This is such a great honor -- but it is still not quite as exciting as winning the Midwest chapter's "Sock of Socks" at the VRAffle in Houston in 2003. (But just how many pairs of women's socks does a guy need?")

I wish I had a photo of that massive thing -- but it was before the days of having an iPhone and taking pictures of every single random moment as I do now.

At that point, I really felt like I became a member of VRA and not just an exhibitor. I gave away lots of socks and made new friends that day!

I am a firm believer that life presents opportunities and it is best to take advantage of them.

A classmate in library school at San Jose State introduced me to Kathy Cohen and her Delta project – a life-changing event. I eventually helped pull together a huge volume of cataloguing and digitization that students had performed in our strange new EmbARK database … and this led to doing regional workshops with Betty Antrim… and then Kathy's recommendation that I get a job at Gallery Systems.

Clearly, I like it.

THIS image more accurately displays all the different conferences I've attended over the last 23 years. Engaging at conferences and trainings with so many different types of clients – museums, visual resources, private & corporate art collections – has provided an unparalleled opportunity to learn and share knowledge.

One thing about being a vendor is that there can be a lot of downtime when everyone is in sessions. Rather than sit and stare at the drapery, I tend to look for something productive to do.

Scott Gilchrist of Archivision became a dear friend as we partnered to put his data and images into a database.

There have been so many cool things like that – some of which prove to be useful and enduring, others that are just the latest hip tech thing and then fade away.

Though I haven't work in a VR collection since grad school, I subscribe to the "Eat Your Own Dogfood" approach.

I worked after hours using company equipment to scan old family photos and catalogued them in ImageAXS. (One of my images ended up on the packaging - that is my grandpa John Detlefs on the right.)

I have carefully inventoried a decent amount of family furniture/crap in EmbARK as well.

Hands-on work like this helps me understand the needs of my clients and justify the importance of new features and readable documentation that make everyone's work easier.

I am Interested in practical implementations of metadata... helping users understand how the cataloguing they do now will become the metadata that is leveraged for whoknowswhat in the future.

An announcement on the VRA-L in 2006 about the new CDWA Lite metadata standard inspired me to build an XML export from EmbARK – and knowing next to nothing about how XML worked, I struggled with it.

Having done it, I was prepared to help users with requests they receive to share complex data to library and digital asset management systems in a variety of metadata formats.

 It also provided the foundation to work with Greg Reser on the Embedded Metadata Panel. With some simple documentation, Kathy Cohen quickly ingested data for the 100,000 images on her World Images site.

Fortunately, there are always new challenges on the frontier. I hope to help SJSU and others easily enable IIIF on their collection sites soon

and continue to have good content flow to aggregated sites like Google Art, Digital Public Library of America, and the Gallery Systems eMuseum site.

Embarrassingly I had never done any official committee work when Elisa Lanzi asked if I would run for the Pubic Relation & Communications officer position on the Board. My first child was on the way… but I didn't figure I had a chance of winning.

Ooops, I did.

I have never had so much email and things to do in my life. President Maureen Burns had an impressive agenda of goals to accomplish!

I got to know more about VRA and all the behind the scenes work that so many people do for everyone's benefit. There was really no choice but to work hard so everyone could succeed --- but that investment continues to pay out in numerous ways.

I have friends for life and I highly encourage anyone to volunteer for the board.

And though I feel like I have done things backwards, it has been rewarding to serve on various committees and the VRA Core Advisory Board   ---- and understand the role they play in VRA.

I dedicate most of my free time to this group now. Both children have shown encouraging indicators as future information professionals.

Gone are the days of cataloguing family furniture (Mom, please help!)

VRA is my professional home. There are not many places for database software people with a library science degree to go.

It truly is an honor to join this list of DSA recipients – their contributions have made the special community, accomplishments, and future potential of the VRA possible.

Maybe I'll see you at the hotel bar tonight --- for the session after the sessions…