

# Current Comments<sup>®</sup>

EUGENE GARFIELD

INSTITUTE FOR SCIENTIFIC INFORMATION<sup>®</sup>  
3501 MARKET ST., PHILADELPHIA, PA 19104

## To Recognize and Encourage Excellence: ISI-Sponsored Awards. Part 1. Professional Awards

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Over the years we have devoted considerable space to awards of various kinds. Each year, of course, we examine the work of the Nobel laureates. But we have also published a series, soon to be updated, on the other prestigious awards of science.<sup>1,2</sup> Some of these awards serve as "predictors" of a Nobel Prize; others have become equally prestigious in their respective disciplines.<sup>3</sup>

We have also provided coverage, from time to time, of awards that ISI<sup>®</sup> sponsors or cosponsors. Two such prizes are the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) Award for Scientific Reviewing and the American Society for Information Science (ASIS) Outstanding Information Science Teacher Award. The NAS award deserves special mention not only because it is unique but because it is multidisciplinary. Since I have devoted separate articles to each of the recipients, my discussion of the NAS award later in this essay is necessarily brief. ISI is involved in the sponsorship of several other professional awards, primarily in information and library science, but in other fields as well.

We also provide funding for fellowships and lecture programs to encourage and assist those who are just beginning their careers in library and information science. In this two-part essay, I will provide a comprehensive look at the awards and programs in which ISI plays a major role. In this first part, I will discuss professional awards. The second part will deal with fellowships and lectureships.

As I have observed, awards and fellowships can serve many purposes for the vari-

ous groups and individuals involved with them.<sup>1</sup> For one, they are a way of helping young people get started in a profession. Of course, awards also provide an agreeable means for the sponsoring organizations to promote their image. Although it does require a good deal of thought and effort, sponsoring an award or fellowship can be a relatively inexpensive tool of public relations. An award can also bring benefits to a discipline or profession as a whole; occasionally other organizations follow an earlier example and sponsor awards and fellowships of their own. Still, there can be too many awards. An overabundance of prizes tends to devalue the sense of excellence, achievement, and distinction that awards are intended to recognize.

It is undeniable, however, that awards and fellowships can significantly affect the lives and careers of the recipients. On this matter, I speak from experience. As I've noted, my receiving the first Grolier Society Bibliographic Fellowship in the early 1950s provided the funds I needed to study library science at Columbia University.<sup>4</sup>

In addition to providing a boost for those just starting out, awards give recognition to "old-timers" as well. Often we wait too long to honor colleagues and friends. Recipients cannot enjoy posthumous awards.

For these various reasons, I am pleased that ISI has established these awards and fellowships—even if, on occasion, I find myself wondering who my own choices would be or if the selection process is "objective" enough. What is most important, of course, is that the awards do something for the recipients and for the fields in which

they work. If they enhance the image of ISI and the other organizations, so much the better. But the key question is whether these awards promote the advancement of information and library science, scientific reviewing, social studies of science, and other fields.

In the following sections, I indicate the organizations with which ISI cooperates in sponsoring these awards.

#### **American Society for Information Science**

One means of ensuring the advancement of a profession, of course, is to recognize excellence on the part of those who teach it. Since 1980, ISI and ASIS have sponsored the ASIS Outstanding Information Science Teacher Award, which "acknowledges sustained excellence in the teaching of information science."<sup>5</sup> ISI donates the honorarium, while the ASIS Education Committee administers the prize. Winners are selected by an awards jury appointed by that committee. The award is not designed to identify the "best" teacher of information science; that would be an almost impossible assignment. Rather, it is designed to recognize, every year, the exemplary teaching contribution of an outstanding nominee drawn from many.

From the very first, the recipients of this award have exemplified the criteria set forth by ASIS. F. Wilfrid Lancaster, Graduate School of Library Science, University of Illinois, Urbana, received the first award in 1980. He was honored for writing a series of outstanding texts for courses on information retrieval, vocabulary control, and measurement and evaluation of information services.<sup>6</sup> He was also instrumental in shaping and expanding the curriculum in library science at the University of Illinois. Since then he has received other awards and has even participated in some citation-based studies. His recent analysis of Cuban science, with colleagues Abdus Satar and Maria A. Porta, is an example.<sup>7</sup>

The award recognizes not only innovation and achievement, but dedication to teaching as well. The 1982 winner, Belder C. Grif-

fith, School of Library and Information Science, Drexel University, Philadelphia, was honored for "his ability to stimulate thought and generate excitement about the field of information science, for his success in challenging his students to do difficult things... and to perform to their greatest potential."<sup>8</sup> It is my hope that the award will continue to recognize the very best in education and also encourage teaching as a career for information specialists.

The ASIS prize is included in Table 1, which lists each of the awards I'll be discussing. Table 2 features the recipients. You will note that not all the awards have been given out every year. In some years the various juries could not identify a suitable recipient. While I happen to support such decisions, I cannot wholly resist the thought that the process of nominating candidates often lacks adequate preparation and publicity. As is true of many awards, appropriate individuals may find it difficult to nominate themselves. Each school or department ought to ask whether appropriate candidates have been overlooked out of false modesty.

#### **Association for Information Management**

ISI sponsors the Aslib/ISI Award for Innovative Information Management, first given in 1984. Aslib is the London-based Association for Information Management, formerly the Association of Special Libraries and Information Bureaux (from which the name Aslib is derived), an organization involved in research, training, publishing, and consulting in the information management field. This award is designed to "stimulate innovation and to educate the public to the potential of managing information as a resource."<sup>9</sup> It is awarded for "the most outstanding contribution to the development of the emerging discipline of Information Management by an individual or team during the calendar year."<sup>10</sup> Examples of possible contributions include innovative databases and databanks, publications that promote an awareness of the importance of the management of information, and fundamental studies on information management

**Table 1:** List of ISI® -sponsored awards with name of administering organization and contact address.

Award	Administrator	First Year of Award	Amount of Award
American Society for Information Science (ASIS) Outstanding Information Science Teacher Award	ASIS 1424 16th Street NW Suite 404 Washington, DC 20036	1980	\$500
Association for Information Management (Aslib)/ISI Award for Innovative Information Management	Aslib 3 Belgrave Square London SW1X 8PL United Kingdom	1984	\$780
Frank Bradway Rogers Information Advancement Award	Medical Library Association 919 North Michigan Avenue Suite 3208 Chicago, IL 60611	1983	\$500
ISI Award	Institute of Information Scientists 44 Museum Street London WC1A 1LY United Kingdom	1982	\$380
John Desmond Bernal Award	Society for Social Studies of Science (4S) Department of Sociology Washington State University Pullman, WA 99164	1981	\$500
National Academy of Sciences (NAS) Award for Scientific Reviewing (in honor of James Murray Luck)	NAS 2101 Constitution Avenue Washington, DC 20418	1979	\$5,000

or the role of education and training. The contribution, whether a product, service, or study, must be publicly or commercially available. A three-person panel appointed by Aslib judges nominations on the basis of their originality, timeliness, and breadth of application.

The first winner of the Aslib/ISI award was Alan Kingett, a marketing specialist at Kodak, Ltd., who supervised the UK launch of Kodak's KAR-4000 computer-assisted microimage retrieval system. Kingett oversaw the advertising, public relations, sales training, and other phases of the 1983 product launch. The Kodak system itself exemplifies many of the principles of effective information management. It allows companies to build databases from both internal and external sources in a variety of formats, ranging from handwritten material to visual images.

The 1985 Aslib prize was awarded to the Research Library Team at the Greater Lon-

don Council for their work on the databases URBA-LINE, ACOMPLINE, and a new database of slides. In particular, the judges commended the winners for developing and promoting the Research Library's services and for expanding the marketing of its unique collection of information to reach a broader audience of potential users.

#### Medical Library Association

In 1983 ISI and the Medical Library Association (MLA) established the Information Advancement Award to recognize outstanding contributions to the application of technology in the delivery of health-care or health-sciences information. The first recipient of the award was Frank Bradway Rogers, MD, director of the National Library of Medicine (NLM) from 1949 to 1963. Rogers, as I've reported elsewhere, was largely responsible for bringing the NLM into the computer age.<sup>11</sup> Among the

**Table 2:** Recipients of ISI®-sponsored awards.

Award	Year	Recipient
ASIS Outstanding Information Science Teacher Award	1980	F. Wilfrid Lancaster
	1981	Pauline A. Cochrane
	1982	Belver C. Griffith
	1983	Ching-chih Chen
	1984	Susan Artandi
	1985	Tefko Saracevic
	1986	Marta L. Dosa
Aslib/ISI Award for Innovative Information Management	1984	Alan Kingett
	1985	Research Library Team, Greater London Council
	1986	Not awarded
Frank Bradway Rogers Information Advancement Award	1983	Frank B. Rogers
	1984	Louise Darling
	1985	Estelle Brodman, Claire Gadzikowski, Barbara Halbrook, Simon Igielnik, Millard Johnson & Richard Pride
	1986	Naomi Broering
	1987	Irwin Pizer
ISI Award	1982	W. Dijkhuis
	1983	N. Belkin, T. Seeger & G. Wersig
	1984	D.J. Ellis
	1985	John H. Ashford
	1986	D. Bawden
John Desmond Bernal Award	1981	Derek J. de Solla Price
	1982	Robert K. Merton
	1983	Thomas S. Kuhn
	1984	Joseph Needham
	1985	Joseph Ben-David
	1986	Michael Mulkey
NAS Award for Scientific Reviewing (cosponsored with Annual Reviews Inc.)	1979	G. Alan Robison
	1980	Conyers Herring
	1981	John S. Chipman
	1982	Victor McKusick
	1983	Michael Ellis Fisher
	1984	Ernest R. Hilgard
	1985	Ira Herskowitz
	1986	Virginia L. Trimble
	1987	Gardner Lindzey

many innovations he oversaw is his best-known accomplishment, the MEDLARS database for retrieving medical information. In view of his singular contributions to mechanization and computerization in the retrieval of medical information, the MLA decided in 1984 to change the name of the award to the Frank Bradway Rogers Information Advancement Award. Nominations are solicited from the MLA membership, and the nominees themselves must be members of MLA (if a small group is nominated, at least one person must be an MLA mem-

ber). In the judging process, special attention is given to pioneering theories or applications that have had a marked impact on information access and retrieval. As this essay was in final preparation, I was saddened to learn that Brad Rogers died on July 28, 1987. It is especially gratifying to me, however, that his many contributions were recognized while he was still alive.

Subsequent winners, like Rogers, have made their own important contributions in applying technology to the delivery of health-science information. The 1985

award, for example, was shared by six people who played key roles in the development of OCTANET, an online document request and routing system formerly operating in the Midcontinental Region of the Regional Medical Library Network. The system combines data processing and telecommunications to deliver information to health-care professionals over a large area. In 1986 the award went to Naomi Broering, Georgetown University Medical Center, Washington, DC, who headed the organization of Georgetown's integrated Library Information System (LIS). LIS was developed as a module in a larger system of information databases used by libraries. Out of this union came mini-MEDLINE, which foreshadowed the current trend toward information systems.

The most recent winner of the Rogers award is Irwin Pizer, Library of the Health Sciences, University of Illinois, Chicago. In the words of the award jury, Pizer "has been and continues to be a leader in the development and implementation of information technology."<sup>12</sup> The jury made special mention of the State University of New York Biomedical Communication Network, one of the first online biomedical retrieval systems, which Pizer had a key role in planning, designing, and administering. I was glad to be able to congratulate Irwin in person in Portland, Oregon, at ISI's annual MLA breakfast.

#### **Institute of Information Scientists**

ISI joined with the London-based Institute of Information Scientists (IIS) in 1983 to establish the ISI Award, originally given for the best paper published in the *Journal of Information Science*. The 1985 winner was John H. Ashford, Ashford Associates Ltd., Maidenhead, UK, for his paper "Application in practice of the results of library and information retrieval research: experience in consultancy."<sup>13</sup> This paper focuses on the practical considerations governing the application of results from research in library and information science.

This year, it was decided to change the ISI Award from a prize honoring the best

paper in the *Journal of Information Science* to a sponsored lecture on an information-science topic. Arrangements are under way for the lecture to be given following the IIS annual general meeting this September. In the second part of this review, I'll discuss the other lecture programs sponsored by ISI.

#### **Society for Social Studies of Science**

The foregoing prizes concentrate on advances and achievement in information science, while the next award honors excellence in a different area. In 1981 members of the Society for Social Studies of Science (4S), among them science historian Arnold Thackray, University of Pennsylvania, began corresponding with ISI about the establishment of a new award. Founded in 1975, 4S is an international society devoted to the promotion of research, learning, and understanding in the social studies of science. The new prize was to be called the John Desmond Bernal Award, in memory of the Cambridge scientist. As I wrote in my tribute to Bernal (1901-1971), he was respected and revered for many scientific endeavors, not least of which were his own social studies of science.<sup>14</sup> In view of his distinguished life and his impact on my own career, I was pleased to have ISI sponsor the Bernal award. The prize was conceived of as 4S's highest honor and is conferred on a mature scholar in recognition of achievements over a considerable period of time, rather than for a particular book or article.

The first winner of the Bernal prize was Derek John de Solla Price, a good friend whose life and career I have discussed previously.<sup>15-17</sup> The award honored his well-known books *Science Since Babylon*<sup>18</sup> and *Little Science, Big Science*<sup>19</sup> and his role in developing the field of scientometrics, among other achievements. Other noted scholars who received the prize include Robert K. Merton, Columbia sociologist, and Thomas S. Kuhn, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, science historian and philosopher. The most recent winner, in 1986, was sociologist Michael

Mulkay, University of York, UK, who was recognized for his social studies of science over the last 20 years.

### National Academy of Sciences

At the outset I mentioned the NAS Award for Scientific Reviewing, which was the first award to recognize excellence in the writing of review articles. ISI has cosponsored this award since its establishment in 1979 with Annual Reviews Inc., Palo Alto, California. Recently, I discussed the work of psychologist Gardner Lindzey, director, Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences, Stanford, California, the 1987 recipient. He

received the award for reviews in social psychology, personality psychology, and behavioral genetics.<sup>20</sup> The earlier recipients are listed in Table 2.

As I have noted, ISI not only sponsors awards of this kind but has also helped to establish various fellowships and lecture programs. These will be discussed in Part 2 of this essay.

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