



Washington State Genealogical Society

1901 S 12th Ave, Union Gap, WA 98903-1256

Annual Outstanding Volunteer Awards Program

INTRODUCTION TO OUTSTANDING VOLUNTEER AWARDS

The Outstanding Volunteer Awards Program provides recognition for those individuals who have been identified by their local genealogical organization to be honored for exceptional efforts. WSGS started this program, not as a competition between organizations, but as a means for your society or group to give widespread recognition to your top volunteers.

Three milestones or phases help the program operate efficiently: identifying your honorees; providing the narrative and photo for the award certificates; and announcing and presenting the awards.

Milestone 1: Identify Your Honorees

Your organization should select which volunteers to honor, and provide their names and postal addresses to WSGS approximately **12 weeks prior** to the upcoming WSGS Conference and Annual Meeting. This will allow WSGS to send a letter of congratulations and to invite them, with ample lead-time, to attend the conference and receive their award certificate at the WSGS Annual Meeting.

Surprise Awards: If you want the award to be a surprise for the recipients, we suggest you announce the selections at one of your regular membership meetings at least a month prior to the WSGS Conference. Send us the honorees' names and mailing addresses a couple of weeks before the meeting, and we will send you the letters of congratulations from the WSGS President which you can present to the honorees. This will give them sufficient time to consider attending the conference where they will be recognized and given their award certificates.

Categories: Generally, awards are given in two general categories. (1) In most cases the efforts of your honoree will fit the **Support** category "*for exceptional and consistent support of the goals and operation of [their home] society.*" (2) Volunteers whose work primarily is responding to queries or researching and publishing information in a journal or other media fit the **Research** category "*for outstanding efforts in the identification, preservation, dissemination or publication of information of genealogical importance and value to researchers interested in the families of Washington State.*"

However, this is not set in stone. You may have someone who is very active in both categories; in which case, you might wish to have a separate certificate for each category or a single award covering both areas.

Two or three people working together on a project or function might be recognized as a team for an award. Team certificates can be issued to each member, or individual certificates can be made out for each team member, noting in the narrative that they were "working with" the other team members.

A society might recognize a person who isn't even a member but who has helped in some significant way to improve the society's operation, library facility or research effort.

The achievement may have covered several years; perhaps by a charter member or leader, long since inactive, but remembered and worthy of recognition before it is too late to say "thank you."

WSGS has issued posthumous awards so that the honoree's survivors can see how much their loved one was appreciated.

We hope you will recognize at least one of your volunteers each year.

Milestone 2: Submit Narrative and Photo

Please send us information about the honoree approximately **6 weeks** prior to the upcoming WSGS Conference, with a brief narrative of accomplishments and a digital photograph, so we can produce an award certificate. While we can do a last-minute award certificate, we would like to have your submissions early enough to give us time to contact you for any clarification and to have you proof the certificate before final printing.

We need the **volunteer's name, city/town of residence**. We prefer to use the full name, including maiden name, on the certificate's lead-in statement, although a nickname is fine in the narrative portion. If this is a posthumous award, please give us the birth and death years to include on the certificate.

Explain **what the volunteer has accomplished** to support your organization's genealogical goals or related community activities. Try to keep the narrative to no more than 150 words. We have some space latitude by adjusting the font size or picture size if the narrative is longer than 150 words. More narrative can be accommodated if there is no photo, but a photograph greatly improves the award certificate. For some examples, look at the narratives for previous award recipients.

Please provide a **digital photo** for the certificate. We prefer it to be full length or cover head to waist so we can crop the photo to show the person's head and shoulders. If your volunteer is very sensitive about having photos taken, ask them if they will let you scan a copy of their favorite photo of themselves. A photo from when they were younger will work fine if it makes them more comfortable. If you want the award to be a surprise and are reluctant to tip your hand by asking to take a photo, try having an annual photo session with all your key volunteers and officers "to be put in our society's history scrapbook."

Please send your organization's submissions by email, with an attached digital photo, to the WSGS Recognition Committee Chair. If necessary, you could send a good quality photographic print to the Recognition Committee Chair's postal address.

Milestone 3: Announcement and Presentation

The awards are announced at the WSGS Annual Meeting held in conjunction with the conference, and the award certificates are given to those honored volunteers who are present.

Award certificates not given at the annual meeting will be forwarded to the originating society for presentation. The honorees will be listed in the WSGS Newsletter, and the narratives will be abstracted, without the photo, onto this WSGS website to show others around the state what good works your volunteers do and that your organization appreciates their efforts.

Need Help?: If you need a copy of certificates for the awards your organization has submitted in the past, or your organization has not submitted anyone for the award before and need more help, please contact the WSGS Recognition Committee Chair (shown on the document listing the milestones).