

## Stuart Thayer Prize

- 1. Purpose.** The Circus Historical Society, Inc. (hereafter “CHS”) encourages the highest quality of research, scholarship and writing about American circus history. It annually recognizes a superior work by awarding the Stuart Thayer Prize (hereafter the “Prize”). The award is named in honor of Stuart Thayer, the author of numerous foundational and insightful works published about the antebellum American circus and menagerie.
- 2. Administration.** The selection of a work or works for consideration, the nominee(s) and the awarding of the Prize shall be administered by CHS’s Board of Trustees (hereafter the “Board”). The process shall be managed by a three member committee appointed every four years by the newly-elected CHS president during his or her initial three months in office. The first committee shall be nominated by the current president within one month of the process being approved by the Board.
- 3. Definition and Updates.** This document, which defines the Prize process, shall be kept current by the CHS secretary. It shall be constantly posted and maintained on the society’s website, with the dates of any revisions clearly given with the document. It will be reviewed and updated by the Board at each annual board meeting. The Board, at its discretion, may revise the process, with approval in accordance with current by-laws.
- 4. Prize Committee.** A committee of three members shall be appointed by the CHS president for a term of four years, to run concurrent with the CHS election years. The committee appointees may or may not be CHS members, but they shall have a demonstrated and generally known knowledge of circus history. The names of the committee members shall be communicated to the Board by written statement or joint e-mail. In the event that any member fails to fulfill their duty, or otherwise faults the process, they shall be replaced at the sole discretion of the President, who shall inform the Board in writing, or by e-mail to all, of the action.
- 5. Committee Chair.** The three members shall select a chairperson to speak on their behalf. The chairperson shall receive all submitted nominations and shall distribute copies of them to the prize committee.
- 6. Exclusion.** Members of the committee are not eligible to receive the prize. Should they be nominated, they may elect to decline consideration, or submit their resignation. The president shall designate their replacement for the remainder of their term.
- 7. Invitation for Nominations.** Invitations for nominations for the Prize shall be announced annually in the CHS journal, in the last issue actually distributed within each calendar year, and also on the society’s website during the last quarter of each calendar year. Both invitations shall refer to the Nomination Form, which will be available for downloading from the CHS website.

## 8. Eligibility.

**Content**--A nominated work must be substantially about American circus history or a very closely related topic.

**Format**--Works may be in any printed form: book; article; pamphlet; booklet; bibliography; exhibit catalogue; a single essay that is part of a larger work; or an original work contained in digital format on a disk or loaded on a permanent website.

**Posthumous publication**--Works by deceased authors being published posthumously for the first time are eligible for nomination. The prize shall be awarded to the closest survivor or an immediate family representative, or to a representative of the organization that accomplished the publication.

**Exclusions**--Exhibits, websites, symposiums, etc., that do not issue a permanent document or are not archived in some permanent format are not eligible for nomination. Fictional works are not eligible. Simple re-printings and new editions of older works, without annotation or other updating that substantially improve the value of the work are not eligible for nomination. Virtual and digital library content and activity are not eligible for nomination.

**Release date**--A work published, issued or released within the calendar year prior to the prize year is eligible for nomination.

9. **Selection.** The committee shall give due consideration to all works nominated for the Prize. Each nomination will be accepted or rejected on the basis of meeting the nomination criteria and submittal requirements. The committee shall familiarize themselves with each work via direct access and evaluation. Consultation may be made with other knowledgeable authorities outside of the committee to gather appropriate knowledge necessary to render a decision.

The committee chair shall draft a brief written statement that reflects the decision of the three members. It shall clearly state the name of the selected prize winner and declare the merits and qualities of the work that is being selected for the Prize. The statement shall be submitted in writing to the CHS president, who shall utilize the information in announcing the prize winner. The deliberations and selection of the winner shall be kept confidential.

Should the committee decide that a nomination falls outside the nomination criteria, they shall return the nomination form to the nominator with an explanation for their decision.

If in the committee's deliberations no nominee justifiably deserves the Prize, they shall so declare to the CHS president in writing.

10. **Nominators.** Any current member in good standing of the CHS may nominate one or more works for the Prize. Officers, board members and members of the prize committee who are CHS members may nominate works. Members may nominate their own works for the prize.

11. **Nominations submission.** All nominations shall be submitted in the format of the Nomination, Attachment 1 (below). No other nomination forms shall be accepted. Nominations may be submitted in hard copy, by fax, or e-mail delivered scan. Each nomination must be signed and dated by the nominator.

12. **Deadline.** All nominations must be submitted no later than March 31, prize issued at the CHS convention.

13. **Announcement.** The Prize winner shall be contacted by the President of the CHS, who shall ascertain that the winner will accept the prize.

The name of the Prize winner and the identity of the prize-winning work shall be announced during the organization's annual meeting, at the annual banquet. When possible, confidential arrangements shall be made to have the winner personally present to accept the award, or to have it received by a designated recipient.

After the annual meeting, the Prize winner shall be announced on the society's website and also recognized in the society's journal, *Bandwagon*. A media release may be prepared and issued to other circus-related publications, the winner's hometown newspaper and other recipients judged to provide appropriate recognition for both the winner and the CHS.

14. **Prize.** The Prize shall be declared on a suitable plaque inscribed with the following declaration:

The Stuart Thayer Prize  
Awarded to  
[name]  
For  
[name of work]  
By the  
Circus Historical Society, Inc.  
[year]

The cost of the plaque and any expense related thereto shall be born by the CHS treasury.

15. **Honorarium.** Monies shall be accepted by the CHS to build a restricted fund, the earnings on which will fund the awarding of an honorarium in conjunction with the Prize plaque. These funds shall be accounted for separately within the established CHS accounting practice. The funds shall be restricted solely for the purpose of awarding an honorarium commencing at such time when the Board has determined that the earnings on the fund are adequate to support the honorarium. As the Prize fund grows, a policy for the management of the monies shall be prepared by the Board.

Revised: 2014

Attachment 1

**Circus Historical Society  
Stuart Thayer Prize Nomination**

Nominator  
Name:

Address:

E-mail: Telephone:

I hereby nominate the work below for the Stuart Thayer Prize:

Author[s]:

Title:

Publication Date:

Provide a brief statement that advocates why the nominated work is worthy of the Prize. Please refer to aspects of cutting edge scholarship, new content, advances in knowledge, superior or new research technique, or other features embodied in the work.

[description]

Submit nomination form to:

Circus Historical Society  
Stuart Thayer Prize Committee  
Fred D. Pfening III  
1075 W. Fifth Ave.  
Columbus, Ohio 43212.

Nominator signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

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CHS use only

Date nomination form received \_\_\_\_\_