

# American Camp Association National Awards Criteria



In 1965, the ACA National Board of Directors established a means of paying tribute to those who make an extraordinary contribution to the advancement of the camp movement in the United States and who have played an important role in creating today's association. In 1991 the board updated all award criteria. Six recognition awards are currently presented at our national conference each year: the Distinguished Service Award, the Hedley S. Dimock Award, The Jack Weiner Award (approved in 2002), the National Honor Award, the Service Award, and the Special Recognition Award. Another national award, the Eleanor Eells Award that honors outstanding programs, is also presented at that time.

## Nomination and Awards Procedures

1. All members of the association have the right to nominate people for ACA recognition awards.
2. To insure sufficient candidates, responsibility for nominations is held by the field/affiliate office presidents, field/affiliate office nominations chairs, and the national board of directors. Promotion of the awards and requests for nominations from all members will be done through Camping Magazine, ACA Now, ACA Leadership, and field/affiliate office newsletters, as appropriate.
3. **Deadline for ALL nominations is October 26th of each year.** None will be accepted after this date. Nominations should be completed online via the online nomination form or mailed/faxed to:

Awards Committee Chair  
American Camp Association  
5000 State Road 67 North  
Martinsville, IN 46151-7902  
fax 765-349-0301

## AWARDS NOMINATION ELIGIBILITY AND CRITERIA

### **DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD**

The Distinguished Service Award is the highest honor afforded to members by the American Camp Association. Only one award may be given annually unless the committee agrees no candidate is available for that year. To qualify for nomination, the candidate must:

1. Be known for his/her outstanding service in the field. It should be easily recognized that no other award would do justice to the magnitude of the contribution of this nominee.
2. Exemplify the best in service, research, teaching or administration, plus noteworthy leadership within ACA.
3. Be over forty years of age.
4. Have been a member of the American Camp Association for a minimum of ten years.

### **HEDLEY S. DIMOCK AWARD**

The Hedley S. Dimock Award is given to persons who have made significant contributions to camping through related fields. No more than two awards may be given annually, and the committee may agree no candidates are available for that year. Membership in ACA is not a requirement. To qualify for nomination, a candidate must offer significant contributions to camp through related fields such as outdoor education, conservation, recreation, medicine, education, architecture, or the social sciences. Contributions or relationships can be

administrative, legislative, professional, or have specific participation in local, state, or national program development.

### **SPECIAL RECOGNITION AWARD**

The Special Recognition Award is designed to honor groups, organizations, or individuals for their efforts to promote camp. No more than five awards may be given annually. The committee may agree no candidates are available for that year. To qualify for nomination, candidates must have demonstrated efforts that have significance on a national level and do not fall into any other award categories.

**WE MAKE A LIVING  
BY WHAT WE GET.**

**WE MAKE A LIFE  
BY WHAT WE GIVE.**

*-Winston Churchill*



# National Awards Criteria



## NATIONAL HONOR AWARD

The National Honor Award is designed to recognize meritorious service. No more than three awards may be given annually, and the committee may agree no candidates are available for that year. To qualify for nomination, a candidate must:

1. Be a current member of the association or former member who has retired from active participation in the field.
2. Have served in camp programs for a period of at least ten years.
3. Have high moral character, personal integrity, and exemplify a spirit of devoted service to the field.
4. Have made a noteworthy contribution to the advancement of camp through leadership and industry.
5. Have leadership and meritorious service that can be documented in at least four of the following areas:
  - President or Chair of an ACA field/affiliate office.
  - Chair or member of a national ACA committee or Board for a total of 2+ years.
  - Field/affiliate office or region committee work for at least three years.
  - Chair or member of a national or regional conference steering committee.
  - Significant addresses before educational or recreational groups, conferences, radio and television presentations, and other meetings held in the interest and promotion of camp.
  - Systematic research.
  - Author or coauthor of at least one book on camp.
  - Articles in handbooks, newspapers, or magazines, blogs, social media, websites, etc on a regional or national scope.

## JACK WEINER LEADERSHIP AWARD

The Jack Weiner Leadership Award is designed to support a young person who is pursuing a career in the camp field. The award ensures professional development by providing financial support for the recipient to attend and fully participate in the ACA national conference. No more than one award may be given annually. Membership in ACA is not required. To qualify for nomination, a candidate must:

1. Be eighteen to thirty years of age.
2. Demonstrate leadership within the camp community or field/affiliate office.
3. Have an interest in pursuing a career in camping.

## NATIONAL SERVICE AWARD

The Service Award is designed to recognize continued and increasing service beyond the field/affiliate office level. No more than eight awards may be given annually. Any field/affiliate office may make a nomination. To qualify for nomination, a candidate must:

1. Be a current ACA member, having demonstrated service to one or more field/affiliate offices.
2. Be endorsed by two field/affiliate offices or a national board, committee, or national awards committee.

## ELEANOR P. EELLS AWARD FOR PROGRAM EXCELLENCE

*New this year! The Eleanor P. Eells Award will focus on recognizing program excellence as well as research in practice at camps. A total of 6 nominees will be selected for recognition at the National Conference and throughout the year. Evaluation and selection of the final awards will be completed by the National Awards Committee and the Committee for the Advancement of Research and Evaluation (CARE) as a collaborative initiative to recognize excellence in all areas at camp! Membership in ACA is not a requirement. Two awards will be given out:*

*Eleanor P. Eells Award for Program Excellence  
Eleanor P. Eells Award for Research in Practice*

The Eleanor P. Eells Awards are designed to honor programs that:

- Develop effective, creative responses to the needs of people and/or societal problems using the camp environment and encourage continued development of such ideas,
- Stimulate the exchange of creative ideas, or
- Present to the public examples of positive contributions camp has made on the well-being of individuals and society.

Additionally, Research in Practice Awards will focus on programs that:

- Generate or apply innovative, quality research or evaluation
- Use research or evaluation findings to improve program practice, and
- Share research or evaluation findings with others.

All nominations are judged on creativity and imaginative planning; relevance to the needs of participants and/or camps; involvement of the target participants in the planning or implementation; adaptability and potential for replication; cooperative efforts with other organizations, agencies, camps, colleges or universities; and, the program's ability to meet stated objectives.

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## ELLS AWARD (Continued)

Nominees for the Research in Practice Award will also be judged on research/evaluation innovation, rigor, and utilization; adherence to ethical research or evaluation standards; and, the camp's use and sharing of the research and/or evaluation findings.

To qualify for nomination of the Eleanor P. Eells Award in Program Excellence, a program or camp must meet at least one of the following criteria:

- Have been in operation for at least two years (planning and development time do not count).
- Understand and make use of intergrouping – combining groups that have differences, e.g., physical abilities, ethnic and cultural backgrounds, religion, and home environment.
- Develop programs suited to the needs and interests of teenage campers.
- Broaden the range of services to persons with disabilities.
- Emphasize awareness of interpersonal relationships and development of interpersonal skills.
- Conduct continuing innovative and effective staff development programs.
- Offer support activities or leadership that significantly expands the opportunities for human growth and enrichment through camping (for non-camp organizations).

To qualify for nomination of the Eleanor P. Eells Award for Research in Practice, a program or camp must have been in operation for at least two years (planning and development time do not count), demonstrate adherence to ethical standards for research or evaluation, and:

- Have developed and implemented or applied an exemplary research or evaluation project at camp.
- Have used research or evaluation findings to improve camp practice.
- Shared research or evaluation findings with others.

## OTHER AWARDS

Other awards that are given by affiliated groups within the association are:

### Camping Magazine Awards J. Wendell and Ruth T. Howe Golden Quill and Golden Lens Awards

These awards, which are funded through a memorial established in J. Wendell and Ruth T. Howe's name, encourage excellence in writing and photography. Each year we recognize those individuals who contribute their talents to *Camping Magazine* through quality articles that address the needs of camp professionals and outstanding photography

that depicts the camp experience. All articles and photographs submitted to *Camping Magazine* during the calendar year are automatically entered in this competition. Photos submitted for the Golden Lens Contest must be accompanied by a [Photo Release Form](#). For more information on the J. Wendell and Ruth T. Howe Awards, contact [magazine@ACAcamps.org](mailto:magazine@ACAcamps.org).

## Marge Scanlin Outstanding Research Award

Marge Scanlin was a driving force behind many of the research efforts of ACA. Upon her retirement, this award was established as an ongoing tribute to recognize Marge's contributions.

- The monetary award is given annually to a student in recognition of their completed research efforts that result in originality, innovation, and significant contribution to the advancement of the body of knowledge concerning the camp experience.
- Submissions of research projects can be made by any undergraduate or graduate student.
- The outstanding research paper will be selected by the Committee for the Advancement of Research and Evaluation (CARE).
- The award will be presented at the national conference where the student will present their research at the Research Symposium.

Information will be posted on the ACA Research Web page as well as distributed in multiple ways to reach a wide range of students. Learn more at <http://www.acacamps.org/research/connect/scanlin-award>

## Speedy Altman Award

Presented annually by the Camp Owners and Directors Association (CODA) at their annual meeting prior to the ACA National Conference. Learn more at <http://coda.camp/>

## Ernest F. Schmidt Scholarship

The Ernest F. Schmidt Scholarship is presented annually to a leader within Boy Scouts of America. Scholarship funds are used for participation at the ACA National Conference.

THE BEST WAY  
TO FIND YOURSELF  
IS TO LOSE YOURSELF  
IN THE SERVICE OF OTHERS.

A large, stylized yellow star with a soft glow and a long, flowing tail that curves around the bottom right of the text.

- Mahatma Gandhi