



Illinois Library Association

# So You Want to Nominate an Illinois Library Luminary?

## Luminary Champion Manual

*Updated July 12, 2023*

Thinking of nominating an Illinois Library Luminary? Thank you for considering honoring your colleagues and supporting Illinois librarianship in this manner! This manual is designed to support Illinois librarians in nominating potential Luminaries and championing the fundraising campaigns.

For more information, please visit the ILA website at [www.ila.org/support-ila/illinois-library-luminaries](http://www.ila.org/support-ila/illinois-library-luminaries) or contact ILA at [ila@ila.org](mailto:ila@ila.org).

## **About the Illinois Library Luminary Program**

Illinois Library Luminaries honor those who have made a significant contribution to Illinois libraries and whose supporters make donations of at least \$2,000 in a one-year period to the Illinois Library Association Endowment on their behalf.

This honor roll for Illinois libraries serves the dual purpose of recognizing outstanding voices in the library community, while creating a legacy through the ILA Endowment to continue their important work.

### **First: Who Can Become an Illinois Library Luminary?**

Luminary candidates must have made a significant contribution to Illinois libraries. Nominees can be living or deceased.

- This honor is open to anyone who meets the above criteria. They don't have to be directors, managers, or others in traditional library leadership roles. The person who did your weekly storytime, or who greeted patrons with a smile at the circulation desk for 25 years could make great candidates.
- In fact, candidates do not need to have been a librarian or library staff at all! Did your mayor work to provide funding for a new building? Did a library advocate make a big difference in your community? Did someone plow your parking lot for free year after year after year?

### **Second: How to Nominate an Illinois Library Luminary**

You will need to submit a letter of nomination to the ILA Executive Board. This 200-word maximum letter should include a bio outlining key accomplishments (positions held, honors received) dates of birth and death (if applicable), and a photo.

The ILA Executive Board meets five times per year and must vote to approve Luminary nominations before the fundraising campaign begins. Meeting dates are listed on the ILA website at [www.ila.org/events/calendar](http://www.ila.org/events/calendar). You do not need to appear at the board meeting.

Submit your letter to [ila@ila.org](mailto:ila@ila.org) and copy the current chair of the ILA Fundraising Committee; find contact information on the ILA website at [www.ila.org/about/committees](http://www.ila.org/about/committees).

Following the meeting, ILA staff will notify you and the Fundraising Committee chair.

### **Third: The Fundraising Campaign**

It is the nominator's/champion's responsibility to lead efforts to raise \$2,000 within one year. That may seem daunting, but you'll be surprised how readily people will support your cause! We've included sample solicitation letters to get you started.

Nominations and campaigns that are not posthumous are typically confidential. This is to avoid embarrassment if the campaign is not successful. If you feel there is a reason to seek the nominee's permission or otherwise notify them, you may, but you do not have to. Next:

- Create a list of potential donors. 40 people giving \$50 reaches the goal. Use the "Circles of Fundraising" concept to identify audiences. Build a big list—the more the merrier. The worst they can say is "no."
- Ask for a specific amount. Any donation is welcome, but people appreciate the guidance. We use \$50 as a start, but you might feel your audience is more open to \$25 or \$100. It's up to you; you can even vary the amount depending on whom you're asking.
- Start your outreach! Direct donors to the ILA website at [www.ila.org/support-ila](http://www.ila.org/support-ila) for online donations, or to mail a check made out to "Illinois Library Association Endowment" to Illinois Library Luminaries, ILA, 560 W. Washington Blvd., Ste. 330, Chicago, IL 60661.

ILA staff tracks donations and will report donor names and the cumulative amount to you and the Fundraising Committee chair at least once a month and when the threshold has been met.

The ILA Executive Director sends a thank you note with tax benefit information to donors.

If after the one-year time period the full \$2,000 is not raised, funds collected to that point will be deposited in the ILA Endowment Fund.

### **Fourth: Induction**

The candidate is inducted once \$2,000 has been raised on their behalf in a one-year time period. Similar to the nomination process, the ILA Executive Board will vote to induct successful Luminaries.

ILA staff will notify you and the Fundraising Committee chair following the vote and you can decide who will give the Luminary the good news!

ILA staff will send the "nuts and bolts" information to the Luminary regarding the annual awards ceremony, where and when the Luminary will be announced and promoted, etc. Once the successful campaign is complete, please remember to send each donor a thank-you note.

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## **SAMPLE NOMINATION LETTER #1**

Dear ILA Executive Board:

It is my honor to nominate Valerie J. Wilford as an Illinois Library Luminary. Valerie embodies the spirit of this award and merits consideration. She retired as executive director of the Alliance Library System after a 40-year career improving libraries and librarianship in Illinois. She was a colleague, instructor, and mentor to hundreds of librarians.

Valerie was president of ILA in 1984 and Librarian of the Year in 1992. Other honors include the following:

- Hugh Atkinson Award from ILA for her contributions to multi-type library cooperation and resource-sharing.
- Margaret E. Monroe Award in 1995 administered by the Reference Adult Services Division of ALA for her contributions to library adult services. Wilford was recognized for her publications, leadership, influence on others, and creative and innovative concepts. She spearheaded the first national virtual conference for the American Association of School Libraries, allowing access through the internet, and developed a FREENET for rural libraries.
- Leadership Achievement Award in 2004 presented by the Association of Specialized and Cooperative Library Agencies (ASCLA) in recognition of Wilford's success at setting new standards in cooperation among all types of libraries and for developing a new model of system operations. She was honored for her exceptional work, creativity and enterprise.

Wilford is a member of the American Library Association, the Association of Specialized and Cooperative Library Agencies, the Illinois Library Association, the American Association of School Librarians, and the Illinois School Library and Media Association. She was also a member of the Illinois Library System Directors Organization.

Wilford has a bachelor's degree in education from Illinois State University and a master's degree in library science from the University of Illinois. She has done post-master's degree work at the University of Minnesota, participated in a doctoral Internship in continuing education from Northwestern and performed doctoral work in post-secondary curriculum and instruction at Illinois State University.

Valerie Wilford's career spans administration, teaching, professional writing and library development. When former students and colleagues were asked to donate to the ILA Endowment Fund in Valerie's honor, a librarian wrote that she wanted to honor "a wonderful librarian, teacher and boss." Thank you for considering Valerie J. Wilford as an ILA Library Luminary.

Sincerely,

Pam Van Kirk

## **SAMPLE NOMINATION LETTER #2**

Dear ILA Executive Board:

It is my honor to nominate Richard Shurman as an Illinois Library Luminary. Richard embodies the spirit of this award and merits consideration. He retired as Administrator of Cooperative Computer Services in June 2015 after 26 years of leadership.

Richard received a BA in Anthropology from the University of Chicago and earned an Illinois State Library scholarship to obtain his MLS from the University of Washington in Seattle. Richard returned to Illinois and spent the first thirteen years of his career with the DuPage Library System where he worked to develop their first DLS consortium

During his tenure, CCS has grown into a consortium of 24 public libraries with a combined 650,000 cardholders, 1.1 million titles and 5.6 million item records. Richard achieved all this through building consensus among members with considerable differences in budget, population, geographic location, or governmental structure. Large city libraries like Evanston and Des Plaines work together with small district libraries such as Lincolnwood and Prospect Heights. North Shore libraries in Wilmette and Lake Forest found common ground with western exurb libraries in Crystal Lake and Huntley.

To say the task is akin to herding kittens is only slight hyperbole. Each library has a unique constituency, unique board of trustees, and unique sets of priorities. Richard did a tremendous job of ensuring every viewpoint had the opportunity to be heard and providing each member with unbiased information to allow them to reach their decision.

Richard has been a member of ILA, ALA, and PLA and other professional organizations and committees his entire career. He has presented at many conferences, conventions, workshops and other professional programs, sharing his expertise on consortia with eager audiences.

Richard Shurman has long been a leader in Illinois libraries. His dedication to promoting cooperation and sharing among libraries helped CCS become one of the most successful consortia in the state, if not the nation. He would be a worthy addition to the roster of Illinois Library Luminaries.

Sincerely,

Alexander C. Todd Executive Director  
Prospect Heights Public Library

## SAMPLE SOLICITATION LETTER #1

Dear [person's name],

The Illinois Library Luminaries program, sponsored by the Illinois Library Association, honors those who have made a significant contribution to Illinois libraries and whose supporters make a contribution of at least \$1,000 **[Note: it's currently \$2,000, increased since the time this letter was written]** to the Illinois Library Association Endowment on their behalf. As committee members of the Illinois Library Association, we have seen what an honor this award is and what an illustrious group of librarians have been selected. To see the current luminaries, visit the ILA website at [www.ila.org](http://www.ila.org), Support ILA—Illinois Library Luminaries.

We immediately thought of the leadership provided by Lee Logan and were surprised that he is not yet been named part of this esteemed group. He embodies the spirit of this honor and has been nominated by John Sayers, Director of Kewanee Public Library District to receive it. However, contributions for his nomination are still needed.

Lee Logan started serving the library community in 1974 and retired in 2010 after a decades-long career advancing and assisting libraries in Illinois. (We've included more details about his contributions to librarianship below.) Perhaps he was a colleague, mentor, or friend to you. To honor Lee as an Illinois Library Luminary and to recognize his years of leadership for libraries in Illinois, we are launching *Thirty-Six Friends for Thirty-Six Years*. We are asking 36 people to each donate \$25.00 to the ILA Endowment on behalf of Lee. Any donation will be accepted, but total contributions for Lee's nomination must meet the minimum of \$1000 in order for Luminary status. Of course, we would like to keep this effort a secret from Lee until the goal is reached.

To donate by check, please make it payable to "Illinois Library Association Endowment" with a note of "Lee Logan, Library Luminary" in the memo line. Checks may be sent to Illinois Library Association, 560 W. Washington Blvd., Ste. 330, Chicago, IL 60661.

To donate by credit card online, visit the ILA website at [www.ila.org](http://www.ila.org) and select "Support ILA." Please be sure to select "Illinois Library Luminaries" for *Fund Name* and to list "Lee Logan, Library Luminary" for *Dedication or Additional Information*.

Also, if you are willing, please share this information with friends and colleagues who knew and/or were positively impacted by Lee.

Thank you for your consideration. Sincerely,

Pam Van Kirk and Genna Buhr

## SAMPLE SOLICITATION LETTER #2

Dear [person's name]:

The Illinois Library Luminaries program, sponsored by the Illinois Library Association, honors those who have made a significant contribution to Illinois libraries and whose supporters make a contribution of at least \$1,000 **[Note: it's currently \$2,000, increased since the time this letter was written]** to the Illinois Library Association Endowment on their behalf. This is one of the foremost awards in Illinois libraries and it is comprised of an incredibly illustrious group of librarians.

My father, Alex W. Todd Jr. deserves to be among that group, and I am leading the campaign to raise the required funds. Alex spent the vast majority of his library career serving as Fountaindale's Executive Director from 1974-97. During the late 1970s and early 1980s, he traveled Illinois to speak to library boards and encouraging the formation of library districts. He co-wrote "Standards for the Public Library" section of the first edition of the *Trustee Facts File*, which has since become a volume issued to every trustee in the state. His work gained him recognition as the Illinois Library Association's Librarian of the Year in 1986. After his retirement from Fountaindale, he worked with many other libraries as a policy consultant and/or interim director.

I am asking you to donate \$50 towards Alex W. Todd's campaign to become an Illinois Library Luminary.

Checks should be made payable to the **Illinois Library Association Endowment** with **Alex Todd Luminary** in the memo field and mailed to:

Illinois Library Association  
560 W. Washington Blvd.,  
Ste. 330  
Chicago, IL 60661

Donations can be made online at [www.ila.org/support-ila](http://www.ila.org/support-ila). Please make sure you enter your amount in the "Illinois Library Luminaries" box and type **Alex Todd Luminary** in the note field. This recognition is my family's Christmas gift for Alex. We would appreciate keeping the campaign a secret until it becomes official for both.

Thank you for your consideration. Sincerely,

Alex C. Todd  
Executive Director  
Prospect Heights Public Library District

## **SAMPLE THANK-YOU NOTE**

Dear **[donor name]**:

We did it! With your help, we succeeded in raising enough donations to the ILA Endowment in honor of **[Luminary name]** to secure **[his/her/their]** status as an Illinois Library Luminary!

This honor roll for Illinois libraries serves the dual purpose of recognizing outstanding voices in the library community, while creating a legacy through the ILA endowment to continue their important work. To be eligible to become an Illinois Library Luminary, candidates must have made a significant contribution to Illinois libraries. Clearly, **[Luminary name]** exemplifies this criterion and we have been so gratified by support for this campaign from across the state.

Thank you so much for enabling **[Luminary name]** to be inducted as an Illinois Library Luminary.

Sincerely,

**[Champion name/s]**