members of the Oklahoma Library Association’s Sequoyah Book Award Committee.

The award is named for Donna Norvell, Children’s Consultant for the Oklahoma Department of Libraries from 1992-2004, who passed away in 2004. The award honors Donna’s contributions to the development of the library profession in Oklahoma.

### Criteria

- The Norvell Award will be given annually.
- The Oklahoma Library Association Sequoyah committee will administer the award.
- It must be for an original work for children in grades 2 and under.
- The winning title will be selected by the Sequoyah Committee from titles presented by the current year’s Children’s Reading Team.
- The Norvell Award will be announced at the same time as the winning Sequoyah Book award authors are announced.
- The award shall consist of plaque and/or medal honoring the author and illustrator.

## Nomination Eligibility

- High quality in writing and illustration
- Clarity and accuracy of presentation in both text and illustrative material
- Distinctive use of language
- Excellent artistic presentation in illustration
- Stimulating presentation of concepts and ideas
- Engaging writing and illustration
- Age appropriate style of presentation
- Title considered for the award must be copyrighted one (1) year preceding the date of winner announcement.
- Titles that are self-published, published online in eBook format, and/or published by a publisher outside of the U.S. will not be considered eligible until the first year the book is available in print or distributed through a U.S. publishing house.

## Reading & Administrative Teams

### Purpose, Masterlist Intention, Challenges

The Sequoyah Book Award Committee shall be responsible for the administration of the Sequoyah and Donna Norvell Awards and the guidelines by which the Sequoyah program is developed. The Sequoyah Book Awards program encourages the students of Oklahoma to read books of literary quality. The awards honor books by authors whose primary residence is in the United States.

The Sequoyah Book Awards are selected by Oklahoma students annually. Student voting is held in schools and libraries. Students in grades three (3) through five (5) vote on the Children's Book Award. Students in grades six (6) through eight (8) vote on the Intermediate Book Award. Students in grades nine (9) through twelve (12) vote on the High School Book Award. Eligibility to vote for the Sequoyah Book Award requires all students to have read or heard at least three books from the current Masterlist.

Each Masterlist is created to appeal to children in a variety of situations, interests and reading levels. The books on the Masterlists are not intended to be an automatic recommendation of the books. Since selection policies vary, one should apply the specific guidelines to each title and purchase those titles that meet individual selection policies. The Masterlists are not to be taken as recommendations that children be encouraged or required to read every title on a particular list. Teachers and other group leaders should carefully read and consider a Masterlist

title before reading it to a class or group or assigning a title as required reading. **It is not the intention of committees that every student must read every book on each Masterlist.**

Occasionally, a person or group may comment about the inclusion of a particular title on the Masterlist. Official complaints regarding a title on the Masterlist are sent to the Association's management company. The complaint is forwarded to the Administrative Team. The Administrative chair will compose a written response to the person or group addressing the complaint, which will be shared with the administrative team.

The Reading Team is ultimately responsible for selecting titles for the Masterlists and uses the members' best judgment based on the criteria for inclusion and their experience in working with students. Once the Masterlist is created, titles will not be removed from the list, except with the consent of the Reading Team.

If a person or group wishes a Reading Team to reconsider the inclusion of a book on the Masterlist, written notification of the request should be sent to the Association's management company. A form is provided for this purpose (**Appendix p. 10**). The Association's management company will forward all completed request forms to the chair of the Administrative Team, who will forward it to the appropriate Reading Team chair. The Reading Team will carefully consider the request and will notify the Administrative Team chair, respond in writing to the complainant. If not satisfied, the complainant may request a hearing before the OLA Executive Board.

If the Reading Team chair agrees to remove a book from the Masterlist, the chair of the Reading Team will notify the chair of the Administrative Team and the Association's management company. The Administrative Team chair will take the necessary steps to notify all concerned parties of the remove of the title from the Masterlist.

No requests for reconsideration will be accepted after March 31.

### [Membership Volunteer Appointments](#)

The President-elect of OLA confirms members of the Reading Teams to terms of three years. Appointees must be members of OLA, be a public librarian or a school librarian actively involved in the selection and/or purchase of materials appropriate to the age/grade requirements of the respective Reading Teams. Appointments are made in fall and the first meeting new members attend will be the all committee member meeting in May. New members will take part in a brief orientation meeting with their respective chair-elects by January 31.

The Reading Teams' membership consists of no more than, and equal balance of, five school librarians, five public librarians and a library educator who serves as a consultant to the Reading Team. Team members, if possible, should represent diverse geographic areas of the state. Reading Team consultants will be professional librarians who reach the appropriate age/grade

range of literature at the college level. Continuity of members on the Team will be assured through rotating terms of members.

Reading Teams membership begins first year January at the Sequoyah Orientation meeting and ends third year at the OLA Annual Conference.

The Administrative Team solicits names of OLA members who have volunteered to be considered for the Sequoyah Committee. The Administrative Team along with the OLA President-elect makes recommendations from the list of volunteers. The OLA President-elect sends a letter to the potential Reading Team members- New appointments are made in November for terms beginning in January. Each term is three years and will end upon the completion of all reading team requirements, including the Masterlist presentation at the OLA Annual Conference, of the last year served.

The names of Reading Team members are not published without consent of the Reading Team chair. They are not listed on the OLA webpage. Names of the Administrative Team may be published on the OLA webpage. Correspondence regarding the Sequoyah Book Awards Program, questions about books on the Masterlist or other matters should be directed to the Association's management company.

#### [Reading Teams: Purpose](#)

The Reading Teams for each award select the Masterlists for the awards.

The Reading teams present programs at both the OLA Conference and OTA/Encyclo-Media and perform other tasks to help promote the awards. Attendance is mandatory at both conferences unless there is express permission granted from the administrative team chair for extenuating circumstances.

Reading Team members are expected to read as many books as possible from the Consideration List. The Consideration List will vary from year to year but may exceed 150 books. Reading Team members are expected to fulfill all the duties of their assigned subcommittees. Reading Team members are expected to read an average of 2-3 books each week from the Consideration List. Failure to meet the average reading requirement may result in the team member's removal from the team.

#### [Consideration List: Preparation, Reading Expectation, Criteria, Deletion Calendar](#)

A Consideration list of eligible titles is maintained throughout the Sequoyah year. Titles are mailed to Reading Team members from publishing companies. The Reading Team Chair-elect oversees the process of creating and updating the Consideration List from the titles received. Each Reading Team determines the process used for developing the Consideration list.

Eligible titles are those published between January 1 and December 31 and are copyrighted two years preceding the date of winner announcement.

Reading Team members will receive titles from publishing companies throughout the year.

Titles that have received at least two (2) favorable reviews in standard review and professional journals are considered for inclusion. Committee members may nominate other books for inclusion on the Consideration list. The Consideration list is prepared and distributed to Reading Team members. For books received by the team from publishers, books must meet eligibility requirements to be considered for official consideration; however, the team does not have to consider every book received. The Reading Team Chair can choose to not consider titles at the advisement of the rest of the team, even if the book meets eligibility requirements.

Reading Team members are expected to read and evaluate as many books as possible from the Consideration List (an average of 2-3 books per week).

Reading team members will receive books and advance readers' copies (ARCs) of books from publishers for consideration for the Sequoyah Book Award Masterlist. Books are not to be sold for individual profit, but may be added to library collections, used as prizes and giveaways for children and teen library patrons, or donated to organizations serving youth in need of books. ARCs, as they are not the completed version of the book, may be used for any of the above, but not added to library collections.

### Eligibility

- Eligible titles are those published between January 1 and December 31 and are copyrighted two (2) years preceding the date of winner announcement.
- Titles previously published in another country are eligible only if an American edition has been published during the period of eligibility provided other criteria are met.
- Works by multiple authors or editors or combination author and illustrator resulting in a single story are eligible for the Consideration list and award.
- Titles that are self-published only in eBook format, and/or published by a publisher outside of the U.S. will not be considered eligible until the first year the book is available in print or distributed through a U.S. publishing house.
- The Reading Teams are responsible for verifying the eligibility of all nominated titles.
- Once a title has been deleted from the Consideration list, a member may request the title be reconsidered at any time before the creation of the Masterlist.

### Masterlist: Criteria, Deadlines

Reading Teams are responsible for the production of a Masterlist of books of literary merit and appropriateness to the age level of the students. The recommended length of a Masterlist is fifteen (15) titles, although Masterlists with fewer than 15 titles may be acceptable. A Masterlist longer than fifteen (15) must be approved by the chair of the Administrative Team.

At the Masterlist selection meeting in February, the Reading Team will reach a consensus for the inclusion of titles on the Masterlist from the remaining eligible books.

In selecting books for the Masterlist, the reading teams evaluate the individual titles by the following criteria:

- Literary merit
- Originality
- Factual accuracy
- Clarity and readability
- Age/Grade appropriateness of content & subject matter

Books on the Masterlist must be copyrighted two (2) years preceding the date of the Masterlist.

Each Reading Team will submit their Masterlist to the Administrative Team by February 10 in the required format-

The new Masterlist must be released to the public by February 15 each year. Committee members will submit written annotations with the Masterlist to the Administrative Team by the end of February.

All promotional materials will be prepared by each reading team before the OLA Annual Conference each year.

## Officers of the Reading Teams

Each Reading Team will select a chair and a chair-elect. The Reading Team may also select a secretary. Each Reading Team will have a Library Educator/Consultant and a Publisher Liaison. The Publisher Liaison is a non-voting member of the Reading Team.

## Promotional materials: Items, Logo, Product

The Sequoyah Book Award Masterlists may not be altered by individuals, schools, teachers, libraries, librarians or others. The lists must be promoted intact as selected by the Reading Teams.

Promotional materials created by the Sequoyah Committee are used to encourage and promote the Sequoyah Book Awards Program. All promotional materials must be pre-titled "Oklahoma Library Association".

The Administrative Chair is the main contact for Battle of the Books Tournament questions. The Questions/Answers Packet is sent to the requesting librarian by the Administrative Chair.

The Administrative Team reserves the right to disapprove any promotional materials. The Sequoyah name or logo may not be used without the Administrative Team's approval. For any items approved by the Administrative Team which are sold by outside producers, OLA will receive compensation of 10% or the gross sales price for each item. This compensation may be waived at the discretion of the Administrative Team, which will determine the extent that the materials are of public service.

The Administrative Team will decide which materials will be sold, and the manner in which the materials will be marketed, with appropriate authorization by the OLA Executive Board.

All approved materials may use the OLA Sequoyah name and/or logo and may be sold by the producer or the Sequoyah Committee.



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*Request for Reconsideration of a Sequoyah Book Award Masterlist Title*

Please complete this form. It will be carefully considered by the appropriate Reading Team. You will be notified, in writing, of the Reading Team's decision.

No requests for reconsideration will be accepted after February 15. The voting deadline of March 31 precludes the removal of a title from a Masterlist during the voting process.

Children's Masterlist Intermediate Masterlist High School Masterlist Author:

Title:

Please state your concerns about this book. Please be specific and cite page numbers. Use the back of the form if necessary.

Did you read the entire book?\_Yes No

If no, what parts did you read?

The reverse side of this form may be used for additional comments. Your name:

Address:

City:

State:

Zip:

Email address:

Return this completed form to:

Oklahoma Library Association 1190 Meramec Station Road, Suite 207, Ballwin, MO 63021-6902

### *Sequoyah Battle of the Books Tournament: Official Rules and Regulations*

Disclaimer: These are guidelines. Librarians are welcome to adapt to their individual entity and will receive the Questions/Answers Packet regardless of the Battle of the Books format.

#### Committee

A Battle of the Books Committee (BOBC) should be established by participating entities. Members include a Chair and as many volunteers as needed.

The BOBC tasks are:

- Designate the day of the Battle of the Books Tournament (BOB).
- Fill out the form on the OLA Sequoyah website, <http://www.oklibs.org/?60SequoyahBattle>, and request the Official Questions/Answers Packet for either the Children's, Intermediate, or High School Masterlist, including all required information. The packet will be emailed just before your BOB date to ensure secrecy and it must be kept in a secure location.
- Establish classrooms for teams to compete plus one large classroom for the Final Battle.
- Decide the number of teams competing.
- Design your bracket. The BOBC will use a blind draw to place the teams within the brackets. Each team competes in two rounds of competition before elimination. No two teams should meet in more than one round unless they meet in the Final Battle.
- Have copies of the books available for challenge consultations.
- Create the agenda packet for competitors. This includes: the bracket, classroom assignments, and competing teams
- Create signs for designated classrooms.
- Designate volunteers outside the committee as Reader Officials and Timekeeper/Scorer/Judge Officials for each classroom.
- Take the Official Questions/Answers and divide them into groups of ten (10) and place in sealable envelopes. Each envelope should be carefully numbered indicating which round. The sealed envelopes will be given to the Reader Officials one round at a time. Keep these envelopes in a secure area.
- Provide stopwatches, clipboards, rules, official title list, score sheets and pencils for each Timekeeper/Scorer/Judge Official.
- Assign competing teams to their rooms for the round of play.

## *Day of the Battle of Books Tournament*

Post the tournament brackets and team match-ups on classroom doors. Give teams and audience a copy of the agenda packet.

Meet with all Reader Officials and Timekeeper/Scorer/Judge Officials and review the rules. Each Reader Official receives one (1) Official Questions/Answers Packet clearly marked for each round. They should review the questions ahead of time for pronunciation.

The Time/Scorer/Judge Officials should each be given a stopwatch, clipboard with the BOB rules, the official Masterlist titles, a score sheet, and a pencil.

A BOBC (Battle of the Books Committee) member should be designated to keep posted brackets updated throughout the tournament.

### Tournament Rounds and Scoring

1. The team that sits on the left will be given first chance at the odd number questions, and the team on the right will be given first chance at the even questions.
2. Each team will tell the Reader who is serving as Captain. This should be recorded on the score sheet.
3. The “odd” team will go first and be read question number one.
4. Each team has 30 seconds after the reading of the question to give its response through the team Captain. Teams are encouraged to confer before giving a response. Only the first answer given by the Captain will be acceptable. Teams cannot use remaining time to guess other titles.
5. If the title is correct, the team is awarded 5 points. Then the team may have an additional 5 seconds to confer on the author and give its response. An additional 5 points will be awarded for the correct author.
6. Regardless of who scored what on the last question, even numbered questions will be read to the even team, and odd numbered questions will be read to the odd team.
7. If a team has begun its response before time is called, it will be allowed to complete it.
8. After 5 questions have been asked, half time score will be announced.
9. In the event of a tie, Reader Official will request from the BOBC an additional packet for another round until a winner is declared.

Acceptable answers

The answer is considered correct even if mispronounced, as long as the judge can discern it. That may mean that an incorrect article in the title may be used or answers that are slightly off (such as “Miss Peregrine’s and the Peculiar Children” instead of “Miss Peregrine’s Home for Peculiar Children”) are acceptable. Not acceptable is: “That Women with the House of Weird

Kids.” A correct author’s name is one that is quoted as it appears on the OLA Sequoyah Masterlist. Only giving the last name of the author is also acceptable.

### Challenges

The questions are proofread and worded carefully to avoid mistakes. A common challenge may be a question that will have two correct answers. When the error has been proven by consulting the book, both teams will receive credit for a correct title. The challenges must occur before the round is completed.

### Default

Any team which does not appear for a round will automatically default to the team which was to be its opponent.

Do not share the Official Questions/Answers. Do not rewrite or tamper with the Official Questions/Answers. Please keep them for use at one location for one use only. If you are planning more than one Battle of the Books Tournament, please re-request the Official Questions/Answers Packet from the OLA Sequoyah Administrative Team, <http://www.oklibs.org/?60SequoyahBattle>. Notify OLA Sequoyah Administrative Team if you have questions, concerns, or suggestions, <mailto:sequoyah@oklibs.org?subject=Battle of the Books>.

The OLA Sequoyah Book Award Reading and Administrative Teams are proud to provide this opportunity to your school or library. Good luck!

### Administrative Chair duties

Upon receipt of form submission, count back a minimum of five (5) working days from the requesting library’s event. Put a reminder alert on your calendar.

Contact the requesting librarian with your direct contact information and let them know when you will send the questions to them.

On the specified day, email the Questions/Answers Packet to the requesting librarian.