

The vita for this member of the Reading Hall of Fame, who is now deceased, was submitted to the then office of the Reading Hall of Fame housed in the headquarters of the International Reading Association while this individual was still active in our profession. Hence, the vita may not include a complete delineation of the individual's professional contributions across a lifespan. The vita is simply what was available for uploading as of the summer of 2018. Still, it provides current and future scholars with a valuable primary source on the professional endeavors undertaken by this respective member of the Reading Hall of Fame.

## VITA

Ralph C. Staiger

701 Dallam Road

Newark, Delaware 19711, U.S.A.

Dr. Staiger is Executive Director Emeritus of the International Reading Association, and served that professional society from 1962 to 1984, during its period of greatest growth. He was adjunct professor of education at the University of Delaware until his retirement in 1984.

Staiger was born in New York City in 1917, and attended that city's public schools. He received his bachelor's degree from Columbia College in 1939 and his master's degree from Teachers College in 1942. He earned a doctorate in the Psychology of Reading from Temple University in 1952.

He began his career in education as a teacher in the Quinwood, West Virginia schools, and in 1943 became supervising principal in Portland, Pennsylvania. From 1949 to 1952 he was reading consultant for the Utica, New York school system; from there he went to the University of Southern Mississippi as professor of psychology and director of the reading clinic. He also taught in summer programs at Cornell, Rutgers and Syracuse Universities and in the U.S. Indian Service in Carson Agency, Nevada.



When he became the chief administrative officer of the International Reading Association in 1962, the Association had 12,000 members and 296 councils throughout the world. By 1984, there were 80,000 members and more than 1150 councils in 85 nations. The Association's interest in improving literacy takes many shapes, but is typified by its sponsorship of the \$5,000 International Reading Association Literacy Award, a prize initiated by Staiger and presented annually by Unesco to honor meritorious work in promoting literacy internationally. The Association's activities are accomplished primarily through its membership. Local, state, regional, national and international meetings promote improved reading instruction at all levels.

Staiger served as consultant to the United States Department of Education, as a member of the Executive Committee of the U.S. National Commission for Unesco and on the advisory committee of the Library of Congress Center for the Book.

He was elected to the Reading Hall of Fame, and served as treasurer of that group. A member of the International Book Committee, in 1980 he was elected chairman. In 1990 he was made an Honorary Life Member of the Committee. He was also given the Indiana University Literacy Award in 1984.

He was a past president of the National Conference on Research in English, and the author of more than eighty publications on reading, including *Roads to Reading*,

published by UNESCO, which was translated into French, Spanish, Arabic, Thai, Korean, and Urdu.

After his retirement from the International Reading Association, Staiger was elected president of the United States Board on Books for Young People (USBY), and served as Organizing Chair for the first congress of the International Board on Books for Young People to be held in North America, in Williamsburg, Virginia. In 1991 he was made an Honorary Life Member of the U.S.B.B.Y



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