money could be made available from the G. Norman Knight Fund, an appropriate source, for Norman Knight was a Medal winner in 1967, and at present the Fund is not being used. The medal is a handsome object, worthy of the honour, but a sum of money in addition would help focus members’ thoughts on submitting suitable indexes; their own work or that of others. In the US, the H. W. Wilson Company Award for Excellence in Indexing (founded in 1978) is awarded annually in two parts: the first, awarded to the indexer(s), consists of $500 and a citation; the second, to the publisher, is a citation.6

Secondly, it would be helpful if a submission document were included with the nominated index, in which the indexer detailed the problems he/she found, what solutions were made, what role the publisher played (e.g. any restrictions or particular help), what technology was used and how it helped or hindered the process, and any information which could demonstrate why the index was thought outstanding. This would make the nominee examine the standards of the proposed nomination and eliminate frivolous or unworthy indexes before they reached the panel.

Thirdly, the publicity to the indexing, library and publishing worlds should be more professional. A request for nominations needs to be made in a more positive manner in the professional press. The list of nominated books could be made known in SI Newsletter, with the names of the indexers and publishers. The winning book and runners up should be fully described in The Indexer, in which their particular problems and solutions have shown how high their standards are and how professional their approach is to the business of indexing: for example, John Vickers in 1979, and Ann Hudson (Commended for 1989).7,8

If positive, modern publicity were given to the award, in the booktrade and library journals in particular, sponsorship might even be forthcoming to raise the profile of the award and gain public awareness of excellence in book indexing.

References
4. Ibid.

Jill Ford was editor of Indexers Available 1985–90; member of SI Council 1985–92; assessor of Wheatley Medal 1990-date.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Name the indexer?

Norman Knight, founder of the Society of Indexers, maintained with vigour that the name of the indexer should always appear at the head of his index. No doubt he was successful in ensuring this for the indexes he made, but, apart from the compilers of some indexes of special length and importance, the practice has not become prevalent. I did not find the indexer named in any of a selection of recently published books.

However, before seeing his name over an index, the indexer would wish to secure that the index was printed as supplied to the publisher. In my experience this was usually the case, but occasionally copy-editors felt impelled to make alterations. These were not always in accord with the typographical design of the index, and might even introduce error, as when my 'rat-borne disease' was changed to 'rat-born disease'. As time often did not allow the indexer to see a proof of the index, the possibility of change was a cause for anxiety (and for not wanting to be named) but given that an index is printed as supplied, do indexers want to be named? As G. V. Carey persuasively wrote in *The Indexer* Autumn 1966 5 (2), 78–80, indexers are 'servants of the world of letters', and as such indexes should rightly prefer to be inconspicuous.

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