

**Society of American Archivists  
Council Meeting  
August 22, 2011  
Chicago, Illinois**

**Action Item: Emerging Leader Award  
(Prepared by: Gregor Trinkaus-Randall)**

**BACKGROUND**

The Society of American Archivists recognizes members who have contributed substantially to the profession and to SAA by awarding them one of several awards. The most prestigious of these is one's election as a Fellow of the Society. As stated on the SAA website, the distinction of Fellow is the highest individual honor bestowed by SAA and is awarded to a limited number of individuals for their outstanding contributions to the archives profession.

SAA also recognizes individuals who have contributed to religious archives with the Sister M. Claude Lane, OP, Memorial Award that recognizes individuals who have made a significant contribution to the field of religious archives.

The Council Exemplary Service Award recognizes a special contribution to the archives profession, and especially to SAA, that is not eligible for one of the other awards given by the Society. It is given on an occasional basis at the discretion of the Council or upon recommendation to the Council by the Awards Committee.

The Spotlight Award recognizes the contributions of individuals who work for the good of the profession and of archival collections and whose work would not typically receive public recognition.

Most recently, the Archival Innovators Award was created to recognize individual archivists, groups of archivists, repositories, and organizations who are innovative, creative, and making a difference in the archival world or in their own communities.

Each of these awards recognizes individuals or groups for specific activities, large or small, but most tend to occur well into the recipient's career.

**DISCUSSION**

Unlike a number of other professions, SAA does not have an award to recognize archivists early in their careers who have shown exceptional promise and have already made significant contributions to the profession through their work, their participation in

regional and national organizations, and the promise of leadership in the years to come. By creating such an award, the SAA Council would provide an opportunity to encourage archivists who show the potential to be leaders in the profession and reward their activities. Often archivists have noted that so-and-so has done exceptional work or that such person should be recognized for his or her accomplishments/leadership. However, there has been no way to recognize these people on a national basis. Even at the regional level, this has been an area that has not been addressed consistently.

**Pros:** This would be a wonderful opportunity for SAA to recognize the accomplishments of a number of early career archivists and encourage them to continue to be active participants in the field. Moreover, it would fill a gap by encouraging archivists to recognize their peers at an early stage in their careers. SAA has been reaching out to acknowledge the accomplishments of students as well as the long-established archivists. There is a large hole in between. This award would begin the process of filling that gap.

**Cons:** None.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

**THAT the SAA Emerging Leader Award be established and awarded for the first time at the 2012 Annual Meeting; and**

**THAT the SAA Awards Committee be responsible for administering the award; and**

**THAT the following language be incorporated into the full award description:**

#### **SAA Emerging Leader Award**

##### **Purpose and Criteria for Selection:**

The SAA Emerging Leader Award is presented annually to celebrate and encourage early-career archivists who have completed archival work of broad merit, demonstrated significant promise of leadership, and/or performed commendable service to the archives profession.

Nominees will have completed more than two years and less than ten years of professional archives experience. Nominees should be SAA members and must meet as many of the following criteria as possible:

- Work of merit that has made a substantive contribution to an area(s) of the archives profession beyond the nominee's local institution and holds promise for future contributions.
- Demonstrated leadership through collaborative work or exemplary service to local, regional, and/or national archival and cultural associations.

- Formal archival education through a graduate degree program in history, library science, information science, or a related field; through an archival or preservation institute; or certification by the Academy of Certified Archivists.
- Involvement in successful outreach and advocacy efforts on behalf of the nominee's institution and the archives profession.

### **Eligibility:**

The award is presented to an archivist who has completed between two and ten years of experience in positions defined as professional in the nominee's institution. The award is given based upon the total experience of the awardee, including knowledge, leadership, participation, and/or achievements in the profession. Up to five awards may be given per year.

### **Submission Requirements:**

In addition to a completed nomination form, each nomination must include at least two and preferably three letters of support from the nominee's employer/supervisor and colleagues familiar with the nominee's work and professional activities. Self-nominations are not accepted.

### **Sponsor and Funding:**

The Society of American Archivists.

### **Prize:**

A certificate. Given that this award is intended to recognize exemplary contributions, there may be some years in which no awards are presented.

### **Selection Committee:**

The subcommittee is composed of three members of the Society of American Archivists and one of the co-chairs of the Awards Committee (*ex officio*). One member of the subcommittee shall be appointed each year by the SAA Vice President to serve a three-year term. The senior member of the subcommittee in years of service shall serve as its chair and present the award.

### **Application Deadline and Nomination Form:**

**All nominations shall be submitted to the Awards Committee by February 28 of each year.** Download the nomination form as a [PDF](#) or [RTF](#). Send 5 copies of completed form and supplementary documentation to:

Emerging Leader Award Subcommittee  
Society of American Archivists

17 North State Street, Suite 1425  
Chicago, IL 60602-3315

Questions should be directed to the Chair of the SAA Emerging Leader Award Subcommittee.

**Support Statement:** An Emerging Leader Award provides a wonderful opportunity for SAA to recognize archivists relatively early in their careers who have shown exceptional promise and have already made significant contributions to the profession through their work, their participation in regional and national organizations, and the promise of leadership in the years to come.

**Fiscal Impact:** None.