

Nomination for Honourary Member Grace Welch

The Association of Canadian Map Libraries and Archives (ACMLA) recognizes as honorary members those who have made a distinguished contribution to the field of map librarianship or to a more significant understanding and appreciation of maps. These are individuals who have assumed leadership roles within the Association and have championed the Association beyond the confines of institutional walls.

Grace Welch more than meets the criteria and we are nominating Grace for election as an Honourary Member of the Association of Canadian Map Libraries and Archives.

In the citation for the ACMLA Honours Award in 2003, the Association noted that Grace “has been a wonderful ambassador for the profession, a stalwart advocate for map libraries and archives.” In the years since then, the accomplishments continue to mount. Grace provided persistence, strength and a great skill set to the negotiation of educational licenses to Canadian colleges and universities for spatial data from Natural Resources Canada, a step in the process of providing free access to all Canadians; she was a proponent of the educational license partnership with DMTI Spatial; and was a vocal advocate in the recent lobbying of Natural Resources Canada for the continuation of the availability of print topographic maps.

From the beginning of her career in the Map Library at Carleton University in 1976, Grace has been a champion for maps, map use, and access to maps in all formats. After her early years at Carleton, Grace moved to the National Library of Canada in 1981 where she held positions of increasing responsibility, particularly in the systems field. In the ACMLA Bulletin no.76 (1990), the Regional News editor reported that Grace was leaving the position of Chief of the Interlibrary Loan Division to return to the map world, “looking forward to renewing acquaintances and becoming active again in the ACMLA.”

Grace has indeed become active, serving on numerous committees (notably the Bibliographic Control Committee), local program teams for annual meetings, providing articles and notes for the ACMLA Bulletin, and presenting workshops and papers at annual conferences. In 1995, she took on the role of ACMLA First Vice-President, a role she held until 1999. In 2001, Grace agreed to run for President, a position she held until the Spring of 2003. During those key years in the development of partnerships with spatial data providers, Grace brought passion, talent and, some might say, a bit of political acumen to every task facing the Association.

During her tenure as Head of the University of Ottawa’s Map Library Grace provided leadership not only in the provision of service, but developed her expertise in the area of cataloguing electronic cartographic materials. Grace is not the passive, laissez-faire type of person, content to let others do the lion’s share of the job. On the contrary: Grace has a reputation for getting things done, often in an innovative style. Grace was one of the hard-working members of the international Anglo-American Committee on Cataloguing Cartographic Materials and, with other dedicated colleagues, brought the results of that professional work to workshops across many associations. The subject may have been complex to some, but Grace could make map cataloguing seem like a day at the beach, something that everyone should want to do. As one of those writing in support of this nomination put it, “her interest and enthusiasm are infectious.”

In 2002, Grace became the Assistant Chief Librarian for Systems and E-Resources for the University of Ottawa Libraries and, on her retirement, was Assistant Chief Librarian (Access) for the library system. From such a demanding position, retirement might have simply involved kayaking or spending time at the cottage, but Grace is very much a continuing, dynamic, and effective member of the Association of Canadian Map Libraries and Archives. This past winter, Grace represented ACMLA interests in a national coalition of writers, genealogists and historians protesting the reduction of hours of service at the Library and Archives of Canada and continues

to serve on the Ontario Geographic Names Board, In addition to creating a proposal for a mentoring program for ACMLA, Grace is working on a draft document of core elements for geospatial metadata in conjunction with the Bibliographic Control Committee. As if that was not enough, Grace is also a member of the ACMLA/NRCan working forum which should assistance in problem-solving at the national mapping level.

All this has really amounted to dedication to and passion for the profession. Her accomplishments are "stellar," again to quote one of the writers supporting this nomination. Another contributor wrote that throughout her career, Grace Welch always considered her time as a map librarian as one of her greatest career achievements. Yet another member wrote that "there have been only a handful of librarians who have that extraordinary gift to make a real difference in the profession. Grace is one of these librarians."

No matter where her career has taken her, Grace has always been passionate about maps, geography and ACMLA. Grace's expertise in all aspects of map librarianship, her pioneering role in GIS and digital mapping, and her leadership at the University of Ottawa and her continuing commitment and service to the Association of Canadian Map Libraries and Archives make her an ideal candidate for ACMLA's highest award.

Nominated by: Heather McAdam

Seconded by: Colleen Beard

Select Career Highlights

Education:

BA (Geography & Psychology, University of Windsor)
MLS (Western)

Career:

1976-1981 Assistant to Map Librarian, Carleton University
1981-1990 National Library, special projects, systems, reading room division, user support and liaison, interlibrary loans
1990-2002 University of Ottawa, Map Library, Head
2002 University of Ottawa, Assistant Chief Librarian for Systems and E-Resources / Access

ACMLA Activities:

1995-1999 ACMLA First Vice-President
2001-2003 ACMLA President
Chair of the Awards Committee, the National Libraries Liaison Committee, the Bibliographic Control Committee; many conference committee organizing teams; representative of ACMLA on the AACR(CM),

Other Association Activities:

OCUL Map Group Chair; Technical Program Committee for the 1998 Spatial Data Infrastructure Conference, Ontario Region Map Users Advisory Committee, Chair; AACR(CM) member

Grace has also been an appointed member of the Ontario Geographic Names Board (to September 2008) and served as Chair of the Advisory Committee on Automation and Delineation of the Geographic Names Board of Canada. She was also a panelist on the DMTI Spatial Great Canadian Mapping Challenge Scholarship (2004)

Presentations

Key presentations date back to her paper at the 1992 ACMLA conference, "Reference Services in the 1990's, which provided a good analysis of the issues facing map libraries and steps that could be taken to meet those challenges. Recent presentations include a workshop at the Joint Conference of the ACMLA, CCA and WAML (2000); a workshop at the ALA Conference MAGERT (2003) entitled "Electronic Cartographic Materials: the Basics", a presentation at the ESRI User Conference in 2001; a maps and GIS workshop at the Ontario Library Association Superconference; and "Geospatial metadata...the View From the Library" at the Canadian Metadata Forum in 2003.

Publications:

Grace has written and co-authored numerous articles in the ACMLA Bulletin and coordinated the preparation of the Cumulative Subject Index for the ACMLA Bulletin. Some of those titles include:

Brown, D., Welch, G.; Cullingworth, C. Management and Preservation of Geospatial Data. Ottawa: Ad hoc Committee on Archiving and Preserving Geospatial Data, 2004.

McAdam-Ferratotto, Heather, and Welch, G. "Inter-Library Cooperation for GIS Services: A Road to Success" ACMLA Bulletin, no.111 (Spring/Summer 2001); pp.13-18.

Parker, V. and Welch, G. "Geomatics Cataloguing," in ACMLA Bulletin, no.97 (Fall 1996); pp.1-6

Welch, G. and Williams, F. "Cataloguing Digital Cartographic Materials" in Andrew, Paige G. Maps and Related Cartographic Materials. Haworth Press, 1999.