



ESO **Epsilon Sigma Omicron** **Honorary Educational Society**

ESO stands for Epsilon Sigma Omicron and is an honorary educational society that is federation-supported and open to all GFWC club members. ESO was established in 1928 by the Indiana Federation of Women's Clubs. It was incorporated as a national society in 1930. ESO first appeared at the GFWC Convention in 1932 and in 1950 became a division of the Education Department of GFWC. For the past 60 years, over 40 states have established chapters and enjoy the reading program as we know it today. The North Carolina Alpha Eta Chapter of ESO was begun in 1961.

The motto of ESO is "Enlighten Your Own Pathway". Its purpose is to provide club women with a structured reading program to promote educational pursuits and stimulate a desire for self-improvement. ESO can take the form of a reading group or an individual's personal reading pursuit. The goals of ESO are as follows:

- To encourage club women's pursuit of higher education
- To create an additional means to unite women in volunteerism
- To develop a support network for women returning to school
- To improve study skills and develop new study skills.
- To stimulate systematic home reading and study with a minimum amount of supervision.
- To encourage the establishment of home libraries and greater use of public libraries
- To encourage the formation of reading/study/discussion groups

How Do I Join?

Interested GFWC-NC members must complete the ESO pledge application before they can begin working towards membership status.

Send pledge application with \$2 enrollment fee to the State ESO Chairman, Lynn Wiss, who will begin tracking your progress. Contact Information located in Appendix F of the GFWC-NC Administration Book.

Once the application has been received, the chairman will send you the official ESO Handbook. The Reading list can be found on the GFWC website at www.gfwc.org/ESO.

What Are My Responsibilities?

The primary responsibility of the ESO participant is, of course, reading. After becoming a pledge, a clubwoman will read books within established categories and will complete a required report form (one to three sentences is sufficient) expressing her opinion of each book read. Once a member has completed a category (four books), she will send her completed report form to the state ESO chairman. As reports are completed, the clubwoman will work her way up through the ESO levels, from ESO Pledge to ESO Century Award Member and on. The program is self-paced, and the subject categories on the reading list cover a wide range of topics. In addition to the current

GFWC ESO Reading List, books from prior ESO lists and from current bestseller lists will be accepted towards credit in the appropriate category. The ESO Reading List is available on the GFWC website or through the GFWC-NC ESO chairman.

What Are The ESO Levels?

ESO participants work their way up through the ESO levels from ESO Pledge to ESO Century Award Member. Clubwomen move to a new ESO level by completing a set of reading list requirements. The reading list is divided into subject categories. According to GFWC-NC to complete a category, a member must read and report on four books in the category.

- MEMBER – Has completed the requirements of membership—4 books in each of 4 different categories for a total of 16 books.
- STAR – Has completed the requirements of the Star level—4 books in each of 6 additional categories for a cumulative total of 40 books. Categories may not be duplicated from the Member level.
- TORCH – Has completed the requirements of the Torch level—4 books in each of 6 additional categories for a cumulative total of 64 books. Categories may not be duplicated from the Member and Star levels. The Member will have read 4 books in 16 different categories.
- CENTURY – Has read an additional 4 books in 9 different categories. These categories may be repeated from the Member, Star and/or Torch levels, for a total of 100 books.
- 2nd Century and beyond – members may continue on to reach additional Century levels by reading 100 books. Books read to achieve these may be in duplicate categories. Members also use the Century Report that only requires the author, book, and category to be listed/
- Diamond – Has completed Century 10 and a total of 1,000 books.

Every administration a new reading list is published and the categories change slightly. The categories are based on selected best sellers lists, American Library Association lists, Pulitzer lists, and other prize lists, and GFWC related topics. The current list from 2022-2024 subject categories is as follows:

What Are The ESO Reading Categories?

- | | | |
|----------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| • American History | • Science Fiction / | • Science |
| • Arts | • Fantasy | • Social Science |
| • Biography & Memoir | • Health & Medicine | • Sports & Recreation |
| • Business & Finance | • Home & Gardens | • STEM.STEAM books |
| • Conservation & | • International Authors | for adults and children |
| Ecology | • Parenting & Families | • Travel and Geography |
| • Drama | • Poetry | • Volunteerism |
| • Education | • Reading to Children - | • Women's Studies |
| • Fiction Romance | Picture/Story Books | • World History |
| • Fiction, Classic | • Reading to Children - | • Authors from your State |
| • Fiction, General | Chapter/Youth Books | • Books About or Taking |
| • Fiction, | • Religion & | Place in your State |
| Mystery/Thriller | Inspirational | |

In addition to the Reading Categories established by GFWC, North Carolina members have decided to honor our North Carolina writers by adding the following categories:

- North Carolina Fiction Writers
- North Carolina Non-Fiction Writers
- North Carolina Children's Books Writers
- Lucy Bramlette Patterson Honoree Writers

Please copy and send the following application and a one-time enrollment fee of \$2.00 to the State ESO Chairman. Make checks payable to GFWC-NC and designate the funds for ESO in the memo.

ESO Pledge Application

Name: _____

Club Name: _____

Home Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Phone Number: _____

Email Address: _____

I hereby agree to pursue the goals of ESO and to participate in ESO Programs.

Date: _____ **Signature:** _____

This form will be used to track your progress as an ESO member throughout the ESO levels.