American Bar Association
Silver Gavel Awards for Media and the Arts

2020 GUIDELINES FOR ENTRY

The American Bar Association Standing Committee on Gavel Awards is pleased to announce the 62nd annual Silver Gavel Awards Competition for 2020. Each year the American Bar Association presents these awards to recognize work in media and the arts published or presented during the preceding year that have been exemplary in helping to foster the American public’s understanding of law and the legal system.

Each entry must be submitted online using a separate form. For all categories, except books, actual entry materials must also be submitted electronically.* Actual book entries must be submitted “hard copy” by mail.

*Exemptions to electronic submission of non-book actual entry materials may be granted in exceptional circumstances. To request, email howard.kaplan@americanbar.org by January 3, 2020.

Program Objectives

The overall purpose of the Silver Gavel Awards is to recognize annually eligible entries from communications media that have been exemplary in fostering the American public’s understanding of the law and the legal system. The Gavel Awards seek to recognize entries reaching the public across a wide range of communities and audiences. The “public” includes, but is not limited to, people in their various roles as students of all ages (including young people and adults), as consumers, and as citizens of a law-based democratic society. To address this purpose, the Gavel Awards also seeks to recognize publications and programs that meet one or more of these objectives:

- educate the public about the American constitutional/legal system and the fundamental principles and values upon which it is based (this may include both domestic and international issues or comparative perspectives);
- educate the public about the operations of legal institutions (e.g., the courts, legislatures, regulatory agencies, prisons, and law enforcement agencies) and the role lawyers and other legal professionals play in the justice system; and
- encourage public support for improvements in the American justice system by informing the public about current practices, policies, and issues.

Selection Criteria

The American Bar Association has established the following criteria for selecting entries to receive Gavel Awards:

- extent to which entry addresses the Gavel Awards’ purpose/objectives;
- educational value of legal information or issues treated;
- impact on, or outreach to, the public;
- thoroughness and accuracy in presentation of issues;
- creativity and originality in approach to subject matter and effectiveness of presentation; and
- demonstrated technical skill in production of entry.

Entry and Eligibility Requirements

Entries must have been originally published, produced, or presented between January 1 and December 31, 2019. You MUST indicate all co-producers or co-publishers, if any, involved in the development of your entry. Non-English-language entries accompanied by an English translation or transcript are eligible.

Entries cannot have been previously submitted for the Silver Gavel Awards—unless they are substantially revised and represent new releases or editions.
Entries should be on a single subject or issue or otherwise focus on a coherent theme or tell a cohesive story. They must be complete—they cannot be treated as representative of work not submitted.

Entries should also not be so lengthy as to burden reviewers or otherwise lessen their impact. Exceedingly “burdensome” entries may be deemed ineligible. There is no restriction on the number of entries publishers and producers may submit.

Particular entries, however, may be submitted in only one category.

Recognizing that certain entries might be eligible under more than one category, the ABA reserves the right to review entries and select finalists and awardees under other categories than those submitted.

The ABA may disqualify any submission not meeting these entry requirements.

Programs or products funded or developed by or in association with the American Bar Association are ineligible for Gavel Awards.

Please note that all entry materials become the property of the American Bar Association and will not be returned. They may be archived.

Required Formats for Entry Materials

Actual entry materials in all categories except books must be submitted online.

All book entries (with 5 books each) must be submitted “hard copy” by mail to the ABA:
2020 Silver Gavel Awards
ABA Division for Public Education
321 N. Clark Street, MS 17.2
Chicago IL 60654

Book Entry Hard Copies

When submitting book entries, you must include five copies of the books themselves. In addition, you must attach white cover pages, clearly visible upon immediate inspection. The cover page should clearly include the following: (1) the entry number (e.g., 01-111) assigned to your entry when you submit online (email confirmation to awards contact); and (2) the entry title, as submitted.

For all newspaper or magazine entries, legibility is essential, even if this requires PDFs of entry formats larger than 8-1/2” x 11”. To facilitate entry, special published reprints of original articles may be submitted.

Electronic Entry Submissions

Entrants have two choices for submitting actual entry materials electronically: uploading or linking.

Actual entries less than 10MB may be (1) uploaded as a single file. Actual entries may also be submitted using the Online Entry Form as (2) linked URLs. The ABA requires that you consolidate each entry submitted to be accessible via one URL. You may link to actual entries, especially audio or video, uploaded to a hosting site such as YouTube or Vimeo. If your linked entry is password protected, please provide the password where requested on the entry form. Passwords will only be shared with ABA Silver Gavel Award reviewers. All links must remain publicly accessible throughout the awards period (January 8 – August 31, 2020).

Entry Fees

A $100 handling fee is required for each entry. Entrants with multiple entries may submit combined payment. The deadline for payment is January 17, 2020. To pay by credit card, use the online form. To pay by check (to ABA Fund for Justice and Education), mail with “hard copy” entry materials or separately to the attention of Christina Cerveny, ABA Division for Public Education, 321 N. Clark Street, Chicago IL 60654. For any payment-related questions, contact Christina at 312.988.5719 or gavelawards@americanbar.org. The ABA FEIN is #36-0723150. If mailed separately, reference the assigned entry numbers, name of organization, and entries. Hardship waivers may be granted, limited to one entry per entrant. To request, email howard.kaplan@americanbar.org and briefly state the reason.

Notifications and Awards Presentation

The ABA will publicly announce finalists on March 11, 2020. Silver Gavel awardees will be publicly announced on May 20. ABA President Judy Perry Martinez will present the awards at the National Press Club in Washington, DC on July 21, 2020.

Archives

The Tarlton Law Library at the University of Texas School of Law houses the permanent Gavel Awards archives for the ABA.
AWARD CATEGORIES AND SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS

1 BOOKS
Full-length (at least 50,000 words) books of nonfiction with ISBNs. Only “hard copy” entries may be submitted (5 books).

2 COMMENTARY
Open to commentary, editorials, columns, criticism, editorial cartoons, blogs, and other opinion journalism, regardless of medium of production or dissemination (i.e., print, online, video, and audio entries are all eligible).

3 DOCUMENTARIES
Film and video documentaries (non-fiction, unscripted), whether or not they were telecast on television, on the web, or independently screened. Companion websites may be submitted as part of entries.

4 DRAMA and LITERATURE
Open to drama and literature, regardless of medium of production or dissemination (i.e., film, television, books and other media are eligible), including docudramas, episodes of dramatic television series, original dramatic films produced for general theatrical release or for television, novels, plays, and short stories.

5 MAGAZINES
Any article or series published by a magazine (periodical or journal). Magazines may submit both (or either) print and digital content.

6 MULTIMEDIA
Open to digital and other media entries not subsumed under other award categories. Includes entries representing multiple, hybrid, or convergent media, as well as those on mobile platforms. Must include substantial new content produced during 2019. Online entries must be submitted as ONE URL to be eligible. All digital entries must be publicly accessible through August 31, 2020. On the online entry form, include how the entry can be accessed (e.g., web addresses, app platforms).

7 NEWSPAPERS
Any news article or series published by a newspaper. This category includes investigative, explanatory and other deadline and non-deadline reporting, as well as features. Newspapers may submit both (or either) print and digital content. Open to dailies and weeklies.

8 RADIO
Any audio program telecast by network, satellite, or individual radio stations. Included in this category are investigative, explanatory, and other deadline or non-deadline reporting, talk radio, and features. Also eligible are original audio webcasts or podcasts. Companion websites may be submitted as part of entries.

9 TELEVISION
Any program (including documentaries) telecast by cable, network, or individual television stations during the period of eligibility. Also eligible are original video webcasts. Companion websites may be submitted as part of entries.
STEP-BY-STEP INSTRUCTIONS TO ENTER THE 2020 ABA SILVER GAVEL AWARDS

#1: Review the Guidelines for Entry (www.ambar.org/gavelawards)

#2: Complete the Online Entry Form (deadline: January 8, 2020); review “What Will You Need?”

#3: If you wish to submit “Supporting Information” as one PDF file (up to 10 pages or 2 MGs), you may (a) upload or (b) link to a URL directly on the Online Entry Form (deadline: January 8, 2020)

#4 Book entries must be mailed “hard copy.” For all other categories, actual entry materials must be submitted electronically: (a) uploading, or (b) linking to URLs of files hosted online. Exemptions to electronic submission of non-book actual entry materials may be granted in exceptional circumstances. To request, email howard.kaplan@americanbar.org by January 3, 2020.

#5: When submitting book entries “hard copy,” reference the assigned entry number and entry title

#6: Upon completing the Online Entry Form, entrants will receive an email acknowledging receipt and providing how-to instructions on Paying Entry Fees (@ $100) by credit card or check (deadline: January 17, 2020)

#7: Program questions: email gavelawards@americanbar.org

What Will You Need?: Completing the Online Entry Form
The ABA has designed the online form to facilitate submission of entries for the 2020 Silver Gavel Awards for Media and the Arts. To ensure the process goes as smoothly as possible, please be prepared to provide the following:

- Contact information for all “key creative personnel” (up to five)
- Key entry data (title, release date, audience, length or duration, public access to entry)
- Entry abstract/summary (4000 character maximum)
- Supporting information (up to 10 pages optional, one pdf ready for uploading or linking to URL)
- Single files of actual entries, only if being submitted via upload
- URLs to actual entries, only if being submitted as online links (entrants are responsible for hosting their media)
- Upon submission of your Online Entry Form, you will receive a confirmation email, which includes information on payment options for entry fees. If paying by credit card, have this information available.
- If you choose to pay entry fees online, you will be directed to a link to pay the ABA.

We also recommend that you download a pdf of the entry form at www.ambar.org/gavelawards before completing it online in order to review all of the questions and information requested.