

## JURYING PROCESS

### GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Most jurying processes in the arts proceed on the basis of certain generally accepted principles. These include:

**Peer assessment** - juries are made up for the most part of artists or arts professionals from the same discipline and category as the applicants (writers for writers, book publishers for book publishers, and so on). Larger juries sometimes include a range of representation, and might take in jurors with related expertise such as booksellers or festival organizers for the literary arts.

**Arm's length** - the agencies or organizations holding juries are autonomous and free of government and hence political influence. Similarly, decisions on awards are made by persons outside the organization to discourage exercise of influence. (In keeping with this principle the Saskatchewan Book Awards uses jurors from outside the province and should not itself intervene in decision-making in any way.)

**Freedom from conflict of interest** - potential jurors must disclose to the organization any relationship that could compromise or appear to compromise their objectivity in dealing with a specific submission, and in award jurying processes it is general practice that a single conflict will eliminate a jurying candidate.

**Confidentiality** - Comments released by the jury for circulation to the applicant or the public excepted, jury discussions leading to decisions are confidential and protected by legislation. The Saskatchewan Book Awards is required by law to protect that information. Jurors must not reveal the results of their deliberations until those results have been made public by the Saskatchewan Book Awards.

### ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

**Jurors** have the following responsibilities:

- to read each work submitted in their category, and assess its merit according to the criteria provided by Saskatchewan Book Awards;
- to select a jury chair;
- to discuss their candidates for winner and shortlist and to arrive at a final decision by consensus or, if necessary, by vote;
- to produce comments on the shortlisted and winning titles for inclusion in the Gala programme and audio-visual presentation.

**Monitors** serve as resource people for the juries and have the following responsibilities during the jury meetings:

- to advise jurors of their responsibilities and provide guidance and direction as necessary;
- to ensure that the purpose of the jurying process is understood and duly followed;
- to provide information that the jury may request, as appropriate.

## **JURY COMPOSITION AND SELECTION**

Timing: January-April each year

Names of potential jurors are assembled by the Executive Director from:

- lists on file
- lists submitted by members of the Criteria Committee
- suggestions from the community (partner organizations, etc.)

Except in the case of one jury (Educational Publishing), all jurors are from outside the province.

Juries can be made up of:

- writers - poetry, fiction, non-fiction, scholarly, First Nations and Métis, French-language, as appropriate to the respective award category under consideration
- publishers - depending upon the award category
- teachers, professors or librarians - depending upon the award category
- bookstore owners and other book professionals, depending upon the award category

## **PRELIMINARY REVIEW PROCESS**

When jurors have agreed to serve, each one shall receive a letter of confirmation indicating general conditions and guidelines (payment, timeline, confidentiality, conflict of interest, names of fellow jury members).

After the first submission deadline (July 31), Saskatchewan Book Awards Criteria Committee volunteers shall review each submission to ensure that it complies with the stated Saskatchewan Book Awards criteria, and the Executive Director shall send each juror a package consisting of the titles submitted to date for each category, along with:

- the criteria for the particular award;
- conflict of interest and confidentiality policy and declaration form;
- instructions about how the jury process will then proceed, i.e., teleconference, election or appointment of a jury chair, and how each juror will submit their comments to Saskatchewan Book Awards.

After the second submission deadline (September 15):

- jurors will receive the balance of the works for their category;
- having reviewed the works submitted, they will assess the potential for actual or perceived conflict of interest and follow the procedure indicated by the Saskatchewan Book Awards;
- they will receive names and contact information of the other jurors in their category and choose a chair;
- the jury chairperson will then arrange a teleconference, with or without the assistance of an Saskatchewan Book Awards volunteer or staff;
- each juror will read the works individually and will select a proposed shortlist of no more than six titles; and may select a winning title at this time. Jurors may discuss the books with each other prior to the teleconference.

## **MONITOR SELECTION**

Timing: January to April each year

Names of potential monitors are proposed by the Criteria Committee from:

- the Criteria Committee membership
- the Saskatchewan Book Awards board
- staff of founding associations (SPG, SLA, SWG)
- other qualified persons

The Criteria Committee selects appropriate monitors from among the assembled names based upon:

- appropriateness of background and knowledge
- experience in jury moderation
- availability

Monitors are required to follow the conflict of interest procedure.

## **JURY MEETING**

The jury meeting is held by teleconference and can be organized by the jury members themselves, the volunteer monitor, or the Saskatchewan Book Awards staff. Organizing a jury teleconference involves choosing a date and time for the conference call, setting up the conference call with the teleconference service provider, and ensuring that jurors have the information required to participate in the call. The monitor may or may not be “present” in the teleconference – s/he can leave the teleconference and check in later at a predetermined time (as is the case in the Alberta Book Awards), or s/he may listen in, without comment, to the jury deliberations (as is the case in the Manitoba Book Awards, the Atlantic Book Awards, and other jury processes).

### **During the meeting:**

Jurors have the following responsibilities:

- to select a chair and follow the conflict of interest procedure.
- to discuss their candidates for winner and shortlist and to arrive at a final decision by consensus or, if necessary, by vote.
- to produce comments on the different titles either by assigning them to different jury members for submission no later than three days following the meeting or by collaborating to produce and submit to the monitor before the close of the teleconference.

Jury chairs have the following responsibilities:

- to ensure that each work in the competition for that category receives due consideration;
- to ensure that category criteria are duly applied;
- to ensure that jurors participate equally in the discussion.

Monitors serve as resource persons for juries and have the following responsibilities:

- prior to commencing deliberations, to determine whether each jury member has declared freedom from conflict of interest in writing to the Saskatchewan Book Awards office, and, if they have not, to record their verbal declaration.
- to reiterate the criteria for the category;
- to answer procedural questions about the jury process.
- to ensure that the purpose of the program is understood and the proper process is followed.
- to provide information which the jury may request, as available.

Monitors *do not* in any way influence or direct the jury's deliberations, except to answer procedural questions that may arise.

#### **At the conclusion of the meeting**

The monitor resumes participation in the teleconference:

- to ensure that there is unanimity regarding decisions on the winner and shortlist.
- to thank the jurors for their contribution and remind them of the need for confidentiality.
- to record the decisions of the jury for presentation to the Executive Director.
- to record the jury's comments for presentation to the Executive Director, if comments are produced at the teleconference.
- to answer questions and provide information about press conferences, dates, and the Gala.

#### **Following the Meeting**

The monitor oversees submission of the comments to ensure that all are received in good time.