
The William O'Farrell Volunteer Award

The **William S. O'Farrell Volunteer Award** recognizes significant contributions to AMIA and to the field. Honorees have made a significant contribution to AMIA, either in the form of notable achievement or special projects, or through the noteworthy performance of volunteer work carried out over a long period of time. The Award is named for long-time member Bill O'Farrell and honors all that Bill did for the Association, his contributions to the field, and the mentoring role he played over the years to so many archivists.

Bill O'Farrell (1954-2008)

William S. O'Farrell (Bill) was a founding member of AMIA who strongly believed that the success of the association was based on volunteerism. Bill served as a member of the AMIA Board and chaired both the Preservation and Awards Committees.

In addition to his other roles in AMIA, he was a keen observer and could persuade anyone that they were the right person for any job that needed filling. His talent for scouting the best volunteers was as legendary as his sense of humor.

In 1975, after a career at Canadian film company, Crawley Films, Bill joined the Public Archives of Canada as a film vault technician. Soon he became responsible for management of all film preservation projects earning him the title of "Canada's archiving godfather." (CBC website) Bill frequently lectured, gave presentations and taught workshops worldwide managing to convey the technical complexities of film preservation in simple and practical advice. His one-on-one encouragement and tutoring of archivists in smaller institutions endeared him to many who were new to the field. To all of us he conveyed a passionate belief in



the vital necessity of preserving our moving image heritage from theatrical films to home movies. In 2014 he was posthumously awarded AMIA's Silver Light Award.

A memorable and classic O'Farrell prank on a CBC call-in talk show, *Maritime Noon*, involving AMIA members Jim Lindner and Jim Wheeler can be found online <http://www.cbc.ca/archives/entry/remembering-master-archivist-bill-ofarrell>.

Additionally, Bill O'Farrell appears in several films speaking on film preservation, the most recent is Bill Morrison's 2017 *Dawson City: Frozen in Time*. Others include Karen Shopsowitz' *My Father's Camera* (2000) and Mark McLaughlin and Randy Gitsch's *Keeper's of the Frame* (1999).