

2002 Distinguished Service Award

Presented to Sandra C. Walker in recognition of her many contributions to the field of visual resources through demonstrated leadership, research, and publication, as well as her long-term service to professional organizations, institutions, and the artistic community.

Presented this 24th day of March 2002, by Ann Whiteside, VRA President, and Ann Thomas, VRA Distinguished Service Award Committee Chair

The Visual Resources Association annually honors an individual who has made an outstanding contribution to the field of visual resources. Nominees must have achieved a level of distinction in the field either through leadership, research, or the development and management of a particular visual resources project. Consideration is also given to those who have shown outstanding innovation, participation, or service to the profession.

Presentation

Good evening, members of the Visual Resources Association, members of ARLIS, and friends.

The Distinguished Service Award is the highest honor that the Visual Resources Association bestows on a visual resources professional. It is of particular significance tonight that the decision to hold the first VRA conference to overlap with ARLIS, rather than that of the College Art Association, was made during this honoree's term on the Executive Board. The Committee is delighted to announce that the recipient of the Award for 2002 is Sandra C. Walker. Please come forward Sandy.

Sandra C. Walker received her Bachelor of Arts in Art History (1982) and her Master of Science in Library Science (1985) from the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. Since 1980 she has been employed by the University's Department of Art as Visual Resources Specialist.

Sandy's contributions to the profession have been in three significant areas: leadership, publications, and emerging technology issues.

Her leadership abilities have been evidenced by her contributions to her Department, her College, her University, and to professional organizations.

At the departmental level, she was honored for her many contributions when she was presented with the Department Head's Special Recognition Award in April 1998. She is an excellent mentor for new professionals, supervising practicum students from the UTK School of Information Science in the development of a History of Photography Website. She has lectured to the Museology, Special Libraries, and Information Foundations classes on digital image and collection management, professional activities, Internet access to museum collections, and matters of copyright.

While serving on institutional committees dealing with the use of new technologies, her talents were also employed in other areas. She has long been a strong advocate for professional women in higher education, helping to convene the Equity Issues Committee and serving on the UTK Notable Women Committee. She was appointed by the University Chancellor and Provost to the UTK Commission for Women (1996-2001), and was elected to three terms as its vice chair. In March 2000 Sandy coordinated the University of Tennessee Satellite Teleconference on "Women's Lives, Women's Voices, Women's Solutions: Shaping a National Agenda for Women in Higher Education," which was broadcast as part of a national teleconference hosted by the University of Minnesota.

At conferences of the College Art Association, she has been workshop participant; session chair (CAA Conference, San Antonio, 1995, "Implications of New Visual Resources Technologies for the Classrooms and Museums of the Twenty-first Century"); and presenter (VRA/CAA Intersession, Chicago, 2001, "A Two-Way Street: Practicum Experiences for the Information Science Students in the School of Art Visual Resources Collection"). Additionally, she has addressed the National College Arts Administrators Conference and attended the International Congress in the History of Art.

Sandy has also been an active long-term member of the Southeastern College Art Conference (SECAC), and worked as the first editor of the Southeastern Visual Resources Newsletter and coordinator of the SECAC conference held at her university in 1987. She has acted as session chair and been a presenter at eight SECAC Conferences over a fifteen-year period.

Her service to the Visual Resources Association includes two terms (1990 and 1999) as chair of the Nominating Committee; five years (1996-2001) as a member of the Nancy DeLaurier Writing Awards Committee; and four years (1996-2000) as a member of the Intellectual Property Rights Committee. Ascending to the pinnacle of the visual resources profession, she was elected to the presidency in 1993 and served subsequently as president elect, president, and past president through 1996.

Sandy has also published actively in journals on a wide variety of professional issues. Contributions to the VRA Bulletin include "Website Development - Getting Your Feet Wet Without Drowning," Spring 1999; "Hidden Treasures: Beauford and Joseph Delaney of Knoxville, Tennessee," Spring 1997; "Cruising the Internet," Fall 1995; and "Cataloging Graphic Design/Illustration Slides as a Major Component of the Slide Collection," Fall 1992. Moving onto the international scene in 1989, Sandy presented a paper at the Twenty-seventh International Congress on the History of Art in Strasbourg, France. The next year, an article based on this paper, "Technology Usage in Visual Resources Collections in the United States," was published in *Visual Resources, An International Journal of Documentation*. Sandy's most outstanding contribution is her book, co-edited with Don Beetham: *the Image Buyer's Guide: An International Directory of Sources for Slides and Digital Images for Art and Architecture, Seventh Edition*, published by Libraries Unlimited of Englewood, Colorado, in 1999.

Sandy has also made outstanding contributions in the overlapping areas of intellectual property rights and emerging technologies.

She was an early advocate of and proselytizer for the use of computer technology as a management tool for visual resources collections, and has played an important role at UTK in addressing the use of the new technologies. She has served as a member of the University's Multimedia Seminar Committee and her department's Technology Committee and Media Resources Advisory Committee.

As early as 1988, she became a Beta Tester for the Michigan Image Cataloging System (a software program for cataloging slides and creating a searchable database). Ten years later she was invited to participate in the groundbreaking VISION Project (1997-98) sponsored by the Research Libraries Group and the VRA to promote cataloging standards for visual resources records online.

As VRA President, in 1994 she made two seminal national presentations which defined the position of the visual resources profession with respect to intellectual property rights and fair use issues. In Washington, D.C., that September, the United States Department of Commerce sponsored the Fair Use Conference (CONFU) and held Public Hearings on Intellectual Property Rights and the National Information Infrastructure. Sandy's general presentation to CONFU and her formal presentation of a position statement on behalf of the VRA at the Public Hearings not only heightened national awareness of the VRA but established her as an active participant in the generation of important public policy.

The Distinguished Service Award committee received a nomination packet for Sandy that not only included an enthusiastic nomination letter along with her impressive resume, but also nine letters of recommendation from visual resources colleagues. These laudatory letters of support from those who know her well highlight Sandy's accomplishments and document most effectively her service to the profession. I would like you to share some of these tributes attesting to the range and depth of her contributions.

In reference to her Leadership

- "She served as president of the VRA with distinction and authority, but also with graciousness and good humor."

- "As president of the VRA Sandy appointed dedicated and talented leaders to committees, encouraged board members to work creatively as a group, and never lost touch with the VRA constituency."

- "Sandy's term of office can be characterized as effective and strong."

- "Sandy's leadership and vision for the visual resources profession allowed the Association to grow in numbers and stature."

- "Sandra as President-Elect, President, and Past President, was always even-tempered, and willing to look at all sides to bring people to consensus."

- "When working with Sandy, I am always struck by the calm authority she exhibits, by her skills of diplomacy, and by her quiet and steady leadership."

In reference to her editorship of the Image Buyers' Guide:

- "A prodigious undertaking, the Image Buyers' Guide is the only reference tool that covers major sources for images. I consult it often and sincerely appreciate the time and thought that went into its production."

- "Updating this practical guide to include both analog and digital media sources was a monumental task and a vital service to the profession."

- "Her experience and professionalism were crucial to the completion of the publication... Never once during this time did Sandy become cross or annoyed; all of her attentions were focused on getting the facts right and details in order."

In reference to her involvement in issues of intellectual property rights and emerging technologies:

- "Her testimony during the CONFU hearings in the early 1990s helped to raise the visibility, and credibility, of our profession; we are now consulted as professionals equal with other humanities groups on issues of copyright and intellectual property as a matter of course."

- "She fostered acceptance of digital technologies among the profession and nurtured a leadership role for the Association in digital imaging."

- "Another leader may have let the digital revolution pass VRA by. But Sandra, always on top of the newest technologies and the most critical issues, would not let VRA focus on only slides and labels. Under her "big picture" leadership, VRA reached out to a new and different future."

- "It was a dynamic time to be part of the profession and Sandra was an essential part of making the profession dynamic."

In reference to her role as mentor:

- "The visual resources community has benefited from Sandy's practical applications and her willingness to share her experiences."

- "Since the inauguration of the listserv, Sandy's timely and thoughtful advice has been available to anyone who posts a query."

- "Over the years, Sandy has served as a role model for many new visual resources curators and has been an inspiration to us all."

In reference to her professionalism:

- "She is a true advocate and bridge builder for our profession - locally, regionally, nationally, and beyond. She is equally effective as an advocate for the professional woman."

- "Her quiet insistence on professional standards has always served as a sterling example to colleagues among both visual resources curators, and the scholars we serve."

- "Sandy certainly stands out as one of the most dedicated professionals in the field."

- "As an individual, Ms. Walker always radiates decency and good humor."

And finally, we were offered a bit of advice:

"This Committee could do no better than to award this honor to Sandra Walker, and to do so as her retirement from the profession is imminent would be appropriate and celebratory."

And in that spirit of celebration, it is my pleasure to present you, Sandy, with the Visual Resources Association's Distinguished Service Award for 2002.

Ann M. Thomas
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