

# Pleasant T. Rowland

Founder and Chairman, Rowland Reading Foundation

Pleasant Rowland is a noted educator, business leader, and philanthropist whose career began as a primary-grade teacher. Her lifelong interest in teaching children to read grew from her classroom experience and ultimately led to her authorship of reading and language arts programs used widely for 40 years in schools throughout the country. She is the author of *Beginning to Read, Write, and Listen*, published by McGraw-Hill, and *The Addison-Wesley Reading Program*, published by Addison-Wesley.

In 1985, Ms. Rowland combined her love of American history and her commitment to high-quality educational products when she created The American Girls Collection®, a line of historically accurate books, dolls, and accessories, lauded for its ability to make American history come alive for millions of children.

Ms. Rowland served as president and chairman of American Girl for 15 years and has been honored for her business achievements. American Girl was selected from a field of 3,000 corporations for its exceptional vision and outstanding management. Ms. Rowland was chosen as one of the 12 outstanding entrepreneurs in the nation by the Institute of American Entrepreneurs and was a national finalist for the Entrepreneur of the Year award. She has been cited as one of the “100 Best and Brightest Marketers” in America and as one of America’s Top 50 Women Business

*“Reading is at the heart  
of all achievement.  
Without it, the American  
dream is out of reach.  
With it, anything  
is possible.”*  
Pleasant T. Rowland

Owners. She was inducted into the American Academy of Achievement and has been a member of the International Women’s Forum and the Committee of 200, prestigious organizations that honor women of achievement in business.

Ms. Rowland retired from American Girl in 2000 and

formed the Pleasant T. Rowland Foundation to serve her philanthropic interests in the arts, education, and historic preservation.

In 2003, Ms. Rowland established the Rowland Reading Foundation—dedicated to improving reading instruction in the primary grades. She continues to lead this enterprise today.

Ms. Rowland has been widely recognized for her personal generosity and philanthropic activities and has received the Wisconsin Governor’s Award for her contributions to arts and cultural causes. She was honored as an outstanding alumna of Wells College and holds honorary degrees from the University of Hartford, the University of Wisconsin, and Edgewood College. She has also been inducted into the Wisconsin Business Hall of Fame and the Association of Educational Publishers’ Hall of Fame. In 2011, Ms. Rowland received the Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton Award for her contributions to reading instruction in Catholic schools.

Ms. Rowland lives in Madison, Wisconsin, with her husband.



ROWLAND READING FOUNDATION

[www.rowlandreading.org](http://www.rowlandreading.org)