

I was utterly surprised when Maureen Burns, Chair of the Awards Committee, notified me that I have been named an Honorary Life Member of the Association. Anyone who knows me well (or who has been in the audience for one of my conference presentations) knows that I am seldom speechless, but I was that day! My sincere thanks to Maureen and the members of her Committee, to the Executive Board, and to John Taormina, my colleague at Duke University, for nominating me for this career-capping honor. I am deeply grateful!

My career has been unusual, I suppose, in as much as I stayed at one academic institution for much of my working life. NYU was my professional “home” across 5 decades. But it was VRA that gave me the tools to adapt as the profession changed and evolved, and the needs of image-based scholarship changed and evolved. We worked together, VRA and I, moving from photographic prints to lantern slides to 35mm slides to digital image records; from manual slide projectors to carousels to PowerPoint and Zoom. During conferences, there were long conversations with colleagues about image quality and image preservation and image description and image organization and image use that crossed media boundaries from film to digital, still- to moving- to mapped- to 3-dimensional images. This was an immeasurable help to me and to my career, and to the careers of my friends and colleagues.

The best thing about VRA I think is the approachable, collegial nature of its membership. VRA gave me the chance to practice leadership skills in a variety of ways—committee work, local chapter work, Board work—and to put those skills to work, at work. I will always be grateful to Christina Updike, who mentored me as I first joined the Association in the 1980s and helped me develop as a leader while I served with her as Vice President. Tina encouraged me to “pass it forward,” and become a mentor myself. Writing for the *Bulletin*, as I first did when Joy Blouin was Editor, allowed me to polish my writing skills. John Taormina and I worked together on the several issues of the *Bulletin* that I guest-edited, and it was a great privilege to encourage some of IFA’s students—now distinguished scholars and museum professionals themselves—to write early-career articles for VRA. I honed my public speaking skills presenting at conferences, sometimes at multiple sessions in the same year (2022 being the most recent example). Joan Beaudoin provided the nudge I needed to go back to school for a 2nd masters’ degree—one of the great accomplishments of my later professional life. As I told Joan before I became a student again, I was terrified that I wouldn’t be able to keep up with all the 20-somethings in the same program. But I could. And I did.

Speaking, writing, leading, mentoring, learning. These are the skills I honed through VRA. I hope the Association benefitted from my work; I know I benefitted from being a VRA member. The list of the other colleagues I wish to thank is quite long, spans my entire career, and would take up too much time this evening. For today, simply know that there are many, and I thank all of you. Thank you to my staff at IFA—Jason, Nita, Joe, George, and Fatima—with whom I worked for more than 30 years. Thank you to my husband, Adam, currently sitting just off camera. I am deeply grateful to John Taormina, to the Awards Committee and the Executive Board, and to the Association both for enhancing my entire career, and for the honor of Life Membership.