ADE Awards--Winter 2004

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ADE Awards

Life Service Award
Presented by Esther Katz

Charlene receives the Life Service Award from Esther at the 26th annual ADE conference

Distinguished Service Awards are presented to individuals or projects which have made a significant contribution to furthering the aims of the Association for Documentary Editing. But what do you do when one individual has repeatedly made significant contributions to the ADE? What do you do when one individual is one of only three people to have already been honored with two Distinguished Service Awards, one in 1981 and the second in 1997? You do what the Council has done this year—devise a new honor—the Life Service Award—and select that person, Charlene Bickford, as its first recipient.

I want to be clear—this is not a kiss-off or ready for retirement award—heaven forfend. Rather, we’re hoping this will encourage Charlene to keep on doing what she does so well. Charlene Bickford has served as Federal Policy Committee chair since 1980 and I can’t remember a federal crisis, budget staff, whatever, that Charlene has not steered us through. She is one of the best spokeswomen for editing within NHPRC and NEH, and is probably the ADE’s most effective representative on the Hill. Working closely with Bruce Craig at the National History Coalition, she keeps her eye on politics, calendars, and the people who count. And she effectively represents the interests of the ADE at a host of meetings and conferences—from the National Humanities Alliance to the Association for State and Local History.
Steering Committee. I pity the president who has to work without Charlene at the other end of the phone or an e-mail.

So, it is my honor and very, very great pleasure to bestow on Charlene Bickford the ADE’s first Life Service Award.

**Julian P. Boyd Award**  
**Presented by Ann D. Gordon**

![Barbara receives the Julian P. Boyd Award from Ann at the 26th annual ADE conference](image)

Every third year, the Association for Documentary Editing awards its highest honor, the Julian P. Boyd Award, to a senior scholar in recognition of his or her distinguished contribution to the study of American history and culture.

Why name this prize for Boyd—a name now invoked most often as the symbol of slow production and texts overwhelmed by their annotation? In Julian Boyd, especially in his career editing the *Papers of Thomas Jefferson* from 1944 to 1980, historical editors recognize a pioneer in their craft. To quote Mary-Jo Kline, “under Boyd’s direction the framework of a historian’s notion of a modern editorial project took shape.” He was a visionary about making well-edited primary sources available to the public, a scholar, a passionate historian, and an influential writer about historical editing. We in the Association are committed to the possibility that all Founding Fathers have flaws; we honor them nonetheless.

The Association has, in past years, awarded this prize to a distinguished list: Arthur Link, Harold Syrett, Fredson Bowers, Louis Harlan, Jo Ann Boydston, David Chesnutt, John Simon, and William Abbott. This year, the
Association awards the Julian P. Boyd prize to Barbara Bowen Oberg, General Editor of the Papers of Thomas Jefferson at Princeton University and a past president of this Association.

Barbara will surely (and rightly!) object to an award intended for a senior scholar. To accommodate the sensitivity of this grandmother, I implore you to consider the wonder of the achievements of one so young. Barbara has squeezed twenty-six years of historical editing into her young life. I will come back to that accomplishment, but I begin this recitation of her worthiness with things less obvious to members of this Association.

Barbara Oberg exemplifies an ideal of editor-scholar. Since early in her career, she has combined documentary editing with traditional historical scholarship, embracing the Early American Republic as her field. The list of her publications reveals one of the tricks of this trade: her essays parallel her editorial homes. She has interpreted her authors and their times for the scholarly world in an impressive number of reviews, lectures, essays, and articles. The occasions and the publishers of her scholarship signal that in each phase of her specialization, she gained the respect of other historians.

Barbara’s scholarship and overall competence have been recognized by others. She presided over the Society for Textual Scholarship from 2001 to 2003—the first historian to hold that post. With scarcely a moment to catch a breath at the end of her term, she stepped into the presidency of the Society of Historians of the Early American Republic, better known as SHEAR. Like her editorial predecessors as well as most of her historical subjects, Barbara was elected to membership in the American Philosophical Society. In all of these situations, she serves as a dynamic promoter of scholarly work on the Early Republic and editorial scholarship in general.

To the ideal of editor-scholar, Barbara Oberg adds the ideal of professional servant. In this Association as well as in others, she is one of those who step forward to articulate the goals of a profession, represent it to the public, perform its committee work, provide occasional formal leadership, and constant casual leadership. Everyone familiar with the literature produced by members of this Association knows her both as an editor “Deciding Alone,” written in 1980, and an editor engaged in close collaboration, as she described her work in her presidential address in 1995. Outside the field, among historians, but also outside universities, she has been a compelling spokesperson for documentary editing. Many of us, of different ages and at different stages of a career, recognize Barbara’s casual leadership in the forms of encouragement, recruitment, letters of recommendation, and generous commiseration.
Having said all this, it must also be said: Barbara merits this award on the basis solely of her career as an editor. This is an important point to us. What better way could there possibly be to make “a distinguished contribution to the study of American history and culture” than by providing fundamental materials needed for understanding not one but four individuals who helped to shape the nation’s history and culture?

Beginning in 1978 (she was obviously a mere girl then), she edited the Papers of Philip Mazzei (as an associate editor), to produce a comprehensive microfilm edition. At the Papers of Albert Gallatin (already, by 1981, a young lead editor), she published the microfilm supplement, before proceeding to the Papers of Benjamin Franklin. There eight volumes bore her mark. Since 1999, when she assumed the title of General Editor for the Jefferson Papers, four volumes have appeared. This is a major body of work by any standard.

Within that story of her moves and migrations from project to project lies an odd ambition or a peculiar fate: twice now she has stepped into the shoes of editing giants. She not only matched their enviable reputations, she also led those venerable projects into modern practices without destroying their identities. Barbara Oberg deserves to stand with the other outstanding recipients of this award.

**Lyman H. Butterfield Award**
**Presented by Richard Leffler**

Ken receives the Lyman H. Butterfield Award from Richard at the 26th annual ADE conference
The person nominating Ken Bowling for the Lyman H. Butterfield Award noted that “Ken has devoted almost his entire professional life to the Papers of the First Federal Congress, performing every task a skilled and successful editor can.” This is certainly true. He could have gone even further back in time. Before Ken joined the Congress project, he was an editor on the First Federal Elections project, where he might have remained but for a courageous career-altering decision. His research while at the Elections project in innumerable repositories benefited those two projects and the Ratification of the Constitution project as well. We at Ratification still profit from Ken’s research, past and present.

Ken has also been a scholar who, to use an unfortunate modern expression, “does his own work.” And what work it has been. His published research on the importance of the fight over the location of the capital has been revelatory and brilliant. The letter of nomination called Ken’s 1988 essay “‘A Tub to the Whale’: The Founding Fathers and the Adoption of the Bill of Rights,” “the most insightful and important historical work to be written on the origin of the Bill of Rights in a generation at least, and perhaps ever.” Now that may be an exaggeration. But it is only a slight exaggeration. It is a great article, which recognized that even the “founding fathers” could act not just from high-minded principle, but from political necessity and expediency.

I think we have established that Ken has devoted a lifetime to service and fine scholarly achievement. But the Butterfield Award is presented annually “to an individual . . . for recent contributions in the areas of documentary publication, teaching, and service.” So, what has Ken done for us lately? Well, quite a lot. He has directed Liberty Fund Conferences and been a frequent participant since 1993. He has also participated in conferences on George Washington at Mount Vernon. He was the Director of the United States Capitol Annual conferences on Congress from 1993 to 2001. He serves on the Editorial Board of Washington History and is the dissertation bibliographer for the Journal of the Early Republic. He has served on numerous ADE committees, including presently the Education Committee. He has taught at George Washington University, George Mason University, and The Catholic University of America. In 2002 he published a biography of Peter Charles L’Enfant, and he is currently working on a book of essays on the First Federal Congress. Most importantly, he and his colleagues have recently published three magnificent volumes of correspondence of the members of the great first federal Congress, with more to come. The correspondence volumes will
revolutionize our understanding of these crucial years in the young republic.

For all of these reasons and for more that I could mention, I have the
great personal privilege on behalf of the ADE to present the Lyman H.
Butterfield Award to Kenneth R. Bowling.