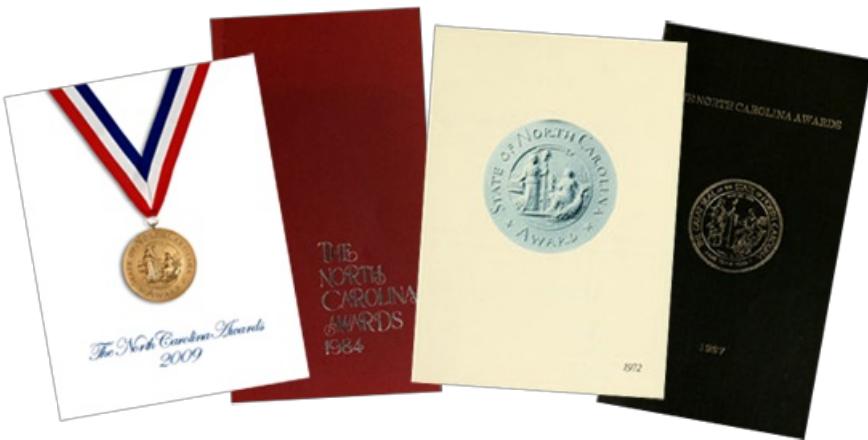


## History of the North Carolina Awards [1]

### History of the North Carolina Awards

by Amy Rudersdorf, N.C. Government & Heritage Library, 2012; Kelly Agan, N.C. Government & Heritage Library, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021; Updated by SLNC Government & Heritage Library, 2021, 2023.

**See also:** [North Carolina Awards](#) [2]; [Black and African American North Carolina Award Winners](#) [3]; [North Carolina Awards ceremony programs](#) [4] (NC Digital Collections)



View the North Carolina Awards ceremony programs in the NC Digital Collections.

[5]On June 22, 1961, the [General Assembly](#) [6] established the [North Carolina Awards](#) [2], the highest civilian honor the State of North Carolina can bestow. According to the legislation, called General Statute 140A-2:

*[t]hese recognitions shall be known as the North Carolina Awards for Literature, Science, the Fine Arts and Public Service, and shall be conferred upon citizens of North Carolina for the most notable attainments in these respective fields during the current year, terminating four months before the date of award, though such distinctions can be exceptionally conferred, with the approval of the Governor and the Council of State, for eminence achieved during years prior to the award. [1961 Session Laws, pages 1572-1573](#) [7].*

The first medals were awarded in 1964 to five recipients. Up to six awards may be presented each year.

Since its inception, more than 250 notable men and women have been honored by the state of North Carolina. Recipients include [William Friday](#) [8], [Romare Bearden](#) [9], [James Taylor](#) [10], [Gertrude Elion](#) [11], [John Hope Franklin](#) [12], [David Brinkley](#) [13], [Maya Angelou](#) [14], [Billy Graham](#) [15], [Branford Marsalis](#) [16], [Loretta Lynch](#) [17], and [Philip Freelon](#) [18].



The gold medal given to each recipient of the North Carolina Award was designed by Paul Manship and has the state seal on the front.

Nominations may be submitted by anyone, with final decisions made by the NC Awards Committee, comprised of five gubernatorial appointees. Recipients are typically honored during a ceremony that takes place each fall. The [North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources](#) [19] administers the award program.

View the ceremony programs by year in the [NC Digital Collections](#) [5].

#### About the Medals

The North Carolina Award medals were designed by the sculptor [Paul Manship](#) [20], one of his last commissions before his

death in 1966 at the age of 81. Each medal is 2 ¾ inches in diameter. It is intended to be worn on a red, white, and blue ribbon around the neck. The first medals were made of fourteen karat gold, although the mineral content has changed over the years to 10 karat gold (1974-1979) and gold-plated silver (1980-today).

## Alphabetical List of Medal Winners

Abbott, Anthony A. Literature, 2015	<u>Golden, Harry</u> [25]. Literature, 1979	Nicholson, Freda. Public Service, 1994
Adcock, Betty. Literature, 1996	Goodmon, James. Public Service, 2000	Niven, Penelope. Literature, 2004
Ammons, A.R. Literature, 1986	Goodnight, Ann. Public Service, 2008	Noland, Kenneth. Fine Arts, 1995
Aneja, Viney. Science, 2007	Gordy, Walter. Science, 1979	Odell Jr., A.G. Fine Arts, 1966
<u>Angelou, Maya</u> [14]. Literature, 1987	Gottschalk, Carl. Science, 1967	<u>Owen, Guy</u> [31]. Literature, 1971
Anlyan, William. Science, 2002	<u>Graham, Billy</u> [15]. Public Service, 1967	Pagano, Joseph. Science, 1996
Applewhite, James. Literature, 1995	<u>Graham, Frank Porter</u> [26]. Public Service 1965	Park, Roy. Public Service, 1989
Atala, Anthony. Science, 2015	Gray, Robert. Fine Arts, 1998	Parker, Michael. Literature, 2006
Baker, Etta. Fine Arts, 2003	Green, Jaki Shelton. Literature, 2003	Parker Jr., Roy. Public Service, 2006
Barber, William J, II, Rev. Dr. Public Service, 2019	<u>Green, Paul</u> [27]. Literature, 1965	Parr, Robert. Science, 1999
Baric, Ralph S. Science, 2020	<u>Griffith, Andy</u> [28]. Fine Arts, 1984	Patterson, Jane Smith. Public Service, 2017
Barrax, Gerald. Literature, 2009	Gurganus, Allan. Literature, 1999	Patton, Frances Gray. Literature, 1970
Bath, Joanne. Fine Arts, 1996	Guthrie, Frank. Science, 1983	Pearson, Henry. Fine Arts, 1970
Bathanti, Joseph. Literature, 2016	Hamner Jr., Charles E. Public Service, 2011	Peiser, Mark. Fine Arts, 2009
Bauer, Margaret Donovan. Literature, 2017	Handler, Philip. Science, 1970	Pierce, Ovid. Literature, 1969
Bayes, Ronald. Literature, 1989	Hanes, Frank Borden. Public Service, 2003	<u>Pittman, Hobson</u> [32]. Fine Arts, 1968
<u>Bearden, Romare</u> [9]. Fine Arts, 1976	Hanes Jr., J. Gordon. Public Service, 1985	<u>Poe, Clarence</u> [33]. Public Service, 1964
Bennett, Betsy M. Public Service, 2014	Hanes Jr., R. Philip. Fine Arts, 1982	<u>Powell, William</u> [34]. Literature, 2000
Betts, Doris. Literature, 1975	Hardy, Martha Nell. Fine Arts, 2002	Preyer, Emily Harris. Public Service, 1998
Bevington, Helen Smith. Literature, 1973	Hart, John. M. H., Jr. Literature, 2013	Preyer, L. Richardson. Public Service, 1998
Biggers, John. Fine Arts, 1995	Harrelson, Walter J. Literature, 2004	Price, Reynolds. Literature, 1977
Birnbaum, Linda S. Science, 2016	Harris, Bernice Kelly. Literature, 1966	Proctor, Deborah S. Public Service, 2019
Blackmer, Sidney. Fine Arts, 1972	Hearn Jr., Thomas. Public Service, 2006	Ragan, Sam. Fine Arts, 1979
Blakeslee, Sarah. Fine Arts, 1994	Herring, William Dallas. Public Service, 1972	Rash, Ron. Literature, 2011
Bowers, Henry. Public Service, 2000	Hill, George Watts. Public Service, 1984	Rice, Oscar. Science, 1966
Boyles, Harlan E. Public Service, 2000	Hill, Robert. Science, 1984	Riggs, Stanly. Dr. Science, 2022
Bringle, Cynthia. Fine Arts, 2002	Hitchings, George. Science, 1980	Rivera, Jr., Alexander. Fine Arts, 2008
Brinkhous, Kenneth. Science, 1969	Hodges, Luther. Public Service, 1966	Roberts, Gene. Public Service, 2018
Brinkley, David. Public Service, 1988	Holshouser Jr., James. Public Service, 2006	Rodbell, Martin. Science, 1998
Britt, W. Earl. Public Service, 2019	Holt, David. Fine Arts, 2021	Rooke, Leon. Literature, 1990
Brodie, H. Keith. Science, 1990	Horton, Frank. Fine Arts, 1999	Roper, William L. Public Service, 2018
Brookhart, Maurice. Science, 2008	<u>Hotelling, Harold</u> [29]. Science, 1972	Rose, Charlie. Public Service, 2007
Brown, Robert J. Public Service, 2016	Howell, Claude. Fine Arts, 1985	Rounds, Glen. Literature, 1981
Brown, William. Fine Arts, 1991	Humber, Robert Lee. Public Service, 1968	Royster, Vermont. Literature, 1968
Broyhill, James T. Public Service, 2015	Hunt, Betty Debnam. Public Service, 2005	Rubin Jr., Louis. Literature, 1992
Bruck, Robert. Science, 1997	<u>Hunt Jr., James Baxter</u> [30]. Public Service, 2003	Russell, Charles. Literature, 1968
Bryan, Joseph. Public Service, 1986	Hutchison III, Clyde. Science, 1995	Sabiston Jr., David. Science, 1978
Bryan, Jr., Joseph M. Public Service, 2005	Ingram, Robert A. Public Service, 2014	Saltzman, Marvin. Fine Arts, 1998
<u>Burke, Selma</u> [21]. Fine Arts, 1982	Jackson, Herb. Fine Arts, 1999	Sancar, Aziz. Science, 2016
Byer, Kathryn Stripling. Literature, 2001	James, A. Everette Jr. Fine Arts, 2015	Sanders, Charles. Science, 2006
Caldwell, John. Public Service, 1987	Janty, R.K.M. Science, 2017	Sanders, John. Public Service, 1996
Carroll, F. Ivy. Science, 2010	Jenrette, Richard. Public Service, 1994	Sanford, Terry. Public Service, 1970
Cashion, Jerry C. Public Service, 2007	Johnson, Gerald. Literature, 1965	Scherr, Mary Ann. Fine Arts, 2003
Chambers, Julius L. Public Service, 2002	Johnson, Hunter. Fine Arts, 1965	Schmidt-Nielsen, Knut. Science, 1999
Chappell, Fred. Literature, 1980	Jones, H. G. Public Service, 2002	Schopler, Eric. Public Service, 1993
Chase, Nancy. Public Service, 1982	Jones, Mary Ellen. Science, 1991	Scott, Ralph. Public Service, 1981
Church, Eric. Fine Arts, 2022	Jordan III, Robert. Public Service, 2001	Scott, Robert. Public Service, 1996
Clayton, Eva. Public Service, 2022	Kamphoefner, Henry. Fine Arts, 1978	Semans, James & Mary. Fine Arts, 1971
Coates, Albert. Public Service, 1967	Kellenberger, May G.L. Public Service, 1969	Shapiro, Alan. Literature, 2014
Cochrane, William. Public Service, 1992	Kenan, Frank. Public Service, 1990	Shelton, Henry. Public Service, 1999
Cockerham, C. Clark. Science, 1976	Kenan, Randall. Literature, 2005	Simpson, Bland. Fine Arts, 2005
Cohen, Myron S. Science, 2013	Kenan III, Thomas. Public Service, 1997	Simpson, Vollis. Fine Arts, 2011
	Kirk, Phillip J., Jr. Public Service, 2013	Sloane, Joseph. Fine Arts, 1977

Coleman, Carolyn Q. Public Service, 2018	Kishnani, Priya. Dr. Science, 2022	Smith, Arthur. Fine Arts, 2001
Collins, Francis S. Science, 2020	Koontz, Elizabeth Duncan. Public Service, 1977	Smith, Dean. Public Service, 2008
Colvard, Dean. Public Service, 1990	Kreps, Juanita. Public Service, 1976	Smith, Lee. Literature, 1984
Cooke, S. Tucker. Fine Arts, 2000	Kuralt, Charles. Public Service, 1987	Smithies, Oliver. Science, 1993
Corbett, Kizzmekia S. Dr. Science, 2020	Lambeth, Thomas Willis. Public Service, 2005	Spaulding, Elna. Public Service, 1997
Couch, John. Science, 1964	Lancaster, H. Martin. Public Service, 2011	Spaulding, Maria F. Public Service, 2021
Cowling, Ellis. Science, 1973	Lee, Howard N. Public Service, 2015	<u>Speight, Francis</u> [35]. Fine Arts, 1964
Cox, Joe. Fine Arts, 1993	Lee, William. Public Service, 1988	Spencer, Elizabeth. Literature, 1994
Cram, John E. Fine Arts, 2013	Lefkowitz, Robert. Science, 1987	Stafford, Darrel. Science, 2007
Cuatrecasas, Pedro. Science, 1988	Leonard, R. Michael. Public Service, 2010	Stanback, Fred & Alice. Public Service, 2008
Dalton, Mary & Harry. Fine Arts, 1983	Leslie, Bill. Fine Arts, 2018	Stanford Jr., Charles. Fine Arts, 1969
Daniels, Jonathan. Literature, 1967	Leuchtenburg, William. Literature, 2007	Stannett, Vivian. Science, 1981
Daniels, Julia Jones. Public Service, 1999	Lindgren, Robert. Fine Arts, 1980	<u>Stem Jr., Thad.</u> Literature, 1974 [36]
Daniels Jr., Frank. Public Service, 1999	Linney, Romulus. Literature, 2002	Stephens, Stanley. Science, 1968
David Jr., Edward. Science, 1972	Littleton, Harvey. Fine Arts, 1987	Stephenson, Shelby. Literature, 2001
Davidson, Jan. Fine Arts, 2007	London, Edith. Fine Arts, 1988	Sultan, Donald. Fine Arts, 2010
Davis, Archie. Public Service, 1979	Long, William Ivey. Fine Arts, 2004	Swalin, Benjamin F. Fine Arts, 1967
Davis, Burke. Literature, 1973	Lucas, John Harding. Public Service, 2013	Swalin, Maxine. Public Service, 1989
Davis, Charles (Chuck). Fine Arts, 1992	<u>Lynch, Loretta E</u> [17]. Public Service, 2017	Talley, André Leon. Literature, 2021
deButts, John. Public Service, 1979	Mackay, Trudy F. C. Science, 2011	Talley Jr., Banks. Public Service, 1995
Delhom, M. Mellanay. Fine Arts, 1997	Madey, John. Science, 1992	Taylor, Billy. Fine Arts, 1993
Denny Jr., Floyd. Science, 1982	Maron, Margaret. Literature, 2008	<u>Taylor, James</u> [10]. Fine Arts, 1998
DeSimone, Joseph M. Science, 2009	Marsalis, Branford. Fine Arts, 2011	Thornton, William. Science, 2003
Dole, Elizabeth. Public Service, 1991	Martin, James. Public Service, 2008	Thorp, Bo. Fine Arts, 2009
Dykeman, Wilma. Literature, 1985	Matheson, Elizabeth. Fine Arts, 2004	Thurman, Maxwell. Public Service, 1992
Eaton, Charles. Literature, 1988	Mayo, John. Science, 1995	<u>Timberlake, Bob</u> [37]. Fine Arts, 1990
Ebendorf, Robert W. Fine Arts, 2010	McBride, Patricia. Fine Arts, 2015	Tynes, Harriet. Public Service, 1978
Edgell, Marshall. Science, 1994	McCain, Betty Ray. Public Service, 2009	Tyson, Timothy B. Literature, 2021
Edgerton, Clyde. Literature, 1997	McCall, Adeline. Fine Arts, 1981	Walker, LeRoy T. Public Service, 2004
Ehle, John. Literature, 1972	McColl Jr, Hugh L. Public Service, 2009	<u>Walser, Richard</u> [38]. Literature, 1976
Ehle, Rosemary Harris. Fine Arts, 2007	McCorkle, Jill. Literature, 1999	Wani, Mansukh. Science, 2005
Eiel, Ernest. Science, 1986	McFee, Michael A. Literature, 2018	Ward, Robert. Fine Arts, 1975
Elion, Gertrude. Science, 1989	McGlohon, Loonis. Fine Arts, 1989	<u>Watson, Doc</u> [39]. Fine Arts, 1986
Ervin, Samuel J. Public Service, 1973	McKay, Martha. Public Service, 1996	<u>Waynick, Capus</u> [40]. Public Service, 1971
Etchells, John. Science, 1975	Meredith, Jesse. Public Service, 1991	Weatherford, Carole Boston. Literature, 2010
Ethridge, Willie Snow. Literature, 1982	Merritt, Hiram Houston. Science, 1967	<u>Webb, James E.</u> [41] Public Service, 1971
Fields, William. Fine Arts, 1974	Meymandi, Assad. Fine Arts, 2016	<u>Wellman, Manly Wade</u> [42]. Literature, 1978
Finlator, W.W. Public Service, 2001	Michaux, Mickey. Public Service, 2022	Wheeler, Lawrence J. Fine Arts, 2019
Fitz-Simons, Foster. Fine Arts, 1976	Miller, Heather. Literature, 1983	Wicker, Tom. Literature, 1981
<u>Fletcher, Inglis</u> [22]. Literature, 1964	Millhouse, Barbara B. Fine Arts, 2018	Wilfer, Catherine M., MD. Science, 2019
Fletcher, William. Science, 2000	Mitchell Jr., Burley. Public Service, 2007	Wilkerson, Annie Louise. Science, 2004
Flood, Dudley E. Public Service, 2021	Mitchell, Joseph. Literature, 1984	Williams, Jonathan. Fine Arts, 1977
Franklin, John Hope. Literature, 1993	Mitchiner, Reginald. Science, 1977	Williams, William T. Fine Arts, 2006
<u>Frazier, Charles</u> [23]. Literature, 2008	Modrich, Paul L. Science, 2016	Wilson, Blake S. Science, 2021
Freedman, Gerald. Fine Arts, 2008	Moore, Dan. Public Service, 1980	Wilson, Edwin Graves. Public Service, 2002
Freelon, Philip G. Fine Arts, 2017	Moore, Jeanelle. Public Service, 1980	Wilson, Emily Herring. Literature, 2006
Friday, William. Public Service, 1975	Moore, Lenard D. Literature, 2014	<u>Winston, Ellen Black</u> [43]. Public Service, 1974
Fridovich, Irwin. Science, 1985	Morehead, John. Public Service, 1964	Wolf, Frederick. Science, 1965
Frye, Henry. Public Service, 2007	Morgan, Robert. Literature, 1991	Wolfram, Walt. Public Service, 2013
Gardner, James C. Public Service, 2016	Morton, Hugh. Public Service, 1983	Wood III, Ira David. Fine Arts, 2014
Garvey Jr., Robert. Public Service, 1978	Murray, Royce W. Science, 2001	Woodward, James H. Public Service, 2017
Gatewood, Maud. Fine Arts, 1984	Narayan, Jagdish (Jay). Science, 2014	Wyngaarden, James. Science, 1974
Gerard, Philip. Literature, 2019	Ness, Kenneth. Fine Arts, 1973	Zucchino, David. Literature, 2022
<u>Gibbons, Kaye</u> [24]. Literature, 1998	Newman, Margaret S. "Tog." Public Service,	
Gilmore, Voit. Public Service, 2004	2010	

## More About North Carolina Award Recipients

Biographical essays are available for each North Carolina Award recipient in the ceremony program for that year. Ceremony programs are accessible [here](#) in the NC Digital Collections.<sup>[4]</sup>

A list of Black and African American recipients of the North Carolina Award can be found [here on NCpedia](#).<sup>[3]</sup>

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[Governmental programs](#) <sup>[46]</sup>

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**Authors:**

[Agan, Kelly](#) <sup>[49]</sup>

[Rudersdorf, Amy](#) <sup>[50]</sup>

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