



## **JUDGING GUIDELINES FOR THE LAMBDA LITERARY AWARD**

The Lambda Literary Foundation (the Foundation) is deeply grateful to you for volunteering your time and talent to select the annual recipients of the Lambda Literary Awards. The purpose of these guidelines is to set forth the manner in which judges are selected, their responsibilities, and the process by which the Lambda Literary Award (Lammy) recipients are chosen. Any questions about these guidelines should be directed to the Awards Administrator (Administrator) who, in conjunction with the Awards Committee of the Foundation's Board of Trustees, is responsible for setting policy with respect to the awards and the awards process.

The Lambda Literary Award honors the best book in a given year in a given category. The relevant factors, as explained further under the judging criteria section, are artistic quality and LGBT content. As to both of these criteria, the judges are expected to exercise their informed discretion. But judges should not, concern themselves with factors extraneous to these criteria, for example, whether a writer has or has not previously won an award, whether a given book has or has not received other awards or critical attention from other quarters or whether a given book has or has not been a commercial success. Moreover, the award should not be presented to an author for a body of work or for a previously written book which, in the opinion of some judges, should have won the award at that time; other awards in our community, like the Publishing Triangle's Whitehead Award for Lifetime Achievement or the Foundation's Outstanding Mid-career Novelist Prize, confer those honors. One of our community's great strengths is its diversity and we strive to select judges who represent and embrace this diversity. It is our hope that the works submitted for consideration will also reflect the true diversity of our community and that the best books will be chosen based on artistic quality and LGBT content.

## 1. Nomination, Selection, Qualifications and Terms of the Judges

(a) *Nomination of judges*: Any member of the LGBT literary community may be nominated or may nominate him or herself to serve as a judge. The nominations may come from staff and Board of Trustees of the Foundation, former judges, former award winners, nominees or presenters, and individuals active in the LGBT literary community as writers, editors, publishers, booksellers, reviewers or teachers. This list is illustrative, not exclusive. The Administrator and Committee will consider all individuals nominated to be a judge. It is the policy and goal of the Foundation to recruit as diverse a set of judges as possible and for this reason the Foundation particularly encourages and seeks to recruit the nomination of people of color and young people (defined as those under 40); the Foundation also strives for gender parity and for meaningful representation by transgender and bisexual members of our community.

(b) *Qualification of judges*: Individuals nominated to be judges will be contacted by the Awards Administrator. If these individuals are interested in serving as judges, they will be asked to provide a resume. The chief qualification for a judge is a demonstrated interest and participation in the LGBT literary community consistent with the mission of the Foundation, which is to nurture, celebrate and preserve LGBT literature through programs that honor excellence, promote visibility and encourage development of emerging writers. Such interest by prospective judges may be shown in a variety of ways, such as, for example, by writing, reviewing, publishing, selling or teaching LGBT literature. A prior relationship with the Foundation and a knowledge of its work, while desirable, is not a requirement to serve as a judge.

(c) *Terms of judges*: In order to fulfill the Foundation's goal of creating as diverse as possible a set of judges, no one shall be a judge for more than three consecutive years, after which they will rotate off. Former judges are eligible for reappointment after two years. There is no limit to how often an individual may be reappointed after she or he has gone through the rotation (3 years on/2 years off.) These term limits shall take effect in 2012 and apply forward from that date. Any individual who has previously been a judge in any category shall be eligible for a full three year term beginning in 2012.

(d) *Compensation of judges*: At this time, the Foundation is unable to financially compensate judges for their service. However, judges will be acknowledged both on the Foundation's website and in the program at the annual award ceremony. Judges shall be offered

a 50% discount on their ticket to the award ceremony. Judges will also receive a certificate of thanks and appreciation from the Foundation for their service. Judges are also free to list their service to the Foundation on their resumes or CVs, consistent, of course, with their confidentiality obligation not to disclose details of the judging process.

## 2. Composition of judging panels

It is the Foundation's preference that there be four judges in each category but in any event there shall never be fewer than three judges. One judge shall be designated the chair by the Administrator. The chair shall be an individual who has had prior experience as a judge. The chair, working with the Administrator, shall ensure that each panel member receives all nominated books and meets the reading and judging deadlines. The chair will facilitate all discussions that lead to the selection of the finalists and the award recipient. The chair shall act as the liaison between the panel and the Administrator and, if necessary, the Committee. The chair's vote, however, shall not have any greater weight than that of the other judges.

## 3. Confidentiality, Identity of Judges and Conflicts of Interest

a. *Confidentiality.* The composition and work of the panels is to be held in strictest confidence during the process. Judges must sign a confidentiality form agreeing to this policy. The purpose of this policy is to protect the integrity of the judging process by allowing judges to engage in free and uninhibited discussion about the nominated books and to protect the judges from outside lobbying. Among matters to be kept confidential are the identity of the finalists and the eventual recipient and the judging process itself including all written and oral communications among the judges. Disclosure of confidential information about the judging process during the process itself or even after the awards have been given shall result in disqualification of the individual who has breached confidentiality from again serving as a judge. If there are any questions about the scope of confidentiality, panels should initially err on the side of nondisclosure and then consult the Administrator. The Administrator, working with the Committee, will respond to any confidentiality question.

b. *Identity of judges.* During the judging process, judges are not to disclose that they are judges, nor the identity of any other judge. Unless a judge requests anonymity, they will be identified and thanked in the awards program and the Foundation website at the time of the award ceremony. Brief biographies may also appear on these sites.

c. *Conflicts of interest.* Judges are asked to disclose any potential conflict of interest they may have with any nominated book or author whether personal or professional. Given that the LGBT literary community is a relatively small one, the fact that a judge may know the author of a nominated book or have had some professional relationship with a publisher will not in and itself disqualify the judge. However, the Administrator, in consultation with the Committee, will decide whether a conflict is so serious as to require disqualification.

Of course, no individual may serve as a judge in a category in which he or she has a nominated book or has contributed a story to any nominated anthology. Individuals may serve as judges in other categories, however. Alternatively, an individual may voluntarily withdraw his or her work from consideration for any awards during any period of their term as a judge.

#### 4. Judging Criteria

The process by which judges select finalists and a recipient is, by its nature, a subjective one and the fruit of frank and open discussion among judges of diverse backgrounds, skills, and interests. Judges should bear on mind, however, that the two foremost criteria for the Lambda Literary Awards are the LGBT content of the work and the work's artistic quality. The standard by which the nominated books are to be judged for artistic quality is one left entirely to the judges to devise.

The question of LGBT content, however, must take into consideration the Foundation's mission to nurture, celebrate and preserve LGBT literature. A combination of factors constitute LGBT content, including, but not limited to, the prominent presence of fictional LGBT characters or of LGBT historical or contemporary individuals in works of nonfiction; descriptions, accounts or renderings of events that have influenced or currently influence the LGBT community; fiction, poetry and drama that showcases the creativity of LGBT writers or LGBT nonfiction that contributes to the community's base of knowledge.

Any questions judging panels may have about whether a particular work meets these criteria can be addressed to the Administrator who in consultation with the Committee will respond to such questions to help guide the panels in their work.

#### 5. Nomination and Category Criteria

Individuals who wish to nominate a work for an award or who wish to know in which category a work should be nominated should consult the Awards Administrator at [kdbold@lambdaliterary.org](mailto:kdbold@lambdaliterary.org) and/or the Awards Categories guidelines. These are found at:

<http://www.lambdaliterary.org/awards-guidelines/> and

<http://www.lambdaliterary.org/awards/awards-categories/>

#### 6. Judging Process; Determination and Number of Finalists; Ties

There is no set form for the manner in which judges conduct their discussion about the nominated books, nor how they arrive at the finalists. Some panels arrive at a consensus through their discussions. Another option that has been used in the past is a point system. After discussion has narrowed the pool of nominees to a manageable number of contenders each judge assigns his or her favorite title 5 points, their next favorite 4 points, then 3, then 2, and their least favorite 1. The titles with the most points become the five finalists. Panels are free, of course, to devise other systems to narrow the field to the final five and to consult the administrator about other methods that have been used in the past.

Ties are to be avoided. If a tie emerges, panels will be asked to reconsider and to arrive at a single recipient. If that fails, the Administrator shall have the right to cast the deciding vote or, if she or he believes the tie is warranted, to approve a joint award.

#### 7. Deadlines for Finalists; Selection of Recipient

The panels must determine the finalists by March 1; the finalists will be made public within two weeks. The recipient must be chosen by or before April 10. Both the lists of finalists and the name of the recipient of the award should be submitted to the Administrator on or before those dates.

#### 8. Submissions in Electronic Format

In the future (but not this year), the Foundation would like to accept books for Lammy consideration submitted in electronic format in order to ensure they can be rapidly distributed to judges and to spare the Foundation the considerable expense of mailing them to judges located across the county. However, no book shall be ineligible for consideration because it is not available in electronic form; in that case, the author or publisher shall submit print copies to be distributed to the judges. Please answer the question at the end of these guidelines regarding your ability to read books submitted in electronic format.

- a. I have read, understand and agree to abide by the Judging Guidelines For The Lambda Literary Award
- b. I am able to commit the time and effort needed to fulfill my obligations as a Lammy judge and meet the March 1, 2013 deadline.

- c. If I am no longer able to fulfill these obligations for any reason, I will notify the Lammy Administrator immediately.
- d. Updated contact information

PRINT NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

**2012-2013 CONTACT INFORMATION:**

Name:

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Mailing/shipping address:

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E-mail:

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Phone:

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Electronic Submissions: In future years, would you be willing and able to read books submitted in PDF or other electronic formats?

YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_ COMMENTS: \_\_\_\_\_