

Administrative Committee Report: Committee on Medals and Awards

Brenda L. Lonsbury-Martin

The Committee on Medals and Awards is charged with recommending to the Executive Council candidates and citations for the awards of the Society, with the exception of the ASA Science Communication Awards and certain other awards as may, from time to time, be assigned by the Executive Council to the Committee on Prizes and Special Fellowships. The recipients of each of these awards and the award citations shall be determined by the Executive Council. The Committee is further charged with recommending to the Executive Council nominees and citations for the A.B. Wood Medal, and where appropriate for awards by other organizations, and with forwarding information on non-Society awards to the appropriate Technical Committee Chairs for possible action or advice.

The Committee on Medals and Awards, unofficially known as the MAC, is a standing committee of the Acoustical Society of America (ASA). The MAC is composed of a chair and as many other members as there are Technical Committees (TCs) of the Society, all of whom are ASA Fellows. The current membership consists of 13 members and the chair (who does not represent a TC). The terms of the chair and MAC members are limited as noted on the ASA website (see acousticalsociety.org/procedures#awards). It is important to appreciate that these positions are not appointed forever and turn over regularly. The chair's major responsibilities are coordinating MAC activities; making certain that all work is completed on time and in good order; communicating with ASA Melville Office, which provides support to the Committee's work; and reporting the Committee's recommendations to the Executive Council (EC).

Each regular member of the Committee is an ex officio member of the TC represented by its member. MAC members have two important roles in that they are responsible for representing their own fields by suggesting candidates for awards and for assisting TC subcommittees in preparing nomination dossiers.

However, when voting, MAC members are responsible for reviewing all nominations and supporting the best candidates regardless of the technical field involved. Additional responsibilities are that members are expected to attend both Spring and Fall ASA meetings and to spend a significant amount of time related to the nomination and dossier preparations of their TC.

Annually, the Society recognizes outstanding achievements in acoustics with several honors, which are reviewed on ASA website (see bit.ly/3m1eK1e). Here are noted details concerning the purpose of each award or honor, the eligibility requirements, and a record of prior recipients. The presentations of these awards are divided between meetings so that at the Fall meetings, nominations for the Gold Medal, the R. Bruce Lindsay Award, and the Helmholtz-Rayleigh Interdisciplinary Silver Medal are reviewed. The last medal is a cross-specialty award that requires each nomination be supported by two or more TCs. Nominations for the Technical Area Awards, including named awards and Silver Medals, are evaluated at the Spring meetings.

The Technical Area Awards recognize individuals, who can be nonmembers, for their contributions to the advancement of science, engineering, or human welfare through the application of acoustic principles or through research accomplishments in acoustics. The eligibility of a TC to award a Silver Medal is determined each year based on the size of the TC, represented by the number of ASA members who choose the TC as their primary interest in acoustics.

Furthermore, the MAC reviews other nominations for ASA awards, including the Distinguished Service Citation that is awarded to a present or former member of the Society in recognition of outstanding service to the ASA and the Honorary Fellowship for a member or nonmember who has attained eminence in acoustics or who has rendered outstanding service to acoustics. The MAC also recommends

COMMITTEE ON MEDALS AND AWARDS

US or Canadian ASA nominees, whose work is associated with the sea, for the United Kingdom Institute of Acoustics (IOA) A. B. Wood Medal, which is awarded for “distinguished contributions to the application of underwater acoustics.” Occasionally, the MAC recommends the preparation of nominations for other non-ASA awards such as the US President’s National Medal of Science.

Nominating procedures vary for different awards. For some honors such as the Gold Medal, R. Bruce Lindsay Award, and A. B. Wood Medal, MAC members have the sole responsibility for generating lists of candidates. In contrast, nominees for the Technical Area Awards are proposed by the pertinent TCS, many of which have appointed subcommittees to assume responsibility for this task. For the Distinguished Service Citation and the Honorary Fellowship, any member or Fellow of the Society may nominate candidates on forms available from the ASA Melville Office (see asa@acousticalsociety.org). A guideline for preparing the forms and documents for nominating and seconding letters for any award of the Society, along with deadlines, is available from the ASA Melville Office.

ASA members who are interested in suggesting candidates for any Society award should contact the chair or the appropriate member of the MAC for information on how to prepare and submit their recommendations. It is important that specific guidelines be followed because dossiers are the bases on which the MAC conducts its voting. If all the dossiers are arranged similarly and address similar topics, fair and equal treatment of all the candidates is facilitated. Voting on nominees, which is conducted in secret, utilizes a ranking procedure, and this ranking of candidates is reported to the EC, which typically bestows an award on the candidate who received the top ranking by the Committee. Although voting deliberations can be intense, they are always interesting and scholarly. Hopefully, the information presented here on MAC operations and procedures will encourage ASA members to seek out relevant information that will assist them in nominating their deserving colleagues for the many awards and honors of the Society.

One only needs to examine the list of ASA award recipients to appreciate the important contributions made by acousticians to humanity (see bit.ly/3m1eK1e). The early awardees included pioneers from every area of acoustics. These were followed by acoustical scientists and practitioners who crafted the acoustics of some of

the world’s outstanding concert halls, contributed to the development of cochlear implants, devices, and methods for the treatment of tumors and diseases, devised a microphone that is a component in cell phones and other devices, and made significant advancements in virtually every area in the acoustics field. It is easy to understand why MAC members have consistently expressed the sentiment that they find their service in identifying individuals who are deserving of the Society’s medals and awards personally gratifying.

Contact Information

Brenda L. Lonsbury-Martin

brenda.lonsbury-martin@va.gov

blonsbury-martin@llu.edu

Research Service (151)

VA Loma Linda Healthcare System

11201 Benton Street

Loma Linda, California 92357, USA

Department of Otolaryngology – Head & Neck Surgery

Loma Linda University Health

11234 Anderson Street

Loma Linda, California 92350, USA

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