Outdoor Writers Association of America Recognizes Top Communicators & Members

Five members selected as Honorary Award Recipients at OWAA's annual conference in El Paso, Texas

Missoula, Mont. (Oct. 17, 2024) — The Outdoor Writers Association of America (OWAA), the voice of the outdoors, selected five association members as recipients of the organization's most prestigious awards. The winners were announced at the OWAA's annual conference in El Paso, Texas.

Award winners are announced and honored by their OWAA peers and categories include: Committee Volunteer of the Year, Outstanding Board Member, the Jade of Chiefs award, the Joan Wulff Enduring Excellence Award (formerly Excellence in Craft Award), and the Ham Brown Award.

"Each of this year's awardees truly represent the best of the best at OWAA, epitomizing service, craft excellence and an unwavering commitment to their fellow colleagues and the entire outdoor community," said Amy Kapp, President of OWAA. "Our organization is strengthened exponentially by their diverse talents and leadership, and we are so grateful to count them among our ranks."

Ham Brown Award: Katie McKalip
"I can't think of anyone more deserving of this year's J. Hammond Brown Award. Katie has dedicated most of her professional life to OWAA, starting as an intern, then a staffer and editor of Outdoors Unlimited. She was a board member, board secretary and our first supporter liaison, as well as OWAA's President in 2023. And she has done it all thoughtfully and with a warm smile."

- Lisa Ballard, 2023 Ham Brown Award winner & OWAA Past President

Joan Wulff Enduring Excellence Award (formerly Excellence in Craft): Lisa Ballard
"As last year's recipient of this award, I can think of no one more deserving than Lisa Densmore to be this year's winner. Her career has spanned decades during which she produced nothing short of award winning writing, photography, and video programming. She is the very definition of a professional communicator. Congratulations Lisa!"

- Michael Furtman, 2023 Joan Wulff Enduring Excellence Award winner & OWAA Past President

"I'm truly honored and deeply humbled to be recognized by my peers this way. There are so many outstanding communicators in OWAA. My goals are simple: do the best I can with each assignment and enjoy my work, which keeps me outside doing the many things I love to do. I'm not done. I've got lots of adventures left."

- Lisa Ballard, 2023 Ham Brown Award winner & OWAA Past President

Jade of Chiefs: Brett Prettyman
"I've had the good fortune of working with Brett professionally and also in a volunteer capacity for two decades. He truly gives it his all. I've also been lucky enough to spend some fun times with him. His enthusiasm and passion for the outdoors is unmatched. He is very deserving of this honor."

- Mark Taylor, 2023 Jade of Chiefs Award winner

Outstanding Board Member(s): Ken Keffer
“During his time as president, Ken was a huge inspiration and support system to me and the rest of the Board, making it clear that everybody’s voice was valued–and that everyone had something to offer as a leader and member of our wider community. His desire to bring out leadership in others combined with his talent and tireless passion and love for nature, was and remains a true asset to OWAA.”
- Amy Kapp, OWAA President

Committee Volunteer of the Year: Howard Fox
“As chair of the contests committee, Howard puts in countless hours coordinating the complex Excellence in Craft program and wrangling volunteer judges. Additionally, Howard is a tireless ambassador for OWAA, especially through his podcasting efforts.”
- Ken Keffer, OWAA Past President

About OWAA
Recognized as “The Voice of the Outdoors,” OWAA is the nation’s largest organization of professional outdoor journalists. Its membership includes writers, photographers, videographers, radio and TV personalities, digital storytellers and artists. Formed in 1927, the nonprofit association’s mission is to improve the professional skills and opportunities of its members, set the highest ethical and communications standards, encourage public enjoyment and conservation of natural resources, and mentor the next generation of professional outdoor communicators. https://owaa.org

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