



ASA Policy and Process for Renaming an Award or Scholarship

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Preamble

The American Statistical Association (ASA) has numerous awards and scholarships that have names of individuals associated with them. Some are named for an individual to honor and recognize their contributions to the statistics discipline or the profession while others are named for the purpose of honoring the donor or a designee the donor wishes to honor. In this document we use the term “honoree” to refer to either case. In the unusual circumstance that a question is raised about the propriety of keeping the name of the honoree on an award or scholarship, the ASA will use the following policy and process, which is based in part on the Stanford University’s *Principles and Procedures for Renaming Buildings and Other Features at Stanford University*, <https://campusnames.stanford.edu/renaming-principles/>.

Policy and Procedure

The ASA is committed to fostering a welcoming and inclusive environment for all. The ASA will consider renaming awards or scholarships when there is sufficient evidence that retaining the name is inconsistent with the ASA’s mission and values or is potentially damaging to the association’s reputation. The ASA recognizes that renaming an award/scholarship can also have negative consequences and should be undertaken only where warranted. We recognize that:

- Historical evidence is typically complex.
- Today’s decisions about naming and renaming may become controversial in the future. Some deference to previous decision makers should be given, just as current decision makers would hope for in the future.
- Any person after whom an award/scholarship has been named may have a history that some members of our diverse community will find objectionable. The proper investigation of requests for renaming, and the possible responses should not be undertaken lightly.

The ASA Board of Directors may begin the process of reconsidering the name on a scholarship/award once a request has been formally submitted, or by its own initiative. Any ASA member may submit a request, and it should describe:

- the specific behavior(s) or course(s) of conduct by the person after whom a scholarship/award is named that violate the ASA’s mission and values;
- the sources of the evidence of that behavior;
- the nature, depth, and extent of the harm that the continued use of the name may inflict on the ASA’s integrity, mission, and communities.

If the Board decides that a discussion of the requested name reconsideration is warranted, the ASA may engage the services of an external entity (for example, a firm specializing in conducting this kind of research) to investigate, under the constraints and conditions described below.

The following factors will be considered during the investigation:

- *The centrality of the person’s offensive behavior to their life as a whole.*
The case for renaming is strongest where the honoree’s offensive behavior is inextricably connected with his/her public and professional persona. The case for renaming is weaker where the honoree’s offensive behavior, though publicly known, is not a central or inextricable part of his/her public persona—especially when the honoree’s behavior was conventional at the time of the behavior or the naming, and when, despite the objectionable behavior, other aspects of the person’s life and work are especially praiseworthy.
- *Harmful impact of the honoree’s behavior*
The case for renaming the scholarship/award is strong to the extent that retaining a name creates an environment that impairs the ability of members, staff, or others involved in ASA activities of a particular gender, sexual orientation, race, religion, national origin, or other characteristic protected by federal law or ASA policy, to participate fully and effectively in the mission of the ASA. The case is also strong in the case of fraudulent or criminal activities, and other morally repugnant behavior.
- *Strength and clarity of the historical evidence*
The case for renaming is strongest when evidence of the person in question’s wrongful behavior is clear and unambiguous, and is weakest when the evidence is scant or ambiguous.
- *Prior consideration of the issues.* The case for renaming is stronger when the honoree’s offensive conduct came to light after the naming, or where the issue was not the subject of prior deliberation. The case for renaming is weaker when the ASA addressed the behavior at the time of the naming and nonetheless decided to honor the person, or when the ASA has already considered and rejected a prior request for renaming.
- *Possibilities for mitigation*
In considering whether to retain or eliminate a name, it should be taken into account whether the harm can be mitigated, and historical knowledge preserved by recognizing

and addressing the individual's wrongful behavior. When a scholarship/award is renamed or when the name is retained but when retention was thought to be a close question, the ASA Board of Directors should consider describing the history in another prominent way.

Upon completion of the investigation, the findings and any recommendations will be presented to the ASA Board of Directors. The subsequent action taken by the board will be considered final and the appropriate next steps will be determined at that time.

As part of the above process, ASA staff will determine, upon the advice of counsel when needed, whether the agreement that created the award or scholarship allows for legal alteration of the name. If not, and if the board determines that the name should no longer be retained, steps will be taken to terminate the award or scholarship and deal appropriately with any fund balance legally associated with the award.