

MISSISSIPPI INSTITUTE OF ARTS AND LETTERS
AWARDS COMMITTEE GUIDELINES
Revised September 12, 2024

1. The MIAL goal should be to nominate every deserving, eligible artist or writer. However, in doing so, MIAL should retain the requirement that only members can submit nominations. A major benefit of membership is the ability to nominate, and this serves as the major recruitment attraction of new members.
2. The Vice President should set up subcommittees of members, each with a board member as chair (category chair), for each of the major award categories: fiction, non-fiction, life writing, poetry, youth literature, visual arts, photography, and music (popular and classical). During the year these committees should make special efforts to track artist/writer activities and to contact other artistic societies, universities, etc., from which lists of potential nominees can be compiled. The subcommittees can augment nominations submitted by the membership.
3. Each year, based on budget and other considerations, the Board of Governors should decide how many awards will be given. Solicitation of nominations from members will reflect the number of categories authorized by the board for that year.
4. It should not be necessary to give an award in every category every year. Awards should reflect excellence of achievement and not be given in a category if no work merits an award.
5. Except in special cases, MIAL should strive for three or more nominations as a minimum for competition in a given field.
6. MIAL should limit eligibility to professionally published, publicly exhibited or performed works.
7. There shall be no limitation on the number of times or the frequency a former winner can subsequently win, but fresh judges should be chosen each year.
8. For purposes of IRS exemption, all judging must be done by persons outside the state, expert in the field, independent of membership in MIAL, of ties to any of the nominees, or of any expectation of being nominated for a MIAL award.
9. Category chairs should inform judges that only one winner is to be selected in each category (no co-winners) and be given a list of previous winners.
10. MIAL should continue to pay judges \$250 for evaluating works, selecting winners, and writing statements explaining why the winners were chosen; pay each winner \$1000; reimburse Noel Polk Life-Time Achievement winners for travel expenses up to \$1000; very strongly encourage winners to be present at the awards ceremony.
11. Eligibility for nomination:
 - a. Work must have been first published, publicly exhibited, or performed during the previous calendar year. Awards given in 2018 are for works presented during January-December 2017.
 - b. The author/artist must be a living Mississippian defined as having significant connection to the state. The Board of Governors adjudicates the eligibility of nominees according to these provisions.
 - c. **Only members of MIAL may nominate.** Category chairs should confirm with the Executive Secretary that only members in good standing have made nominations.

12. The Vice President is responsible for overseeing and coordinating the separate awards. He/she makes sure judges are suitable and chosen in plenty of time. He/she ensures that each category chair assembles the nominated works and gets them to the judges in a timely fashion. Money is available to pay for clerical assistance on mailings. Category chairs should keep a copy of all nominations and send another copy to the Executive Secretary. Category chair should remove the name of the person making the nomination before submitting the nomination form to the judge.
13. Category chairs will notify the winner by telephone (letter from the Vice-President will follow). Category chairs need to inform winner of awards event and cash award of \$1,000; that he/she may bring one guest for a total of two free tickets; that we will reimburse for lodging if a winner has that expense; and that extra tickets may be purchased for the event.
14. When winners have been chosen, category chairs will send their profiles, nomination forms (with winners' addresses and phone numbers) and a brief description of the judge to the Executive Secretary for the gala program and for the Master of Ceremonies.
15. The Executive Secretary will notify all non-winners by letter and category chairs should return any materials, if any, to the nominees.
16. In addition to the category awards, the Board may annually bestow a Lifetime Achievement Award. Beginning in 2013, this Award shall be named the Noel Polk Lifetime Achievement Award in memory of Dr. Noel Polk (1943-2012), co-founder of MIAL. This award shall be given only to living Mississippi-connected artists and art patrons whose body of work over a lifetime of creating, performing, and/or supporting art is truly extraordinary and worthy of special honor. Members of the Board may nominate candidates for this award in writing not later than December 15 each year, identifying activities and accomplishments in the arts that might make this award fitting for that nominee. The President may appoint a committee of Board members to evaluate nominations and make non-binding recommendations to the Board. Winners of the award shall be determined by a three-quarters (3/4) majority vote of the Board members present and voting at its January meeting. It is not required that a Lifetime Achievement award be presented each year, and ordinarily only one such award should be made each year. Absent extraordinary circumstances, the presentation of this award shall be conditioned upon the Lifetime Achievement honoree's in-person presence at the annual awards event. There is no monetary prize for this award, but the Executive Committee may approve up to \$1000 to cover the winner's actual travel expenses to attend the awards event.
17. In addition to the category awards, the Board may bestow the following special awards from time to time:
 - (a) Special Achievement Award – the Special Achievement Award may be presented to a Mississippi-connected person or group for a significant and unique literary, artistic or other creative accomplishment that merits recognition but does not fit the criteria of any of the category awards.

(b) Citation of Merit -- the Citation of Merit may be presented to Mississippi-connected institutions and organizations that (i) have a long and distinguished history of facilitating the creative achievements of artists, writers, and/or musicians and (ii) serve in an extraordinary way to make those creative works accessible to the public, in Mississippi and beyond.

(c) Ann Abadie Art in Architecture – the Art in Architecture Award recognizes architecture or landscape architecture projects in Mississippi that epitomize design and creativity in ways that deepen understanding and dialogue about Mississippi culture and identity. The intent of this award is to champion projects that not only improve and enhance tangible built and environmental landscapes, but that also foster flourishing of social and cultural landscapes. These criteria can be achieved in a variety of ways, such as through project engagement with partners, sites, or stories that interface with Mississippi humanities, historical interpretation, visual and performance art, and/or other cultural threads. Requirements/Details: Given to a discrete architecture project located in Mississippi that defined by its exceptional contributions to Mississippi culture (not a lifetime achievement award); Eligible projects must be completed/opened during the calendar year of their nomination; Not given to an individual, but to a project, which may be represented by a partnership of architects, clients, community partners, educational institutions, artists, or other design professionals; the award is not given annually, but rather, when warranted; the award evaluates a variety of qualities, as appropriate to a given project, which may include design excellence, imagination, cultural depth, community cohesion, historic preservation/interpretation, innovation and technical prowess, sustainability, environmental integrity and integration; the purpose of the MIAL award is not to replicate the awards programs of other professional bodies.

Any member of the Board may nominate a person, institution, or organization meeting the criteria for either award, furnishing the Board with such information necessary to support such an award.

Recipients of such awards shall be determined by a three-quarters (3/4) majority vote of the Board members present and voting at a regular meeting. When conferred, such awards shall be presented at the annual awards event. As these awards are reserved for extraordinary recognitions, it is not anticipated that such awards will be given on a routine or frequent basis. There shall be no monetary prize for either of these awards.

Deadlines:

September:	Category chairs secure judges (fresh judges chosen each year).
October:	The newsletter will be sent to all members with nomination forms.
December 15	Special Achievement, Citation of Merit, Ann Abadie Art in Architecture Award Nominations Deadline (Board nominated)
January 15	Category Nominations Deadline. Nominations must be postmarked on or before this date.
February 1	Category chairs remove the name of the person making the nomination and send nominations to judges. Send copy of all nominations to Executive Secretary and keep a copy.
March 15	Deadline for Judges' choices of winners due to category chairs. Category chairs notify winners and return any materials; send profiles and brief description of judges to the Executive Secretary, along with judges' comments concerning the winners. Executive Secretary will notify non-winners by letter.
June	Banquet is usually held the second Saturday of June but date and location may vary.