

2024 Annual Reading, Literacy, and Learning Conference



DISTINCTION OF SERVICE AWARD CAROLYN COWEN, ED.M.

Carolyn D. Cowen, Ed.M., is an educator and social entrepreneur known for establishing innovative programs and initiatives that improve the teaching-learning landscape for people with learning differences. In her 45-year career in education and nonprofits Carolyn has worn many hats—including reading therapist, speaker, author, editor, executive director, conference and think-tank convener, research coordinator, funder, and communications strategist. She also has served on various nonprofit boards, including the board of the International Dyslexia Association as Executive Editor-in-Chief of its editorial boards.

Carolyn earned her master's degree in reading education and learning disabilities from Harvard University during the "Jeanne Chall era" and received the Alice H. Garside Award from the Massachusetts Branch of IDA. Carolyn was very lucky! Both Chall and Garside were early mentors, along with Sylvia Richardson and Rosemary Bowler.

These days, Carolyn is interested in harnessing the power of digital media to make complex information accessible and actionable for the spectrum of decision makers working for change on behalf of students with dyslexia. She created the first iteration of IDA's Structured Literacy Wheel and guided development of the Structured Literacy InfoMap. Other recent IDA projects include founding the Gordon F. Sherman Neuroscience and Education Symposium and helping spearhead two definition initiatives—creating IDA's definition of Structured Literacy and revisiting IDA's Definition of Dyslexia.

Finally, Carolyn is an aspiring novelist. Currently she's seeking representation for a family saga-historical fiction which, yes, includes characters with dyslexia!

