

**AWARDS PRESENTED BY THE INTERNATIONAL ARTHURIAN
SOCIETY, NORTH AMERICAN BRANCH
(updated January 2024)**

I. The James Randall Leader Essay Prize

The James Randall Leader Prize has been awarded by the branch since 1996. The prize, as announced by Bonnie Wheeler in the Editor's Report for *Arthuriana* 7.3 (1997), was enabled by Pamela Leader and "commemorates the brilliant, brief life of Pam's brother (1961-93)." The Leader Prize is awarded annually to the best article published in a given year on any topic in Arthurian studies. Although initially restricted to articles in *Arthuriana*, the prize has for several years been open to any article in any journal provided the author is a member of the IAS. The prize is adjudicated by a committee comprised of the previous three years' winners, and awarded at the annual branch business meeting.

II. The James Randall Leader Essay Prize in the 'Fair Well-Known' Category

This award was introduced in 2020. The same criteria apply as with the "regular" Leader Prize, but this category is for retired scholars who are still active researchers.

III. The Norris J. Lacy Prize for Outstanding Editorial Achievement in Arthurian Studies

The Norris J. Lacy Award, which is presented by the Executive of the International Arthurian Society-North American Branch every one to three years, is designed to recognize and reward distinction in editing. Such editing might be of primary texts, but also of collections of scholarly material; sometimes the winner has been notable for both types of editing.

IV. The Fair Unknown Award for best paper on an Arthurian topic presented by a graduate student at the International Medieval Congress in Kalamazoo

This award has been awarded since 2014. Graduate students submit their conference papers to the *Arthuriana* editorial team without changes. Entries will be judged on their originality, the strength of their arguments, their potential to intervene in Arthurian studies, and the quality of writing, with no preference for the language or period of their subject. The editorial team works with the winner on revising the paper into an article, which is published in *Arthuriana*.

V. Dhira B. Mahoney Prize for Outstanding Scholarly Book in Arthurian Studies (updated June 2024)

Beginning in 2022, thanks to a generous bequest from the estate of Professor Dhira B. Maloney, an outstanding Arthurian scholar and beloved mentor and teacher, and to a matching subvention from the Editorial Board of *Arthuriana*, the IAS-NAB has awarded a cash prize for an outstanding book-length publication in Arthurian studies. The prize is called the Dhira B. Mahoney Prize for Outstanding Scholarly Book in Arthurian Studies. Publications that appear in the calendar year prior to the awarding of the prize (e.g. 2025 for the prize awarded in 2026) are eligible for consideration. The chair of the selection committee issues a call for nominations in the late fall. Branch members whose memberships are current can suggest titles to the chair, and self-nominations by current members are also allowed. Any book-length Arthurian study reviewed in *Arthuriana* in the prior calendar year will also be automatically considered for the award. Further details about the award are provided below.

The prize is presented annually in the late Spring or Summer, for example, at the Kalamazoo IAS-NAB business meeting, during the Symposium for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, at the triennial IAS

congress, or during an online awards ceremony.

Strong preference in awarding the prize is given to books whose focus is primarily on Arthurian texts rather than, for example, to those that use Arthurian materials simply to inform discussion of another topic. In selecting books for the prize, the chair in consultation with their committee may also choose to focus on books that they feel will have a potential impact among the members of our branch, or they may—at their discretion—choose to cast their net more widely and consider books based more greatly on scholarly merit than just potential impact. The committee will give highest preference to monographs, but the committee may at their discretion also consider other books (see next paragraph).

In years in which there are few books of sufficiently high scholarly quality, the chair of the prize committee, in consultation with its members, may decide not to award the prize. Or the chair, in consultation with the committee, may at their discretion consider not just monographs but also scholarly translations of Arthurian texts (especially into languages that our branch members consult in their scholarship) and critical editions. Edited collections are, however, always excluded from consideration.

Book-length publications by IAS-NAB members and non-members are eligible to be nominated for the prize, but in order to receive the prize, the winner must be(come) a member of a branch of the IAS. Additionally, in the case of books of equal scholarly quality being considered for the prize, books by IAS-NAB members will be given preference over books by authors who are not members of the branch.

The prize consists of a printed citation, which will also be published in *Arthuriana*, and a check for \$400.00, with \$200.00 coming from Dhira B. Mahoney's bequest and \$200.00 from *Arthuriana*.

Regarding books of merit that the committee considers but which do not receive the prize, the committee may at their discretion choose to recognize them also at the annual awards ceremony and may as well, for example, send a letter commending the book's excellence to the author's dean, department chair, and/or publisher.

The prize committee consists of the book review editor for Medieval Literature and the book review editor for Post-Medieval Studies from *Arthuriana*, and the Advisory Committee members of the branch EAC, who will annually in Summer (usually in July, August, or September) elect one of their members to serve as chair for next year's award. The outgoing chair supervises, and participates in (i.e. votes in) the election of the incoming chair. After the presentation of the award and the election of the incoming chair, the official chair duties of the outgoing chair are over. (Recipients of the award are not obligated to serve as committee members in the year/s following their receipt of the award.)

The prize winner will be notified by the branch president not later than one month before the presentation of the prize both that they will receive a major prize from the branch and where and when the prize will be presented. The chair of the prize committee or their delegate will present the prize and read the committee's citation.

After presentation of the prize, the committee chair should submit to the branch president suggested updates to these award criteria and to the committee's production calendar (see below) to reflect any necessary or recommended changes. The incoming committee should work according to the updated award criteria, even though the changes will likely not be ratified officially by the EAC until the annual EAC meeting in May.

Because of the variety of Arthurian publications, the radically differing and unforeseeable vagaries of the academic book publishing industry, and the unpredictable volume from year to year of Arthurian publications (which impacts how many books of each type and from where the committee can reasonably evaluate in a given year), the criteria listed here are intended as guidelines and are not hard-and-fast rules. Indeed, since the intent of the award is to recognize excellence, the chair in consultation with their committee may use their discretion to interpret and slightly modify the criteria suggested here to achieve that larger goal of celebrating excellence. In cases where the committee senses that its interpretation of the criteria are especially wide-reaching, the chair should contact the branch president and seek the advice and approval of the EAC.

Details and information about the prize, along with a list of past winners, will appear on the IAS-NAB website.

VI. The Grail Award

The Grail Award is a lifetime service award created by the International Arthurian Society-North American Branch. Because it is a lifetime service award, it is only given rarely; when it is awarded, it is given by the NAB Executive to recognize and celebrate a senior scholar's outstanding generosity and influence in shaping Arthurian Studies as well as that member's service to the branch and mentorship of rising members. This award is given at the discretion of the Executive in celebration of, and thanks for, such distinctive scholarly achievement and extraordinary service and mentorship.