

## READING HALL OF FAME

The Reading Hall of Fame, an international organization begun in 1973, honors leaders, past and present, who over time have made important contributions in the area of reading. Though independent, its activities are closely associated with the International Reading Association.

In 1973, Russell N. Cassell, then editor of the journal Reading Improvement, asked four well-known leaders in the area of reading to start what was called Project Innovation's "Reading Hall of Fame." These leaders were Helen M. Robinson, Emmett A. Betts, Donald D. Durrell, and Nila Banton Smith. Robinson served as chair of the group for the first three years. The loose relationship with Reading Improvement ended in 1977, and reference to "Project Innovation" was dropped. (Robinson, 1999)

The purpose of the Reading Hall of Fame, according to its by-laws, is to use members' experiences to improve reading instruction by means of contributions through:

- ...cosponsoring sessions at meetings of organizations with similar objectives;
- ...further disseminating important ideas and information from such meetings through publications;
- ...focusing attention on needed research and past trends that appear to have significance for the future; and
- ...discussing current reading problems needing attention and offering possible ways of solving them. (Reading Hall of Fame, 1999)

The Reading Hall of Fame by-laws provide for three types of membership: Member, Honorary Member, and Reading Pioneer. Criteria for election as a Member include significant contributions in the reading area, involvement in reading for at least 25 years, being well known and respected in the profession, and being alive at the time of nomination. After the death of Members, their names are retained on the membership roster as Deceased Members. (Reading Hall of Fame, 1999)



Honorary Members, required to meet the same professional criteria as Members, must have been deceased for three or more years prior to election. Reading Pioneers are 15 outstanding leaders of the past who were no longer living in 1973 at the time of the beginning of the Reading Hall of Fame. They were elected to membership as a group in 1985. These 15 pioneers are May Hill Arbuthnot, James McKeen Cattell, Walter F. Dearborn, Raymond Dodge, Arthur I. Gates, William S. Gray, Ernest Horn, Edmund Burke Huey, Charles Hubbard Judd, Bernice E. Leary, David H. Russell, Ruth Strang, Edward L. Thorndike, Douglas Waples, and Robert S. Woodworth. (Reading Hall of Fame, 1999; Reading Hall of Fame, 1985) Reading Pioneers are sometimes listed as Honorary Members with no reference to their special status.

Only Members of the organization may nominate and elect Members and Honorary Members. New Members are usually limited to three or four each year. The by-laws place a limit of not more than two Honorary Members to be added each year. (Reading Hall of Fame, 1999)

The 2000 membership list includes 78 Members, 36 Deceased Members, and 23 Honorary Members, including the 15 Reading Pioneers. (International Reading Association, 2000) These 137 leaders come from 15 different countries: Australia, Austria, Brazil, Canada, Denmark, England, Germany, Ireland, Israel, Japan, Mexico, New Zealand, Russia, Sweden, and the United States.

The Reading Hall of Fame and the International Reading Association have overlapping membership and activities. Twenty-eight of the International Reading Association's 46 presidents (through the year 2000) and four of its Executive Directors are listed among the members of the organization. More than 20 other members have served on the Board of Directors of the International Reading Association. The Reading Hall of Fame's annual business meeting and a cosponsored meeting of presentations by recently elected and other Members are held during the International Reading Association's annual convention.



REFERENCES

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