

WRA 25

Silver Jubilee

Celebrating 25 years...

Visual Resources Association

WRA 25

**The Silver Jubilee
Celebrating 25 years of
VRA History**

**March 27–April 1, 2007
Kansas City, Missouri**

**Intercontinental Hotel
Kansas City at The Plaza**

Silver Jubilee



In 2007 the Visual Resources Association is marking the 25th anniversary of its founding. As we celebrate all things VRA, we are both looking to our future and commemorating our past – the people and events that have made the Association the strong and vital organization it is today. This VRA Silver Jubilee Memory Book has been put together by the members of the Silver Jubilee Committee as a way of paying tribute to our founders, past leaders and award winners, as well as providing a record of important VRA historic events and conferences. I know that this will be a very special commemorative document for our members.

The VRA was incorporated in the fall of 1982 in Missouri; for that reason we are returning to our roots and celebrating our Silver Jubilee in Kansas City at our 2007 annual conference. We have come a long way as an Association. Initially many questioned the need for a separate organization for visual resources curators. Today, with over 800 members in what has become an international organization, we cannot imagine our profession without the support we receive from our VRA colleagues. As many of us are moving from overseeing collections of photographs and slides to managing complex digital image databases, we value each other's advice and guidance more than ever. Together we have played a critical role in the developing field of digital image collection management.

I want to give special acknowledgement to the Silver Jubilee Committee for their efforts to make this a memorable celebration, and sincere thanks to Kurt and Carmen Wiedenhoft of Scholars Resource for providing the funding for producing this publication.

Happy Anniversary! Let us all raise our glasses and say that we are proud to be a part of VRA.

Macie Hall

Macie Hall

President, Visual Resources Association

Silver Jubilee

"In 2007, we proudly celebrate the Silver Jubilee of the Visual Resources Association. In our 25th year we gather for our Annual Conference in Kansas City, Missouri, where the organization was originally incorporated. On this occasion we honor the accomplishments of the many individuals who comprise this vital, thriving, growing professional organization. For those who have been in the profession 10! these 25 years, we have witnessed truly revolutionary technological advancements. From the days before the advent of personal computers and the Web - when we carefully labeled slides by hand - to the current state of digital image resource management, our colleagues in the VRA have generously supported us, mentored us and been ready and willing to share their knowledge.

We mark this occasion by celebrating the founders and leaders of the VRA, by displaying our history, and by dedicating a conference session to our past, present and future. We also present you with this booklet—a brief history of our organization highlighting the accomplishments of many of the individuals who have contributed to it. We hope you will enjoy this souvenir. As we look forward another 25 years to our Golden Jubilee, we are challenged to maintain our proactive, leading role in the rapidly changing world of visual resources.

It has been an honor to work with the Kansas City conference organizers and the Silver Jubilee Committee to commemorate this milestone of our professional organization."

**Megan Battey
Co-Chair, Silver Jubilee Committee**

"Along with my Co-Chair, Megan Battey, I am delighted to be a part of the Visual Resources Association's 25th anniversary. I hope you enjoy this booklet, which provides an opportunity to review the origins and leadership of our organization as well as highlight its achievements, initiatives and the progress that our profession has made since the formation of the VRA.

I am sure that you will agree that we have come a long way as an organization, due to the vision and hard work of our founding members, and the continuing influx of energy and progressive ideas from our current membership. We can be proud of the camaraderie and outreach that we offer our diverse membership, and are constantly rewarded with seeing this membership grow and gain professional recognition."

**Marcia Focht
Co-Chair, Silver Jubilee Committee**

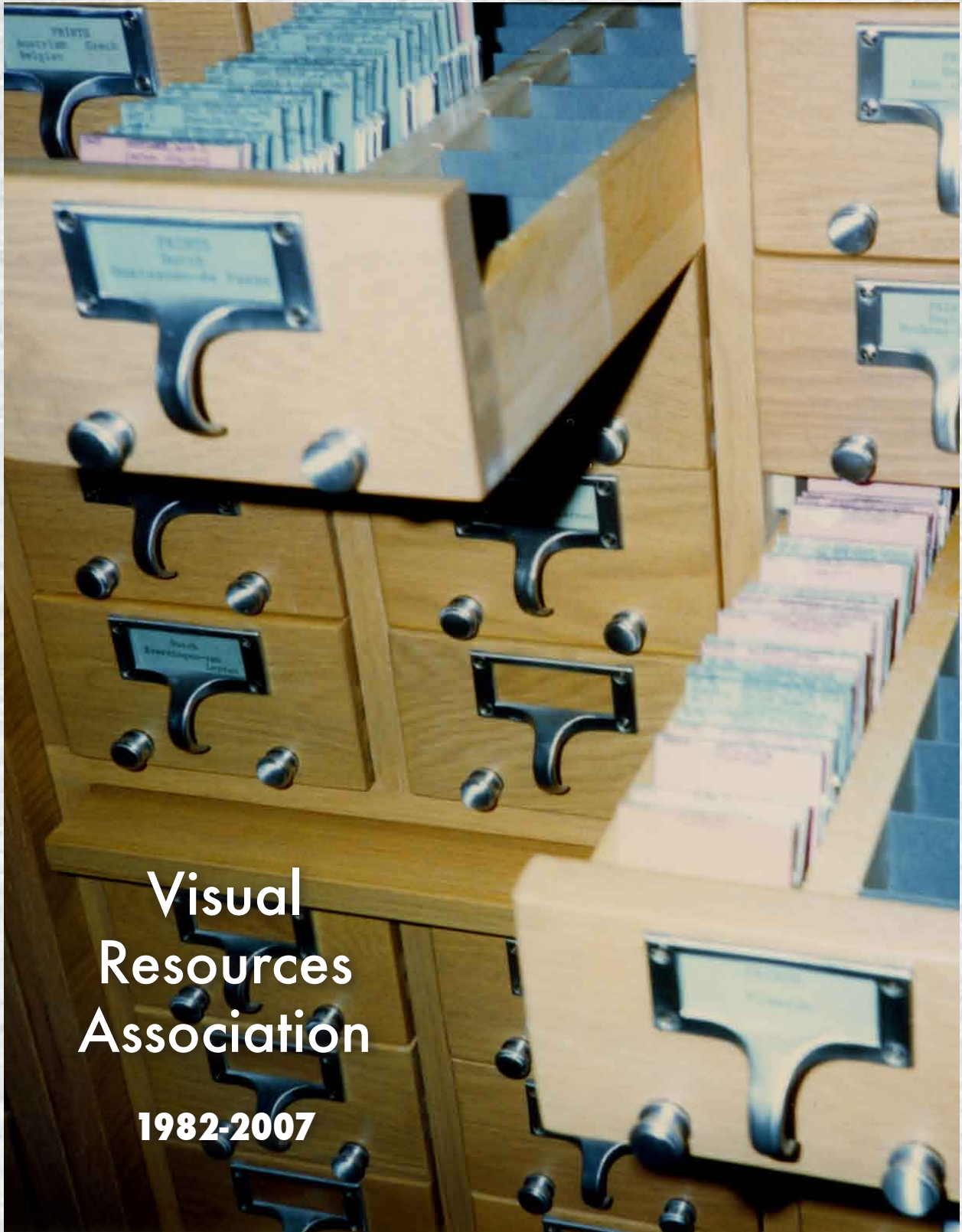
"I'm thrilled to be able to spend my first year as the Vice-President for Conference Arrangements on such a special occasion as the 25th Anniversary of the Visual Resources Association. Working with the Executive Board and the Silver Jubilee Committee to come up with original and inspiring ways to celebrate this event has been a joy. I hope that we all come away with renewed memories of the past, and also a clearer idea of what the future will bring. This is an exciting time for us all, and with the help of all our members, the VRA will only grow stronger as we start working on the next chapter in our history."

**Rebecca A. Moss
Vice-President for Conference Arrangements
University of Minnesota**

"Along with my fellow Vice-President, Rebecca Moss, I would like to express how honored I am to have been at the forefront of the planning for the 25th Anniversary of the Visual Resources Association. I have so enjoyed working with the Executive Board and the vibrant Silver Jubilee Committee over the past two years. I hope that you find the conference program to be forward-thinking, as well as a fitting reminder of how far we have come as both a profession and as an organization. I encourage you to enjoy this special conference, and the opportunity to gather with colleagues both old and new as we plan for an even brighter future. Be proud of your role in making VRA an astounding success, and celebrate one another for the accomplished professionals you are. I am grateful to be able to share in this with all of you!"

**Betha Whitlow
Vice-President for Conference Program
Washington University in Saint Louis**





**Visual
Resources
Association**

1982-2007

The History

by Ben Kessler

TALES OF OUR FOUNDING MOTHERS*

As long as visual resources has been understood as a field distinct from others, there has been a need to organize on a collective basis. The curatorship of slide and photograph collections required special skills and techniques that were not generally available in established curriculums and could be gained only through experience. For the earliest practitioners in the field, who, much as today, were relatively isolated within their respective institutions, this knowledge was hard-earned and therefore of great value when they had occasion to meet and share information.

Beginning in the late 1960s and during the 1970s, visual resources curators gathered at College Art Association (CAA) conferences, as well as, on the regional level, at meetings held by the Mid-America College Art Association (MACAA) and

the Southeastern College Art Conference (SECAC)¹. Visual resources curators also comprised a significant special interest group within the newly-founded Art Libraries Society of North America (ARLIS/NA).² While this panoply of venues encouraged participation, it meant that visual resources remained an adjunct to larger concerns and that affiliation along professional lines was episodic and impermanent.³

Throughout this period, educational initiatives – seminars, workshops, college courses, and even a full-fledged master’s program – sprang up and just as quickly died like so many desert blooms.⁴ Sustained largely by the efforts of dedicated individuals in the VR field, these initiatives withered for lack of institutional support. One individual who was more persistent than others was Nancy DeLaurier, Curator of Slides and



Photographs at the University of Missouri-Kansas City. Her pragmatic and didactic impulses were first expressed in her *Slide Buyers' Guide* (1972) and furnished the presiding spirit of the *Slides and Photographs Newsletter*, which for a number of years was the main conduit of information for the visual resources community.⁵ Under the auspices of MACAA, DeLaurier and others fostered the development of information packets known as "kits" that documented various aspects of VR management. These kits evolved into guides published by MACAA which, in turn, gave rise to what would later become the *VRA Special Bulletins*. In 1976, DeLaurier conducted a workshop offering basic training for slide curators, precursor to a string of workshops that for many years became a fixture on the visual resources horizon.⁶

Parallel to these developments, visual resources, as a nascent discipline, received

its ur-text when Betty Jo Irvine published her monograph *Slide Libraries* in 1974.⁷ After visiting and/or surveying over one hundred VR collections, Irvine presented the first comprehensive, scholarly overview of the field to which the MACAA Guides served a complementary role with their more immediate doses of “how-to” advice. Irvine treated visual resources as a special, if idiosyncratic, branch of librarianship, and thus governable by general principles of librarianship at large. To this end, she emphasized the value of library education and methodology, in contrast to the extensive subject knowledge and more empirical on-the-job training propounded by DeLaurier, Nancy Schuller, and other authorities – and therein lay a point of contention that was to have profound implications for self-identification within the field.⁸

Visual resources literature in the 1970s addressed a wide variety of topics,

including classification, copy photography, slide vendors, equipment, and conservation. But a round of surveys – a time-honored custom in our field – confirmed that the most pressing issue of the day was professional status, as of then not yet truly conferred by any authoritative body. Both CAA and ARLIS agreed in principle on the need for professional recognition of visual resources curators, but the requirement of some measure of library education, favored by ARLIS, proved a stumbling block, and CAA was reluctant to ratify anything not approved by ARLIS. A sequence of committee deliberations resulted in a watered-down statement supporting professional status that, while an important first step, lacked definitive standards.

Nothing so patently signified the growing aspirations of the visual resources profession as when the *Slides and Photographs Newsletter* was renamed the *International*

Bulletin for Photographic Documentation of the Visual Arts in 1980.⁹ With the new decade, it was clear that the profession was ready to form its own organization: meeting as a loosely-organized committee within CAA was ineffective, while remaining with ARLIS had strings attached - and managing joint initiatives between the two was an exercise in frustration. The VR group associated with MACAA provided the most viable infrastructure from which to base a self-standing organization, but it was regionally limited. Furthermore, the International Bulletin, the most essential ongoing asset for the entire field, was by this time independently supported by subscription.

The question of an independent organization was first raised in print by Nancy DeLaurier in 1980.¹⁰ Two years later, a survey measuring organizational preferences, itself inconclusive, gave rise

to a more pointed referendum that offered four choices: 1) maintain the status quo, 2) make an existing group such as ARLIS or the Special Libraries Association the focus for all national VR activities, 3) form an information clearinghouse to coordinate the VR activities of other organizations, or 4) form a new and separate VR organization. Although only forty-two people voted, a clear-cut majority favored the creation of a new organization, and it was on this basis that the Visual Resources Association was born.

From a strictly legal standpoint, the VRA was a self-chartered continuation of the CAA committee. Christine Sundt, chair of that group, was named the VRA's first president, a position to which she was formally elected the following year. But VRA membership was also extended to subscribers of the International Bulletin, thus capturing de facto the entire visual resources field in a

single stroke. For a few years, at least, many members considered the organization as an entity that came with the publication, rather than the other way around.

Like any number of well-intentioned group efforts, the VRA could easily have fizzled at the outset. The organization was fortunate in its early leaders, who proactively

promoted the VRA as the legitimate voice of the profession and swiftly realized the importance of the then-emerging computer technology that was about to have such a major impact on our way of doing business. Twenty-five years later, we remain grateful for their service.

FOOTNOTES

* With thanks to Leigh Gates, Art Institute of Chicago, for making available the resources of her library.

¹ Visual resources curators first met as an interest group at the CAA annual conference in 1969, at the MACAA conference in 1972, and at the SE-CAC conference in 1976. A VR group also met at the Comité International d'Histoire de l'Art (CIHA) conference of 1979 in Bologna.

² ARLIS/NA was founded in 1972.

³ An attempt to organize visual resources curators more formally as a subgroup within the CAA in 1973 was rebuffed by that organization's executive board over the technicality that the only level of sub-organization allowed by bylaws was that of a committee.

⁴ A short-lived masters program, called "Curatorial Science for Slide Collections and Photographic Archives," existed at the Allen R. Hite Institute of the University of Louisville in 1969.

⁵ The **Slides and Photographs Newsletter** was published under the sponsorship of the College Art Association in 1972-74 and from 1974-79 under the sponsorship of the Mid-America College Art Association.

⁶ The workshop, "Basic Training for Slide Curators", was held in Kansas City from 1976-1983, primarily under the tutelage of Nancy DeLaurier. From 1984-1997, the workshop was continued and expanded at the University of Texas-Austin, primarily led by Nancy Schuller, Christine Sundt, and Gary Seloff.

⁷ A significantly revised second edition, prepared with the assistance of Eileen Fry, appeared in 1979.

⁸ Schuller's **Guide for Management of Visual Resources Collections** was published by MACAA in 1978. A much expanded second edition was published by Libraries Unlimited in 1989.

⁹ According to Nancy DeLaurier, the name was changed at the request of the VR group that met at the CIHA conference in 1979. See **International Bulletin for Photographic Documentation of the Visual Arts** 9, no.2 (June, 1982), p.6.

¹⁰ **International Bulletin for Photographic Documentation of the Visual Arts** 7, no.4 (Winter, 1980), p.7-8.

Past Presidents

The Office of President of the Visual Resources Association is a two-year term. As the first President, Christine Sundt was elected to the position three times. With the exception of the first two Presidents, the President's term is preceded by one year as President Elect and is followed by a year of service as Past President.



1982-1987

Christine L. Sundt
University of Oregon
(now residing in Eugene, OR)
President 1982-1987
Past President 1988



1988-1989

Eleanor Fink
The Getty Art History Information Program
(now at The World Bank Group, Washington, DC)
President 1988-1989
Past President 1990



1990-1991

Carla Conrad Johnson
New York State College of Ceramics, Alfred University
President Elect 1989
President 1990-1991
Past President 1992



1992-1993

Christina B. Updike
James Madison University
President Elect 1991
President 1992-1993
Past President 1994



1994-1995

Sandra Walker
University of Tennessee-Knoxville (now residing in Maryville, TN)
President Elect 1993
President 1994-1995
Past President 1996



1996-1997

Joseph A. Romano

Oberlin College

President Elect 1995

President 1996-1997

Past President 1998



1998-1999

Jenni Rodda

Institute of Fine Arts, New York University

President Elect 1997

President 1998-1999

Past President 2000



2000-2001

Anne Baird Whiteside

University of Virginia (now at Massachusetts Institute of Technology)

President Elect 1999

President 2000-2001

Past President 2002



2002-2003

Elisa Lanzi

Smith College

President Elect 2001

President 2002-2003

Past President 2004



2004-2005

Kathe Hicks Albrecht

American University

President Elect 2003

President 2004-2005

Past President 2006



2006-2007

Virginia M. G. Hall

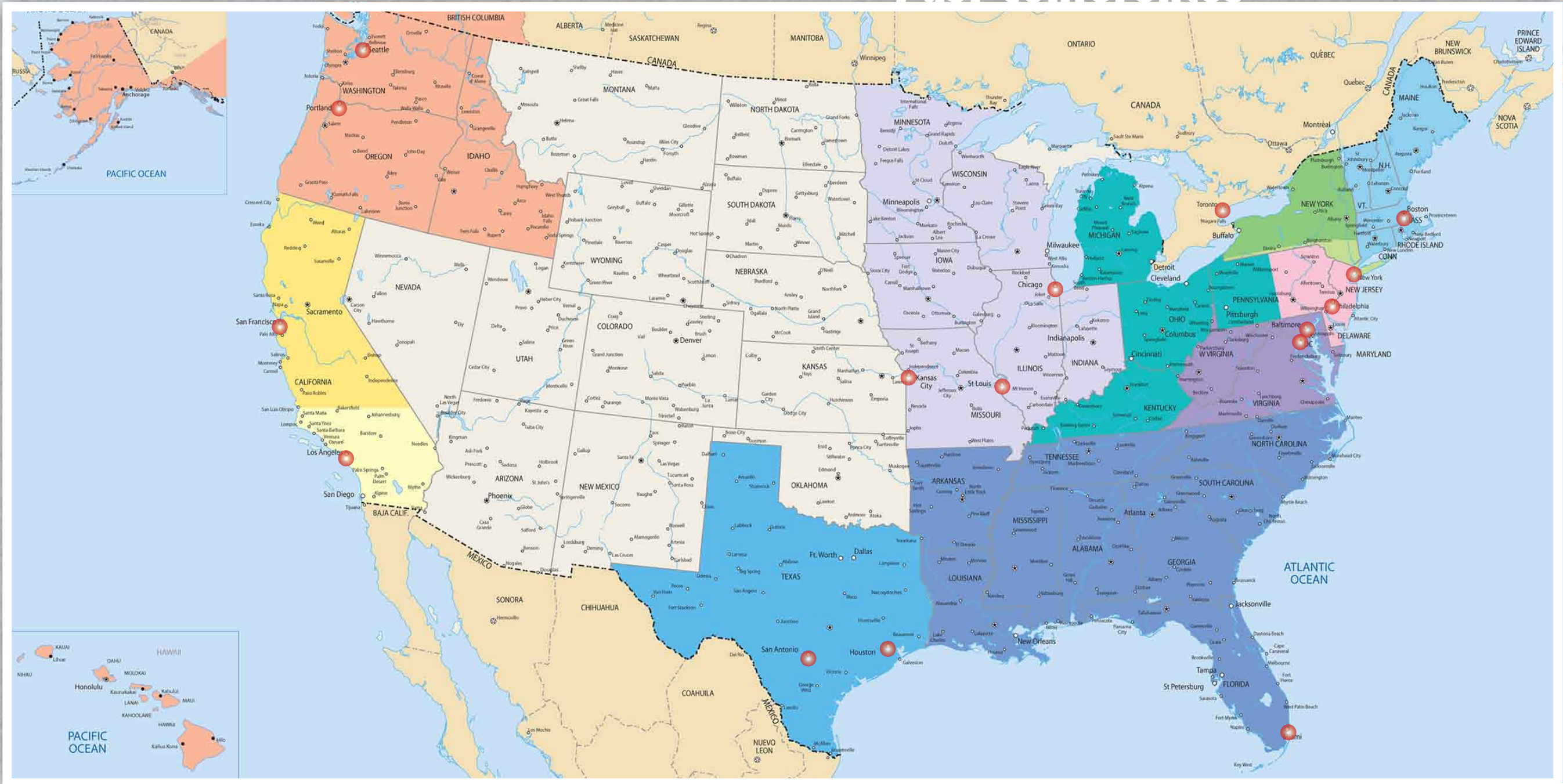
Johns Hopkins University

President Elect 2005

President 2006-2007

Past President 2008

Past Conferences



Regional Chapters:

- Pacific Rim
- Northern California
- Southern California
- Texas
- Southeast
- Midwest
- Great Lakes
- Mid-Atlantic
- Upstate New York
- New England
- Greater Philadelphia
- Greater New York

Past Conference Locations:

1983	Philadelphia, PA	with CAA	1994	New York City, NY	with CAA
1984	Toronto, CND	with CAA	1995	San Antonio, TX	with CAA
1985	Los Angeles, CA	with CAA and ARLIS/NA	1996	Boston, MA	with CAA
1986	New York City, NY	with CAA and ARLIS/NA	1997	New York City, NY	with CAA
1987	Boston, MA	with CAA	1998	Philadelphia, PA	with ARLIS/NA
1988	Houston, TX	with CAA	1999	Los Angeles, CA	with CAA
1989	San Francisco, CA	with CAA	2000	San Francisco, CA	First solo conference
1990	New York City, NY	with CAA and ARLIS/NA	2001	Chicago, IL	with CAA
1991	Washington, DC	with CAA	2002	St. Louis, MO	with ARLIS/NA
1992	Chicago, IL	with CAA and ARLIS/NA	2003	Houston, TX	Solo conference
1993	Seattle, WA	with CAA	2004	Portland, OR	Solo conference
			2005	Miami Beach, FL	Solo conference
			2006	Baltimore, MD	Solo conference
			2007	Kansas City, KS	Silver Jubilee

Honorary Life Members

VRA Honorary Life Members

Visual

Eleanor Collins (deceased)

Resources

Nancy DeLaurier

Association

Margaret Nolan (deceased)

Honorary

Nancy Shelby Schuller

Life

Luraine Tansey

Members

Distinguished Service

Distinguished Service Award Winners

Each year the Visual Resources Association honors an individual who has made an outstanding career contribution to the field of visual resources and image management. Recipients of the VRA Distinguished Service Award have achieved a level of distinction in the field either through leadership, research, or service to the profession.

- 2007 **Maryly Snow**, University of California at Berkeley
- 2006 **Lynda S. White**, University of Virginia
- 2005 **John Taormina**, Duke University
- 2004 **Jenni Rodda**, Institute of Fine Arts, NYU
- 2003 **Margaret N. Webster**, Cornell University
- 2002 **Sandra C. Walker**, Maryville, Tennessee
- 2001 **Linda McRae**, University of South Florida
- 2000 **Elizabeth J. Antrim**, Boulder, CO
- 1999 **Rebecca M. Hoort**, University of Michigan
- 1998 **Brenda MacEachern**, University of Western Ontario
- 1997 **Christina B. Updike**, James Madison University
- 1996 **Nancy Shelby Schuller**, Austin, TX
- 1995 **Eleanor Fink**, World Bank
- 1994 **Eleanor Collins**, Deceased
- 1994 **Margaret Nolan**, Deceased
- 1993 **Luraine Tansey**, Bristol, RI
- 1991 **Joy Blouin**, Ann Arbor, MI
- 1991 **Helene E. Roberts**, Dartmouth College
- 1989 **Nancy DeLaurier**, Kansas City, MO
- 1988 **Christine L. Sundt**, Eugene, OR

Nancy DeLaurier



Nancy DeLaurier

For more than twenty-five years, Nancy DeLaurier was Curator of Slides and Photographs at the University of Missouri, Kansas City, before retiring. An annual summer workshop, instructed by Mrs. DeLaurier, was held at the university as a training session for slide curators. Aspects of managing a slide collection, from technical to administrative, were covered over the one week seminar. She also supervised an internship in Visual Resources that was offered as part of the university's art history program. In addition, for many years, Mrs. DeLaurier was the editor of the Mid-America College Art Association newsletter.

On February 16, 1989, she received the Distinguished Service Award from the Visual Resources Association, in recognition and appreciation for her outstanding service to the visual resources community by diligently working to establish slide curatorship as a profession. Mrs. DeLaurier was also given a Life Membership in the Visual Resources Association.

In 1996, the VRA again honored Mrs. DeLaurier, as a founding member of the organization, by establishing the Nancy DeLaurier Writing Awards. Students and professionals, either nominated or self-nominated, submitted papers on a topic significant to the visual resources field. Those who received the award were given \$200, a one year VRA membership, and a chance for publication of the submission in the VRA Bulletin.



**Nancy DeLaurier,
from the "Slide Curators Video" produced at UMKC
Art & Art History Department, October, 1988**

Award Recipients

Now referred to as the **Nancy DeLaurier Award**, visual resources professionals are recognized for distinguished achievement in the field. "Achievement" is measured by immediate impact, and may take the form of published work, oral presentation, project management, software development, technology application, website creation, or other outstanding effort.

- 2007: **Susan Jane Williams**, Scholars Resource
For development of the VireoCat cataloging software (and funding the cost) since 2004, providing it free to the VR community, updating it and maintaining its compliance with the VRA Core and CCO, and leading user group communications.
- 2007: **Norine Duncan**, Brown University
For development of the IRIS (Image Resource Information System) cataloging software, updating it and maintaining its compliance with the VRA Core and CCO, making it available for purchase, coordinating the IRIS Consortium, and leading user group communications.
- 2005: **John Taormina**, Duke University, and
Mary Wasserman, Philadelphia Museum of Art
Co-chairpersons of the inaugural 2004 Summer Educational Institute for Visual Resources and Image Management, jointly sponsored by the Visual Resources Association and the Art Libraries Society of North America
- 2003: **Christina B. Updike**, James Madison University
For assisting in the creation, development and open source distribution of the Madison Digital Image Database (MDID) software application
- 2003: **Allan T. Kohl**, Minneapolis College of Arts and Design
For freely sharing images through his Art Images for College Teaching (AICT) website <http://arthist.da.umn.edu/aict/html/>
- 2001: **Christine L. Sundt**, University of Oregon
For her public service website "Copyright and Art Issues"
<http://darkwing.uoregon.edu/~csundt/copyweb/>
- 2000: **Marilyn Snow**, University of California at Berkeley
"The Pedagogical Consequences of Photomechanical Reproduction in the Visual Histories: From Copy Photography to Digital Mnemonics" published in *Visual Resources* (vol. XII, pp.307-331)
- 2000: **Kim Kopatz**, University of Rochester
Editor of the Guidelines for the Visual Resources Profession, a joint publication of the Visual Resources Association and the Art Libraries Society of North America
- 1999: **Elisa Lanzi**, Smith College, and
Linda McRae, University of South Florida
Guest editors of a special theme issue of the VRA Bulletin (vol. 25, no. 4) about the VRA Core Categories for Visual Resources, v.2.0
- 1997: **Emily Godbey**, University of Chicago
"Picture Me Sane: Photographic Magic Lantern Slides in a Nineteenth-Century Insane Asylum"
abstract published in VRA Bulletin (vol. 24, no. 3)
- 1997: **Michael Angeles**, Rutgers, State University of New Jersey
"Analysis and Description of an International Visual Resources Index: A Proposal for Building an Image Indexing Database" published in VRA Bulletin (vol. 24, no. 3)

Tansey Travel Award



Luraine Collins Tansey

The Tansey Travel Award is named in honor of Luraine Collins Tansey, who helped kick-start the fund in 1993 with a generous donation to encourage travel in general and specifically to underwrite travel costs to enable members to share in the professional growth and fellowship of the national conference.

Luraine is one of the pioneers of the visual resources profession and is the creator of the Simons-Tansey classification system (also known as the Santa Cruz system after her workplace, University of California at Santa Cruz), a system that used mainframe computers (and computer punch cards) start-

ing in 1968—a truly prescient and groundbreaking path to our current digital age. She taught college courses and also worked at other institutions including the Brooklyn Museum of Art, Vassar and the Institute of Fine Arts at NYU. Luraine is an artist as well and continues to create in retirement.

To generate funds to keep the travel awards going, an annual Tansey Dinner has been a conference tradition for 13 years. The first dinner was held in 1994, coinciding with Luraine's 75th birthday. Luraine attended these through the 1999 L.A. conference, regaling diners with an annual speech, often with exhortations to be adventurous in our careers and lives. Luraine also encouraged a fun atmosphere which included a conga line dance (1995) and allowing herself to be roped by amateur cowboy John Cloud (1997). Luraine is no longer able to attend in person, but is always present in spirit, usually by means of letters, or some creative memento she makes such as little sailboats made of sea-glass collected from the beach near her home in Bristol, RI.

The criteria used in selecting the recipients of the travel award involve multiple items considered during the selection process. Awards are most likely to be given to either a new member or a long standing member who has been unable to attend for several years due to financial constraints at work.

In addition, conference involvement in the form of presenting a paper, moderating a panel, chairing a committee or the like is taken into account. Since we are an international organization, each year at least one award goes to an international member.

Successful applications must include a sensible estimate of expenses for the conference as well as a one-page statement illustrating what benefits he/she hopes to gain from the conference and how they will be applied in their professional context.



Drawing of
Luraine Tansey
by J. Cloud

25 years of...



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History & Leadership





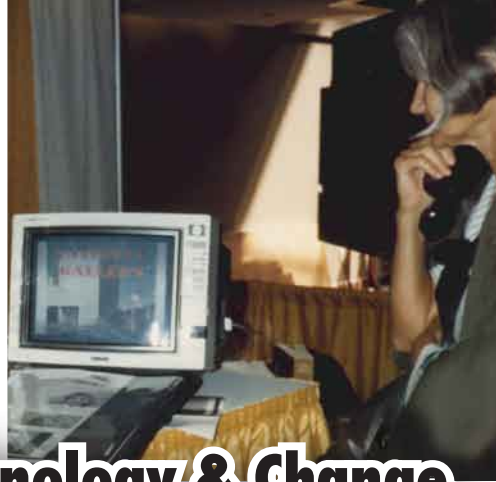
Service & Awards



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25 years of...



Technology & Change



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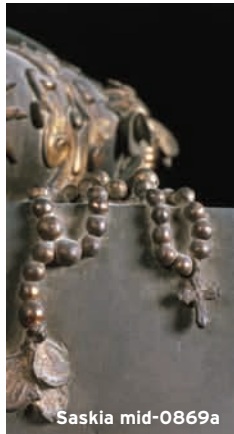
Art & Fellowship



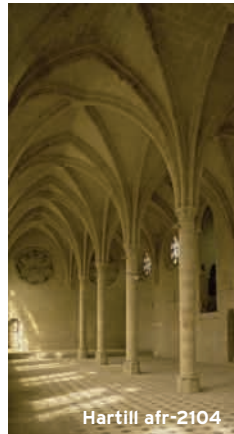
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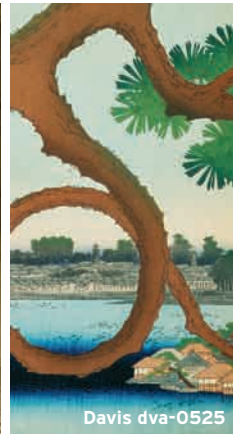
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Christine Sundt, Eugene, Oregon

Christina Updike, James Madison University

Thanks!

"Our heartfelt gratitude goes to our friends at Scholars Resource for providing the funding and design team which made this memory book possible."

VRA25 memory book

EDITOR, **Martine Sherrill**

GRAPHIC DESIGNER, **Brad Smith**, Sugarbomb Studios, LLC

COORDINATORS, **Maryann Ballotta** and **Susan Fulks** of Scholars Resource

"We would like to thank everyone who contributed photographs for the Silver Jubilee Memory Book, especially Chris Hilker, Jeanne Keefe, Ben Kessler, and John Taormina"

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Dedicated to
Christine L. Sundt,
first President of the
Visual Resources Association
(1982-1987),
and an inspiration to us all.