
2019 O'Farrell Award Snowden Becker

The William S. O'Farrell Volunteer Award recognizes significant contributions to AMIA and to the field. The Award is named for long-time member Bill O'Farrell and honors all that Bill did for the Association, the mentoring role he played over the years to so many archivists, and his contribution to the field.

SNOWDEN BECKER

Snowden Becker holds a BFA in Printmaking from the Maryland Institute, College of Art in Baltimore, an MLIS from UCLA, and most (but not all) of a PhD in Information Studies from UT Austin. She first attended AMIA in 2001, and has been active on a number of committees and interest groups since then, in addition to being twice elected to the AMIA Board. She has worked with motion picture materials in a range of collection contexts, from museums and libraries to law enforcement agencies, and from 2012-2019 she managed the graduate programs in AV archiving and Library and Information Science at UCLA.



"Snowden Becker is the glue between dozens of archival communities that all overlap because of her commitment and involvement in the field. She is an advocate and mentor for those who aim to contribute to media archival scholarship and praxis, and a vigilant promoter of good work being done in the archival community. She put her own educational and professional goals on hold to better serve and mentor her students. Snowden is also the heckler who actually gets you to say the thing you meant to say in your AMIA conference lecture or elevator speech. Snowden Becker is gracious, kind, and stern when she needs to be. But, over all of this - Snowden Becker has made her life a dedication and tribute to media preservation and those within the profession who venture to do the same.

Snowden has been a fixture at AMIA Conferences and events for many years, but her emphasis has been to impart knowledge and help others gain the most out of their conference-going experience. Snowden has served as an AMIA Director of the Board and Committee Chair, and at last years' AMIA Conference, Snowden volunteered as an inaugural Conference Navigator, even though that is a position she has informally held for many years. While many of her current students keep an eye out for her, knowing that she'll break up their groups in the spirit of meeting new people and making new connections, they know that those forced interactions have taught them networking skills that led to internships, jobs, interviews for research papers, and lasting professional connections. And those who met Snowden for the first time last year were treated to her extensive knowledge on AMIA, what to do at the conference, introductions to others sitting at the same table, and the locations of the best adult beverages.

Even before getting to a conference, Snowden consistently volunteers her time to help students prepare for it. Her informal Conference 101 Q&A with the UCLA MLIS students merged into her leading the AMIA Education Committee's Conference 101 webinar where she answered questions from students around the world. This event was so well received that attendees recommended that it be an annual offering.

Outside of her duties running the UCLA Moving Image Archive Studies and Masters of Library and Information Science programs, Snowden has always gone above and beyond to mentor and prepare students to work in the archival field after graduation. She consistently pushes for all students to attend conferences, present, volunteer, and publish in pursuit of professional growth. She takes meetings with every student who asks—even prospective students, and students not in the programs she leads. When Snowden worked at UCLA, the program has an unbroken record of receiving AMIA scholarships, which is largely due to her generous guidance on applications and the application process. She has served as internship and job references for countless

students, reviewed resumes and internship applications, and worked with students to make sure they present their best selves, while pushing them to challenge themselves professionally.

Snowden has also organized the UCLA MLIS internship fair for the past two years, as part of her commitment to preparing students to be competitive job candidates after they graduate. During her time at UCLA, Snowden has also been involved in the acquisition of film-handling equipment for the Information Studies Research Lab by soliciting outside donations, seeking funding for the department, and even buying equipment on her own dime so students can learn hands-on skills. With her help, the IS Lab now has film inspection equipment for 8mm, S8mm, 16mm and 35mm. This includes a Steenbeck, rewinds, spliciers, projectors, multiple telecines, and even her own personal bench. Snowden has also planned and organized some of the most successful and useful professional development events for UCLA students.

Before beginning the UCLA MIAS or MLIS MAS programs, students attended Snowden's week-long Bootcamp. The Bootcamp included tours of archives, an introduction to professionals working in archives around Los Angeles, instruction in the foundational tenets of Media Archiving work (to make sure all students are starting out on the same page), and an introduction to the resources available to students at UCLA. In addition, throughout the years, Snowden organized Tea Breaks. Based on the salon concept, Tea Breaks were opportunities for students, and other interested members of the community, to engage in informal discussions with leading archival professionals over her famous baked goods. This model has been so successful that other professional groups have followed suit with their own Tea Breaks.

However, her help is not limited to students currently in school. Snowden continues to meet with alumni long after they graduate to help them navigate working in the media archiving industry. She also meets with potential students, spending what limited free time she has recruiting and curating new classes for UCLA. Her intimate knowledge of

the philosophies and curricula of media archival studies programs throughout North America has provided countless students with the nuanced information to select the programs best suited to their needs and aspirations.

With what little free time Snowden had left after her full-time job and work for AMIA, she founded the Center for Home Movies and created the structure for Home Movie Day, which now has grown into an international event. Even after she stepped down from the organizing committee, she still volunteers at the Los Angeles Home Movie Day, working as the emcee, inspecting film, or asking the audience for help identifying locations on the screen. She's also the first person to loan her equipment and rewinds to those in the community doing their own community archiving events, who would not have the means to work with their film materials otherwise." - *from the Nomination Statement*