

The 2019 AAO Awards

The AAO Awards Committee - consisting of Jean Dryden, Matt Szybalski, David Sharron, and Rodney Carter – were pleased and honoured to present four awards at the Annual Conference held in Belleville on May 10th.

The AAO Emerging Leader Award

This award, announced in 2018 to mark the 25th anniversary of the Association, was created recognize early-career archivists (who have been in the profession between two and ten years), whose work and service demonstrate consistent growth, leadership and promise to the archives profession in Ontario. Achievements may include involvement in professional organizations, and/or participation in relevant projects, and/or written and scholarly work. This award is intended to recognize cumulative contributions rather than any single activity.

The Awards Committee and the AAO Board were pleased to present the inaugural Emerging Leader Award to **Gillian (Jill) Shaw**.



Left to Right: Gillian Shaw and Rodney Carter (photo credit: Jeremy Heil)

As an archival records analyst with the City of Vaughn, Jill works effectively within the records management and archival systems to provide access and preserve the materials in the City's care. Further, she displays a natural ability to develop partnerships with local community groups through social media, exhibitions and other outreach efforts.

Beyond her work at Vaughn, Jill has also been very active within the professional archives community since 2015. As communications liaison for the Professional Development Committee of the AAO, Jill developed a social media strategy that led to increased participation and awareness of the PDC's activities. She has also served as Chair and Vice-Chair of the Municipal Archives Interest Group where she led a revitalization of the MAIG website and magazine, organized open houses and AGMs, and created a municipal archives listserv after a formal study of the needs of this archivist group. When she finds the time, Jill also volunteers with the Association of Canadian Archivists in the membership and mentor committee and the Markham Fair's Demonstration Committee.

In the words of her nominator, "Jill is a consummate professional, incredibly knowledgeable about the archival profession and always eager to lend a helping hand. She has shown immense promise and enthusiasm for the AAO, and the archival community in Canada, and I cannot think of anyone more deserving of the title of "Emerging Leader"."

The Alexander Fraser Award

Named after the first Archivist of Ontario, the Alexander Fraser Award is given to individuals who have contributed in a significant way to the advancement of the archival community in Ontario.

Achievements may range from written and visual work to involvement in organizations or participation in projects. This award is designated to recognize cumulative contributions rather than any single activity. Generally speaking, contributions need to go beyond a specific archives or community.

The AAO presented the 2019 Alexander Fraser Award to **Margaret Bignell** for contributions to the archival community in Ontario in the field of archival conservation and preservation.



Left to Right: Margaret Bignell and Rodney Carter (photo credit: Jeremy Heil)

Margaret, recently retired conservator at Queen's University Archives, has a history with the province's archival community that pre-dates the AAO, having presented a workshop on disaster planning at the

Ontario Association of Archivists annual conference June 1992 which led to the production of the booklet "An Introduction to Disaster Planning and Prevention for Small Archives".

Margaret served for many years on the conservation/preservation committee of the Archives Association of Ontario, and helped to review and adjudicate CPCAR/NADP grant applications as the external invited preservation expert on the AAO's Institutional Development Committee. Under Margaret's supervision, Queen's University Archives was one of the regional depots for the Archives Association of Ontario's Thermohygrograph Program. Margaret was also an active member of AERN (Archives Emergency Response Network) since its inception, and further, she served for many years on the Canadian Council on Archives Preservation Committee. She has also served as an incredible ambassador of the archives and the conservation profession, appearing regularly in news stories on her important work. In addition to her work at Queen's Archives, she also taught paper conservation at the Masters of Art Conservation program at Queen's, mentoring students who have ended up working in institutions across the province and across the globe.

In the words of her nominators "anyone who had the opportunity to interact with Margaret quickly discovered how generous she was with her time, how patient she was with the barrage of questions that inevitably came her way, and how knowledgeable she was about conservation and preservation in archives."

The James J. Talman Award

The James J. Talman Award was named after the second Archivist of Ontario, serving from 1935 to 1939. Talman subsequently served as Chief Librarian for the University of Western Ontario until 1969. The Award is given to individuals who have demonstrated an outstanding level of imagination and innovation in contributing to the profession, their institution, or the archival community, or who have challenged conventional thinking about archival work.

This year, the Talman Award was presented to **Robin Keirstead** for his imagination, innovation, and progressive, unconventional thinking which he has demonstrated throughout his career.



Left to Right: Robin Keirstead and Rodney Carter (photo credit: Jeremy Heil)

In 1989 he pioneered the archives and records program for the Region of Waterloo when he became the Region's first Records Manager (soon re-titled Manager of Corporate Records and Archives). The amount of imagination and innovation required by the challenges that come with starting a new program is considerable. Robin then did it all again when he became Western University's first University Archivist in 2001. There he developed a program and helped design a building that provides the University with a unique range of services: archives and research collections, rare books and special collections, library book depository, and a records centre.

Robin has served the profession throughout his career by participating in the work of the CCA, the AAO, and ACA. He has been an instructor at the Faculty of Information and Media Studies - Western University, as well as teaching at Simon Fraser University and George Brown and Mohawk Colleges, mentored students and early-career professionals. Anyone who has attended one of Robin's many workshops and conference presentations will appreciate the imagination, not to mention humour, that he includes.

Additionally, he is always willing to provide guidance to other institutions and is a deeply respected source of advice.

According to his nominators, Robin "emulates many of the qualities that were held by James J. Talman. They both served as leaders for Western Libraries and in their communities and they are both recognized for their intellectual approach and kind manner." And, as one of his nominators wrote, "Robin does not adhere to any archival 'party line'. Rather he seeks out creative solutions to problems, even if those solutions do not fit a traditional archival mould."

The AAO Institutional Award

The AAO Institutional Award is given to an archival institution that has contributed significantly to the advancement of the archival field or community, or has demonstrated a significant level of innovation and imagination in the establishment of outstanding or model programs or services. Recognition may be granted for an individual project of particular merit or for a program that integrates many facets of archival enterprise.

The AAO presented the 2019 Institutional Award to **Elgin County Archives** for its innovative Green Screen Program, which combines technology with archival photographs to bring these photos to life in a very personal way.



Left to Right: Gina Dewaele (Elgin County Archives) and Rodney Carter (photo credit: Jeremy Heil)

Time Travel with Elgin County Archives is an outreach program that uses green screen technology to photograph participants and superimpose them into historic photographs, to make it appear as if they are traveling back into their local history. Archivists **Gina Dewaele** and **Amber Mandich** conceived, developed, organized, and delivered a series of innovative Green Screen events at local libraries, community events, schools and long-term care homes. The program has captured the interest of community members by offering a stimulating and creative activity that allows staff to start conversations to raise awareness of the archives' collections and resources, and of archives in general.

This program appeals to all ages: younger participants enjoy the technology and the idea that they are "time traveling," which offers a unique opportunity to engage with a group that rarely visits an archival institution in person while older participants reminisce about former streetscapes, buildings, and the people who used to live and work in their community. This is a creative and imaginative way of making archival resources available and relevant to all age groups.

The program was initially launched in partnership with the Elgin County Library, consisting of 10 branches throughout the County, but expanded to local cultural institutions and events, as well as being included in an intergenerational program involving a local nursing home and an elementary school. In its first year, there were nearly 700 participants in the program.

The AAO was pleased to recognize the Elgin County Archives' for their Green Screen Program, which combines technology and archival photographs in an innovative way to bring these images to life for community members of all ages.

Congratulations to all of this year's award winners.