



American Association of Teachers of German, Inc.

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German Educators to Receive National Awards

The American Association of Teachers of German (AATG) recognizes German teachers and programs for their outstanding contributions to the teaching and learning of German in the US. The 2025 award recipients will be recognized at a [**virtual presentation to be held on November 9.**](#)

Outstanding German Educators

AATG's highest honors, the **Outstanding German Educator Award** have been awarded to two truly phenomenal educators this year.

In the **University/Collegiate** category, **Pascale LaFountain**, Associate Professor of German and French at **Montclair State University** in Montclair, NJ receives the award.

Receiving the honor for the **High School (9-12 grade)** category is **Beth Lillskau**, a teacher of German at **Prairie High and Middle Schools** in Cedar Rapids, IA.

The **Outstanding German Educator Awards** are presented in recognition of demonstrated excellence in German education and creative leadership in German language education in local, state, and national arenas.

German Embassy Teacher of Excellence

Each year, the German Embassy recognizes up-and-coming German teachers for excellence in teaching, creativity, and outstanding dedication. In 2025, three teachers receive recognition from the Embassy:

Marissa Beck-Dean, German teacher at **Haines City High School/ International Baccalaureate** in Haines City, FL;

John Daigle, German teacher at **Lindale Middle School** in Linthicum Heights, MD;

and **Olga Shatalova**, German teacher at **Billings West High School** in Billings, MT.

Lifetime Achievement Award

The **AATG Lifetime Achievement Award for Excellence in German Language Education** is presented periodically to a German Educator who has demonstrated a lifelong commitment to the highest standards of teaching, mentorship, and community engagement. The 2025 Lifetime Achievement Award is awarded to **Ingrid Zeller** of **Northwestern University**.

This award honors an educator who has consistently gone above and beyond to inspire a love of the German language and culture in their students. Recipients of this award are not only masters of their craft in the classroom, but they are also deeply dedicated to fostering the personal and academic growth of their students, reaching and supporting them through every challenge.

AATG / Goethe-Institut Outstanding GAPP Coordinator Award

Melanie Mello, German teacher at **Arizona German Language School** in Chandler, AZ will receive the AATG/Goethe-Institut Outstanding GAPP Coordinator Award.

This award honors German educators who provide opportunities for their students to study abroad on short-term exchanges to Germany through the German American Partnership Program (GAPP).

Goethe-Institut/AATG Certificate of Merit

The Goethe-Institut / AATG Certificate of Merit honors AATG members who have demonstrated achievement in furthering the teaching of German in the US. Four educators will be recognized with the **Goethe-Institut/AATG Certificate of Merit** for their achievements this year:

Claudia Grossmann, German professor at **Indiana University Indianapolis**, in Indianapolis, IN;

Sara Lee, German professor at **Arizona State University** in **Chandler, AZ**;

Kathy Lockwood, German teacher at **Cascade High School** in **Everett, WA**; and

Alina Dana Weber, German professor at **Florida State University** in Tallahassee, FL.

German Center of Excellence

This year, one German program receives recognition as a **German Center of Excellence**. This designation is presented to well-established and growing German programs with demonstrated excellence in instruction and strong support from administration, professional colleagues, alumni, and students. This year's designation goes to the German Program at **Carleton College** in Northfield, MN.

Friend of German Award (Community)

Travis and Amy Jerde of the **IASG/Carmel Seiffen Sister Cities of Carmel, IN** will be recognized as this year's recipients of the Friend of German Award for Community Engagement. This award is awarded for outstanding support for and promotion of German in the community.

The award recognizes those who demonstrate exemplary leadership at the local, regional, or national level in the advocacy of German and German language education.

Friend of German Award (Educator)

Maria Sturm of the **German Society of Pennsylvania** will be recognized as this year's recipient of the Friend of German Award for Educators, for outstanding support for and promotion of German and the study of German.

The award recognizes those who demonstrate exemplary leadership at the local, regional, or national level in the advocacy of German and German language education.

Max Kade Prize for Best Article in *The German Quarterly*

Sophie Salvo, Assistant Professor of German at the **University of Chicago**, receives the **Max Kade Prize for the best article published in *The German Quarterly***. Her article, "Knowing Gender in Kim de l'Horizon's *Blutbuch*" demonstrates how gender emerges in Kim de l'Horizon's *Blutbuch* "as a signifier in search of its meaning."

***The German Quarterly* Graduate Student Paper Award**

***The German Quarterly's* 2025 award for the best paper written by a graduate student** goes to **Andrew C. Sternhagen Schwenk**, a graduate student in German Studies at the **University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign**, for his paper "Melusine, Emblem of the Self: The Female Traveler and the Contours of Acceptable Difference." The committee highlights Schwenk's engaging and ambitious exploration of the early modern German novel *Melusine* by Thüring von Ringoltingen (1457).

Award for Best Article of *Die Unterrichtspraxis/ Teaching German*

The 2025 Award for Best Article in *Die Unterrichtspraxis/ Teaching German* recipient is **Morgan Koerner** of **College of Charleston** in Charleston, SC. His article, "Racial literacy and performative pedagogies in the German theater practicum," explores the potential and pitfalls of performative pedagogies for teaching literature that thematizes issues of race and racism and argues that racial literacy requires a rethinking of drama-pedagogical practice.

Concluding Remarks from AATG President Angelika Becker

"With their dedication to excellence in German language and culture instruction, these award recipients promote the transatlantic friendship between the US and German-speaking countries and foster the much-needed intercultural awareness so their students can lead successful lives in a globalized world," said **Angelika Becker**, president of the **American Association of Teachers of German**.

Congratulations to all!

