

ARKANSAS HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

2027 Awards



The Arkansas Historical Association is pleased to announce its award competition for 2027. Held annually, this competition promotes the preservation, writing, and teaching of Arkansas history. Recipients will be recognized at a banquet held on April 2, 2027 in Russellville in conjunction with the AHA's annual conference. Eligibility and submission requirements for each award are given below, and more information can be found online. Contact the AHA at renwickh@uark.edu or (479) 575-5884.

J. G. Ragsdale Book Award

Deadline: January 1, 2027

Given in honor of J. G. Ragsdale, a founding member of the AHA and chair of the board of trustees at the University of Arkansas, this award is presented to the **best book-length nonfiction historical study** of any aspect of Arkansas history. The winner receives a certificate and **prize of \$1000**.

To be considered, mail one copy to each award committee member *and* email the AHA (at renwickh@uark.edu), providing name and contact information. Entries must be postmarked by the deadline and clearly labeled "Ragsdale Award." Mailing and postage are the responsibility of the publisher or applicant. Entries will not be returned but will be retained by committee members, who are serving without compensation.

Committee members: Ralph Wilcox, Arkansas Historic Preservation Program, 1100 North Street, Little Rock, AR 72201; Rodney Harris, 1911 Martin Drive, Pocahontas, AR 72455; and Tom Wing, 1102 Fir Drive, Van Buren, AR 72956

James H. Atkinson Award

Deadline: January 15, 2027

for Excellence in the Teaching of Arkansas History

This award is given in honor of James H. Atkinson, "Mr. History," founder and twice president of the Pulaski County Historical Society, which he served as its journal editor for over ten years, former president of the Arkansas Historical Association, and chairman of the Arkansas History Commission.

Any **elementary or secondary teacher who teaches a course in Arkansas history** is eligible for this award. To be considered, return the official entry form by email or mail. The form can be found at arkansashistoricalassociation.org. The winner receives a certificate and **prize of \$1000**.

Violet B. Gingles and Lucille Westbrook Awards

Deadline: February 1, 2027

The Westbrook Local History Award is presented for the **best manuscript article on a topic in local Arkansas history**. The article must deal with a phase of neighborhood, city, county, or regional history or with a person associated with local Arkansas history. Edited documents and memoirs will be considered for this award. The award recipient will receive a certificate and **prize of \$1,000**.

The Gingles Award is presented for the **best manuscript article on a topic in Arkansas history**. The article can deal with any phase of the history of the state or with any individual connected with its past. The recipient will receive a certificate and **\$500 prize**.

Anyone, whether a professional or an amateur historian, is eligible to submit.

To be considered, entries may be emailed or physical copies submitted **in triplicate**. Manuscripts should be no longer than thirty-five double-spaced pages and must be documented. Entries may not have been submitted elsewhere or previously published. Notes should be numbered consecutively. Since manuscripts are evaluated anonymously, only the full title of the article should appear at the top of the first page. On a separate page the following information should be included: title, author's name, complete address, phone number, and email address. All essays will be considered for publication in the *Arkansas Historical Quarterly*. One copy of each entry will be placed in Special Collections, University of Arkansas Libraries, Fayetteville.

Susannah DeBlack Award

Deadline: February 1, 2027

Established through the generosity of Thomas, Susan, and Susannah DeBlack for books introducing young readers to Arkansas, this award is presented to the **best book for young readers (grades K-8) on a topic related to Arkansas history** published within the two calendar years preceding the annual conference. Winner will receive a certificate and **prize of \$500**.

To be considered, mail one copy to each award committee member *and* email the AHA, providing name and contact information.

Committee members: Sonny Rhodes, 950 East H Avenue, North Little Rock, AR 72116; Tom DeBlack, 1735 Chicot Drive, Conway, AR 72034; and Kaylyn Busch, 282 Wedgeview Drive, Farmington, AR 72730.

James L. Foster and Billy W. Beason Award

Deadline: January 15, 2027

for Best Thesis or Dissertation in Arkansas History

This award was established through the initiative of Dr. Buck Foster and funded by the Foster and Beason families to promote the scholarly study of the state's history. Eligible works include **master's theses or doctoral dissertations** completed in the preceding year **addressing any aspect of Arkansas's history**. Thesis and dissertation advisors or sponsoring history departments are invited to submit students' work for consideration. The winner will receive a certificate and **prize of \$500**.

To be considered, entries may be emailed or physical copies submitted **in triplicate**. Since submissions are evaluated anonymously, only the full title of the work should appear at the top of the first page. On a separate page the following information should be included: title, author's name, complete address, and phone number and email address.



NEARA Award

Deadline: February 1, 2027

for Exemplary Archival Research

The NEARA award was established in 2013 to honor volunteers from the Lawrence County Historical Society who saved the territorial records for future researchers when the Powhatan county seat was abandoned in 1963. The award is funded through the generosity of the family of Eugene Sloan (1892-1981), a Jonesboro lawyer born in Powhatan, to encourage primary document research at the Northeast Arkansas Regional Archives (NEARA) in Powhatan. Anyone, whether a professional or amateur historian, is eligible to submit a manuscript. Eligible works include **manuscript articles using archival records from NEARA**, particularly the Lawrence County territorial papers (1815-1836). The winner will be determined by a three-person panel consisting of representatives of NEARA and the Arkansas Historical Association and will receive a certificate and **prize of \$1000**.

To be considered, entries should be emailed or physical copies submitted **in triplicate**. Since submissions are evaluated anonymously, only the full title of the work should appear at the top of the first page. On a separate page the following information should be included: title, author's name, complete address, and phone number and email address. One copy of each entry will be placed in Special Collections, University of Arkansas Libraries, Fayetteville.

Tom Dillard Advocacy Award

Deadline: February 1, 2027

This award honors Tom W. Dillard's decades of work as an archivist, historian, writer, collector, and promoter of the teaching of Arkansas history in the state's schools and is awarded annually to a **person or organization who has demonstrated a sustained commitment to promoting the study, appreciation, preservation, and dissemination of Arkansas history**. Eligible candidates include individuals, non-profits, governmental agencies, and private businesses and can be self-nominated or nominated by others. The recipient will receive a certificate and prize of **\$500**.

To be considered, submit a biography, résumé, and detailed statement of the advocacy work of the nominee, along with any supporting material. Entries may be emailed or mailed **in triplicate**.

Walter L. Brown Awards

Deadline: February 1, 2027

The Arkansas Historical Association is pleased to once again sponsor the Walter L. Brown Awards for the **state's county and local historical journals and newsletters**. The following awards will be presented to historical societies: the Walter L. Brown Award for the **Best County or Local Journal**, which carries a **\$100 prize** and certificate; Honorable Mention as runner-up for best county or local historical publication (which carries a certificate); the Award for the **Best Use of Graphics** in a journal (certificate); and the award for **Best Newsletter** (certificate). The AHA also recognizes the many excellent articles published in those journals by offering awards to individual authors. These awards include the Walter L. Brown Award for the **Best Article in a County or Local Journal**, which carries a **\$100 prize** and certificate, and the following which are honored with a certificate: the Award for the **Best Biography, Autobiography, or Memoir**; the Award for the **Best Family History**; the Award for **Best Church History**; the Award for **Best Community History**; the Award for **Best School History**; the Award for **Best Business History**; and the Award for **Best Edited Document**.

To be considered, interested societies should **submit three complete sets** of the volume of its journal completed in 2026, as well as any newsletters published. A volume may consist of a single annual publication, two semi-annual publications, four quarterly issues, etc. Entries will be judged on the basis of format, historical content, writing style, and editing.



Conference Scholarships

Student/Teacher Scholarship

Deadline: March 1, 2027

The Arkansas Historical Association is pleased to offer a scholarship for students and teachers to facilitate attendance at its annual conference. Eligible applicants include undergraduate or graduate students currently enrolled in an Arkansas institution of higher learning and K-12 history and social studies teachers. Three scholarships, each of **\$300**, will be awarded. Funds may be used for lodging, transportation, meals, and registration.

To be considered, applicants should provide a letter of interest addressing how attending the conference would benefit their research, studies, or students, along with a separate letter of support from a faculty member (for students) or a school administrator (for teachers). Entries may be emailed or mailed.

Dr. C. Calvin Smith Scholarship

Deadline: March 1, 2027

The Dr. C. Calvin Smith Scholarship supports a college student inspired to follow in his footsteps. Dr. Smith (1943-2009) contributed to Arkansas history as a scholar, teacher, administrator, and mentor for more than thirty years. A son of the Delta, he was among the first generation of African Americans to earn a doctorate at the University of Arkansas, Fayetteville, and among the first Black faculty members at Arkansas State University, where he spent his career, retiring in 2002 at the rank of distinguished professor. He helped establish A-State's Heritage Studies Program while publishing pioneering scholarship of his own in Arkansas and African American history, including *War and Wartime Changes: Arkansas, 1940-1945* (1986) and *Educating the Masses: The Unfolding History of Black School Administrators in Arkansas, 1900-2000* (2003).

The scholarship will include a two-year membership in the AHA as well as a grant of up to **\$500** to fund attendance at the Association's annual conference and defray research and material expenses should the applicant present a paper there. Applicants may self-nominate or be nominated by another person. Applications shall include a brief biography, a current plan of study, and a statement describing how the applicant hopes to build on Dr. Smith's legacy. It is the Association's intent through this scholarship to build a membership that better reflects Arkansas in all of its wonderful variety. Entries may be emailed or mailed.

Complete information on eligibility and submission requirements can be found at www.arkansashistoricalassociation.org and by email at renwickh@uark.edu.

To mail your entry:

Arkansas Historical Association
416 N. Campus Drive, MAIN 416
University of Arkansas
Fayetteville, AR 72701



To email your entry:

renwickh@uark.edu