The Emily Russel award was established to recognize outstanding contributions to Christian librarianship. This award was established in memory of Miss Emily Russel in recognition of her vision and foresight as a co-founder of the Christian Librarians’ Fellowship, now Association of Christian Librarians. For many years Miss Russel was the librarian at Faith Theological Seminary. Later, with the organization of Covenant Theological Seminary in St. Louis, she became its librarian, serving until 1968. She died April 20, 1971. The Emily Russel Award was established by the Fellowship at its 15th Annual Conference at Grace College and Theological Seminary. The recipient of the Emily Russel Award is approved by the Board of Directors.

Any combination of the following criteria may be used in selecting honorees:
1. Foreign service either to missionaries or in international libraries;
2. Special achievement in the librarian’s own home community situation, church, or other special library;
3. Publication or contribution to library literature;
4. Innovative library initiatives;
5. Professional organizational activities.

The recipient of this award receives:
1. A plaque in recognition of outstanding contributions to Christian librarianship;
2. A monetary gift as a token of appreciation for the contributions and services rendered to librarianship and/or the Association of Christian Librarians;
3. All benefits of full membership without the payment of dues for life, after retirement.