

2009 Distinguished Service Awards

In 2008, the Board of Directors voted to institute the Distinguished Service Award to recognize the contributions of and express gratitude to our colleagues for their long and dedicated service to ASIANetwork. The first recipient of the award was **Van J. Symons**, who began to serve on the Board in 1995, served as Board Chair in 1997-1998, became Executive Director in 1999 until 2005, and then continued his service to the consortium by agreeing to manage the ASIANetwork Freeman Student-Faculty Fellows program, our longest running program.

For 2009, the Board voted to present the award to two colleagues: **Stan Mickel**, Professor of Chinese, Wittenberg University (retired in 2007) and **Joan O'Mara**, Professor of Art History, Washington and Lee University. In presenting the recognition, we requested Van Symons to read a tribute for Stan Mickel and Paul Nietupski for Joan O'Mara. Stan was in the audience and visibly surprised with the award. However, Joan O'Mara could not come due to her illness, and Mike Smitka received the plaque on her behalf. Upon his return, Mike arranged a small gathering at W&L to formally present the plaque to Joan O'Mara in March. She passed away in May, 2009 of pancreatic cancer. We publish here the tributes written by Van Symons and Paul Nietupski to share with the larger membership the contributions of these two remarkable colleagues to our consortium.

Teddy O. Amoloza

In Appreciation of Joan O'Mara

Paul Nietupski

John Carroll University

Joan O'Mara's involvement in Asian studies might at first appear typical, until one takes a closer look at her lifetime passion for and results of her work. She does have excellent academic credentials, a Bachelor's from Carleton College, a Master's and PhD from the University of Michigan, all proof of her commitment to the study and research of Japanese, Chinese, Asian, and European art history. Indicators of excellence in her scholarship include Fulbright, Mellon, NEH, SSRC, and others. She has held a number of posts in art history and is tenured at Washington and Lee University in Lexington, Virginia. Her ongoing intellectual growth is made evident in the long list of her



presentations to academic societies, her publications, her curatorial projects, and, not the least, her work with ASIANetwork. Joan has clearly internalized her subject to the point where she has an intuitive understanding of her field. She is an active scholar and continues to study and learn, and clearly enjoys the surprise and challenges of exploring what is new and different, evidenced by her recent involvement in Silk Road studies.

Joan's command of her field is moreover matched by the strength of her belief that Asian studies has something to offer her students, colleagues, and community. She is the type of scholar who is motivated to take the knowledge she has nurtured over decades of hard work and communicate it to others. In other words, she is a teacher who gives all of what she has so carefully received and developed. In this Joan might be like others with prodigious degrees and sincere motives, but she also

has the gift of being able to effectively communicate what she

knows. Some evidence of this is in her fellowships received for pedagogy development and in her years of active involvement in ASIANetwork, in her service on the ASIANetwork Board of Directors from 2002-2006, and in her 2004-2005 post as Chair of the Board. Joan's intellectual curiosity and her gifts of being able to assess and present new ideas and objects are evident in her résumé and in small measure in her *ASIANetwork Exchange* essay on Silk Road pedagogy (*ASIANetwork Exchange*, 15.2, Winter 2007) and more fully for example in her masterful ASIANetwork consultancy of the diverse art collections at DePauw University.



In her role as ASIANetwork Chairperson, Joan O'Mara dealt effectively with a large number of successful initiatives, in addition to the broad range of development and management issues. Joan oversaw the development of a study expedition to the Pearl River Delta in China, the Vietnam-US faculty exchange program, Freeman Student-Faculty fellowship program, and others. She was able to lead a diverse group of Board members to fulfill the best interests of the consortium and organized the collaborative conference between ASIANetwork and the Asian Studies Development Project, a major undertaking. Her contributions to ASIANetwork have been and continue to be outstanding.

Joan remains a key figure in the ASIANetwork-Luce Foundation "Asian Art in the Undergraduate Curriculum," for which she served as grant-writer, consultant, co-editor, and

chapter author. She organized the preliminary book-writing conference in Lexington, Virginia, and has worked hard to bring the goals of the project to fruition. She continues to demonstrate her academic rigor, her intuitive knowledge of the subject, her ability to communicate, her command of written expression, and her apparently unlimited patience, tact, and humor.

In sum, Joan O'Mara is someone special. She is erudite, powerful, a teacher, an incisive intellectual, and a wonderful colleague. This is a person with *chutzpa*. After years of working together, her colleagues know her as an effective team worker, for her administrative skill, for her grace under pressure, and in her roles as wife and mother, and as a friend.

For those who want to commemorate Joan O'Mara, memorial contributions in her name may be sent to the American Cancer Society or to Washington and Lee University for the Joan O'Mara Art Prize.

Reflections on Stan Mickel

Van Symons
Augustana College

The wonder of ASIANetwork is that so much has been accomplished in so little time by so few individuals—all asking for little in return for their service. Development officers at key foundations have asked what the secret is to AN's success. The answer is a simple one. It is due to the unselfish, conscientious work of persons who have invested their talent and energy to foster the growth of ASIANetwork and its programs. Stan Mickel is certainly one of them.

Service on the Board of Directors

Stan joined the Board of Directors of ASIANetwork in 1997, and subsequently, served as vice-chair, chair, and ex-officio chair of the board. Key developments occurred during his watch. The four year Ford Foundation-funded faculty curricular development grant that housed twelve faculty each summer on the campuses of Earlham, St. Olaf, Kenyon and Davidson Colleges than sent them to Japan, China, Southeast Asia, and South Asia the following summers was successfully completed.

An ongoing relationship with the Freeman Foundation was begun which funded for six years a College-in-Asia program to foster study abroad programs in East Asia, and also supported a Student-Faculty Fellows program that is still running and this summer will send its 566th Fellow to Asia to encourage undergraduate research in Asia.

During this time, Stan was also a central figure in the development and successful completion of a second grant, funded by the Henry Luce Foundation, focused on the publication of the book *Asia in the Undergraduate Curriculum* which makes the case for enhancing Asian Studies programs in small liberal arts colleges. His chapter in the book on the centrality of Asian languages to college education is pivotal in this work.

While on the board, Stan worked, especially with Suzanne Barnett (the University of Puget Sound), to regularize AN's administration. His leadership of the board came at a pivotal time when the headquarters was being moved from a six year tenure at Colorado College under the directorship of Marianna McJimsey to Augustana College, where Van J. Symons assumed

the post of executive director. Stan and Suzanne helped develop a collegial model of leadership for ASIANetwork, which is still being practiced today at Illinois Wesleyan University by our current director, Teddy Amoloza. During this time, Stan was also instrumental in securing, for a first time, liability insurance for the consortium and its officers.

Service on the Development Committee

In the spring of 2001, when Stan's term on the board ended, he was asked and agreed to serve along with Cathy Benton (Lake Forest College) on our first ever development team. Knowing that generating foundation support to sustain AN's programs was central to our mission and having few resources to hire professional development officers, the board acted as in the past and simply found the best persons available to take on this responsibility. At the time, I remember wondering how it is that we were able to invest such confidence in a Chinese language professor and a South Asian religious scholar, little familiar with the complex world of fund raising, to undertake such a challenging task. Nonetheless, we soon came to believe that there is little these two could not do once given this charge.

What followed was quite extraordinary. Stan and Cathy jumped right into this endeavor with an energy and resolve that was truly remarkable. After a great deal of hard and grinding work, Stan and Cathy began to identify foundations and philanthropists who might be interested in supporting ASIANetwork programs, while at the same time, prodding the AN board and its members to provide them with grant ideas that would benefit our members and warrant serious foundation consideration. Draft grant proposals were crafted by Stan and Cathy and a small core of willing individuals, and Cathy produced a smart AN portfolio booklet to share with foundation leaders. With these documents in hand, the three of us began making annual fall visits to New York City to introduce the consortium and our grant proposals to various foundations. This was really hard work, but we were assisted by friends at the Henry Luce Foundation, the United Board for Christian Higher Education in Asia, and on AN's Council of Advisors who encouraged us and gave us fine counsel, and we had a surprising amount of success.

During the next three years, while Stan served on the development committee, ASIANetwork secured a third \$1.3 million renewal grant from by the Freeman Foundation to

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\$450,000 Luce Grant to ASIANetwork to Support Postdoctoral Teaching Fellow Program

Through the generous support of the Henry Luce Foundation, ASIANetwork will provide member institutions the opportunity to apply for a grant to hire a postdoctoral teaching fellow in Asian Studies. The ASIANetwork - Luce Teaching Fellows, recent recipients of a terminal degree from a North American university, will spend one year at a host ASIANetwork member college, teaching and participating in the intellectual and cultural life of the host college. ASIANetwork will award 4 grants each year for 3 academic years (2010-11, 2011-12, and 2012-13).

ASIANetwork will provide \$30,000 to each of the selected colleges as partial support for the hiring of the teaching fellow and \$1,000 to support the fellow's mentor/coordinator. The host college will follow its own search and employment procedures within the context of Program guidelines provided by ASIANetwork.

During the year of participation in the Program, the host college will designate a faculty mentor to work with the teaching fellow and will arrange various professional development opportunities. ASIANetwork will provide each teaching fellow with a travel allowance to attend the ASIANetwork annual conference. The teaching fellow will teach a half-time course load, attend departmental and college faculty meetings, keep office hours, mentor students, and continue to pursue research and/or other scholarly projects. With allowances for the academic discipline, area of regional specialty, and the needs of the host college, the teaching fellow should be encouraged to teach comparatively about Asia.

Only U.S. ASIANetwork member colleges and universities are eligible. For more information, visit our website or contact the Program Director, Gary DeCoker, Earlham College, at 765-983-1890; decokga@earlham.edu.

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continue our Student-Faculty Fellows Program; a Fulbright Hays Grant to send fifteen colleagues from ASIANetwork colleges to the Pearl River Delta for faculty development; a shared grant with the American Council of Learned Societies and the Center for Educational Exchange with Vietnam to enable AN colleges to host Vietnamese scholars on their campuses and send faculty from ASIANetwork member colleges to Vietnam for enrichment; and a fourth grant from the Henry Luce Foundation to provide consultancy visits to AN campuses to evaluate their Asian art holdings in order to produce a book *Reading Asian Art: Windows to Asia in College Collections* and a digital library of images of these art works.

Service as Grant Director

Stan's success in helping to secure the fourth Luce Foundation grant to survey Asian art on the campuses of ASIANetwork colleges and produce a book based on the findings, created the opportunity for him to serve in yet another setting. In the spring of 2004, as Stan's three year term on the development committee ended, Paul Watt (DePauw University) was asked to replace Stan on AN's development committee. Stan surely felt that he was finally going to receive a break after almost a decade of service to ASIANetwork. However, the ASIANetwork board had other plans for him. Knowing how thorough and competent Stan is in every endeavor he undertakes, Stan was asked to become the director of this very complex grant. Few have worked so hard for so long for ASIANetwork, but after being given a night to sleep on the offer and discuss it with his wife, Karen, he accepted. Not

surprisingly, he and a small group of individuals around him including Karil Kucera (St. Olaf), Joan O'Mara (Washington & Lee), and Paul Nietupski (John Carroll) have completed the orchestration of consultancy visits to two dozen colleges, secured images of the art that has been accessed and evaluated, posted these images on our website and others, and are now nearing the completion of the promised book dealing with our discoveries. What a fitting conclusion to a full decade of service to ASIANetwork.

Stan is ever dependable, and never commits himself to a project without completing it in a timely manner. His contributions in service on the board, in development work, and as the Asian Arts grant director, are unparalleled. Stan is also a highly respected teacher and scholar who established one of the earliest Chinese programs on a North American liberal arts college campus (Wittenburg), and he has published a number of important scholarly articles and books. He is one of the founders of the *Wittenburg University East Asian Studies Journal* which for over thirty years has published undergraduate research written by students across this country that is focused on Asia.

In my work with ASIANetwork, I came to rely on Stan Mickel more than he will ever realize. Stan is a steady and soft spoken individual. He sees the good in people and is seldom, if ever, judgmental of others. He and I first met when Marianna McJimsey matched us to share a hotel room at ASIANetwork's 2nd annual spring conference held in Santa Fe, New Mexico. Since then, Stan has become one of my closest friends, and a friend that I truly admire.