

Guidelines on Composing Jay Wright Forrester Award Nominations

As the field continues to grow and mature, the number of eligible works increases steadily. The Society encourages nominations from this growing pool by you, the active and committed system dynamics community. Members of the Awards Committee themselves do not normally nominate works. Those on the Award Committee strive to make independent judgments in determining the award winner/s. However, we rely on high quality, thoughtful nominations to frame our thinking. So we urge you to make an effort to make a nomination. Once received, the Awards Committee reviews the nominations. If needed, nominators will be contacted by a committee member for more details. The committee creates a short list and then selects an overall winner.

The nomination and award process is not a closed shop, but it's not an open door either. There are barriers to entry. The first barrier is deciding to nominate someone. Obviously no piece of work, regardless of its special merits, can win unless it's been nominated. The second barrier is the nomination task itself, which is to write and submit a short paragraph that clearly conveys the importance and significance of the nominated work. But what does the Awards Committee expect? It's not enough simply to name an author and a particular work. Nominations should cite papers, articles, books, research or consulting reports, theses or other written material. Please include this information in the field "Please tell us why you are nominating this work" on the web submission form.

~ Books are demanding to read but are perhaps the most straightforward for nominators to propose because their contribution is self-contained. Usually a book fully explains an important set of ideas, or fully communicates a coherent research theme, without the need for nominators to cite a variety of related work by the same or other authors. The nominators' task (clear but non-trivial) is to convincingly describe the book's substantive contribution to the field. A good example is the 2002 award winning work, *Business Dynamics*, the definitive contemporary textbook in the field by John Sterman (2000). Another is *Group Model Building* by Jac Vennix (1996), which won the award in 1999.

~ Papers and articles sometimes present a more difficult nomination challenge than books because a selected paper is often a sample from a portfolio of the author's work. The nominator's task is to select a representative paper from the portfolio, to describe its individual merits **and** to meaningfully assess the contribution of the chosen paper to an identifiable theme, as well as the contribution of this broader theme to the field. A good example is Andy Ford's paper "Estimating the Impact of Efficiency Standards of the Northwest Electric System" published in *Operations Research*. The paper won the Forrester Award in 1996 and contributed to a body of research on performance dynamics in the utility industries by Andy and by others. Another example is Erling Moxnes' paper "Not Only the Tragedy of the Commons: Misperceptions of Bioeconomics" published in *Management Science* that won the award in 2000 and contributed to research on both environmental dynamics and misperceptions of feedback.

~ Yet another example, but rather different, is the award made in 1989 to Barry Richmond for STELLA and the Academic User's Guide to STELLA. It may seem unusual for an academic society to recognize software in this particular way, but STELLA was highly innovative software at the time. Moreover, and of particular importance about composing nominations, STELLA was (and still is) an embodiment of a broader theme in Barry's lifelong work. As we heard eloquently at the New York City conference in 2003, Barry's theme was passionate commitment to communicating the core concepts of system dynamics with exceptional clarity. He was ambitious for the field. He wanted system dynamics to be accessible and useful to everyone (and for Barry the field included not only feedback systems thinking, but also stock accumulation, algebraic modeling and simulation). His intended audience was far bigger than a technical elite.

~ Once in a while an individual paper comes along that has an impact on people's thinking in its own right even though it also belongs to a broader theme of work or research. The nominator's task is then to specify what the contribution is and why, as an individual paper, it has had significant impact. A good example is not in the Forrester Award list. That's because the paper is by Jay Forrester himself, dating back to 1968, many years before the award was established, and published in the *Industrial Management Review*, now called the *Sloan Management Review*. The paper contains the widely studied "market growth model." Although the model clearly belongs in the broad theme of industrial dynamics research then underway at MIT in the 1960s, the paper has had a remarkable impact in its own right. The market growth model introduces into the field, for the first time, a generic structure to explain the puzzling phenomenon of growth and under-investment that occurs when promising growth companies (incubators of jobs and wealth) falter, stagnate and die prematurely. The paper describes and documents the model to fully reveal its subtle policy structure in terms of three interacting feedback loops. The paper then goes on to analyze the model's repertoire of dynamics through a carefully designed series of partial model simulations, culminating in the full-model syndrome of growth and decline, caused by chronic but unintended under-investment.

Who do you suppose should be a winner? We urge you to nominate your personal selection for next year. If you don't do it, who will? Do not wait for someone else to do it. Indeed, when multiple nominations for the same paper come in (as was the case for the winner in 2004), it does make a difference.

We hope to hear from you!

Best Regards,
[The Jay Wright Forrester Award Committee](#)

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The above information was adapted, with permission from the publisher, from award citation speeches:

- John Morecroft, London Business School, 2003 Chair, System Dynamics Society's Academic Awards Committee, *System Dynamics Review* Vol. 19, No. 4, (Winter 2003): 297-301
- David Andersen, University at Albany, 2004 Member, System Dynamic Society's Academic Awards Committee, *System Dynamics Review* Vol. 20, No. 4, (Winter 2004): 337-340

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