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Mary Jo Kline
University of Virginia

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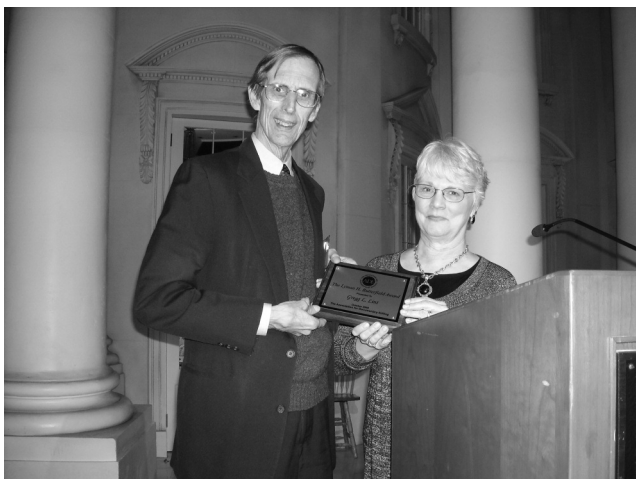
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Lyman H. Butterfield Award for 2009 Presented to Gregg L. Lint

Mary-Jo Kline



Mary-Jo Kline, presents the Butterfield Award to Gregg Lint.

It has become a tradition for the person presenting the Butterfield Award to create a bit of suspense in the presentation speech, mentioning first the more general aspects of the recipient's career, then introducing details that enable all members of the audience but one to realize: "Well, I'm not going to get it this year!"

I will follow that tradition tonight, but even my first remarks will make it clear that the youngsters in the room—those of you under the age of 60 or so—should abandon hope and relax while I sing the praises of one of your elders. This year's Butterfield Award

recognizes not only recent contributions to documentary editing, but contributions that have continued for more than thirty years.

One colleague has called our honoree "an unsung hero among today's documentary editors who has long played a very behind-the-scenes role in promoting our profession." After tonight, the "unsung" descriptor will no longer apply. All the members of the Butterfield Committee were struck not only by the high praise our "hero" received from those supporting his receipt of the award, but by the consistency with which his colleagues and friends identified the areas in which he has shone.

First, of course, there is the quality of the scholarship displayed in the volumes he has edited. But the testimonials we read also revealed the vital role he has played within the walls of his project, as a mentor to junior editors within his office and as a vital aide to the project's directors; he has been equally helpful to fledgling editors of other projects who have sought his help. He has been a model for the rest of us by participating in outreach programs for educators at all levels, by participating in scholarly conferences that publicize the work of editors to a broader audience, by loyal service on the ADE's Nominating Committee, and,

noblest of all, by service on conference local arrangements committees—a task I have avoided like the plague.

Now I will begin leaking details that will enable you to confirm your suspicions, for by now many of you will have guessed that this year's recipient of the Lyman H. Butterfield Award is Gregg L. Lint.

The project where he has spent his entire career as an editor is, of course, the Adams Papers, whose staff he joined in the fall of 1975. He recently completed work on the fifteenth volume of *The Papers of John Adams*, the series with which he has been most closely identified. He has been the "lead editor" responsible for volumes in that series since 1983, and the 2010 volume will be the ninth in which his position on the title page recognizes his role. In addition, he has contributed to several other volumes in other Adams Papers series. Said one colleague: "His knowledge of John Adams's public life is unrivaled, and he has used that expertise to produce well-edited books that have furthered substantially our understanding of U.S. diplomacy in the revolutionary era." Another regrets the fact that "nowadays not many students of the late colonial, revolutionary, and early national periods think of themselves as diplomatic historians." But our Butterfield laureate does, and his work shows him to be "a scholar of diplomatic history of insight and skill."

Next we come to the role he plays in the working lives of his colleagues, something little known outside the Adams Papers offices. Every junior editor on the Adams Papers roster sings his praises. One portrays Gregg as "a kind and considerate colleague who has taken much time and interest in the newer and younger editors"; another as "an important mentor to newer staff members [who] patiently guided me through the process of learning to edit a volume from start to finish, and is doing the same now with other junior editors. Even as he has risen to the rank of senior editor, he has not forgotten the challenges of starting out in this field, and his quiet encouragement has helped many staff members move forward"; and yet another as a "treasured colleague in the field of history and documentary editing" and a "wonderful mentor—both knowledgeable and patient—to all the new editors."

One junior co-worker wrote that "Gregg has spent his career immersed in John Adams and the early republic and has a wealth of knowledge at his fingertips [which] he loves to share . . . with young editors, and his bright enthusiasm for both the subject matter and the process of documentary editing is infectious. Gregg's institutional knowledge of the Adams Papers project is invaluable, and he is happy and ready to share what he knows from the Butterfield days as well as the latest policy decisions." "Gregg's contribution to documentary editing," the committee was told, "goes beyond the many years invested and the many volumes published. . . . Between his work and his reading, Gregg has accumulated a vast

fund of wisdom and knowledge. He has mastered the Adamses and their papers as well as the historical context and the editorial process. Much to the relief of his more junior colleagues, he freely shares his wealth. Gregg's nurturing of the rising cohort of editors has been critical to the recent revitalization of the Adams Papers and has laid a foundation for the continued success of the project."

Ted Crackel, now director of the Papers of George Washington, speaks of Gregg's service as a mentor to editors outside the walls of the Massachusetts Historical Society on Boylston Street. The two met in the mid-1990s, when Ted was struggling to get the Papers of the War Department project into operation. "As anyone who has ever launched a new project will attest," he recalls, "someone who evidences a true interest in your work is almost as rare as an unsolicited donor. Gregg's interest was, moreover, deeper than a simple inquiry. He was truly interested in both the subject and how I was addressing the problems posed by such a 'pile of ashes.' He asked good questions and had good advice and his obvious interest was just the kind of encouragement I needed. Year after year, as the War Department project developed, he continued to encourage me, to make helpful suggestions, to arrange useful contacts, and to provide sometimes much needed reassurance."

Perhaps the most telling tributes come from two men who have served as Gregg Lint's boss during the years in which the Adams Papers office underwent seismic changes in staffing and direction: Conrad Wright, who was interim editor-in-chief of the project for the year before a new permanent director came on board in 2001, and James Taylor, who became editor-in-chief that year. Conrad recalled that when he assumed temporary command "at a time of turmoil for the project—and at a time when Federal funders were expressing grave doubts about its ability to bring out volumes—it was Gregg who saved the day. As interim editor I made a decision that required him to take the lead. Breaking with our past practice of publishing two volumes at once, I decided that to demonstrate the project's productivity we would focus on the single volume closest to being ready—*The Papers of John Adams*, volume 11, for which Gregg was the primary editor. He rose to the challenge, produced a fine volume, and resolved the immediate worries of the Federal funders. Both the project and documentary editing more generally owe him a debt of thanks for coming through when he did." Jim Taylor found Gregg just as invaluable as a permanent colleague: "I too regularly rely on him for advice concerning almost every aspect of the project. The renewed energy and success of the project in recent years would not have been possible without his unwavering commitment to it."

Beyond his work in producing documentary editions, Gregg has provided a model for outreach to the world of users, and, more important, to potential users of specific texts and notes. One of the newer Adams editors sums it up this way: "For Gregg the goal of documentary editing is not only to get the docu-

ments out but to bring people in. It is not enough to make more primary sources more accessible; it is necessary to demonstrate their value to the advancement of historical understanding and to encourage others to take a look. . . .” To this end, he has “presented his findings at academic conferences and in teacher seminars, inspiring interest in the Adams Papers in particular while garnering respect for editors and their work in general.”

An admirer from another project says, “He has frequently served as an emissary of documentary editing to those outside our profession. . . . He is, in fact, elegant when speaking of the understanding that documentary editors bring to the historical record and the richness they add to the story of events that have marked our nation’s history.”

More specifically, and recently, he can always be counted on to lend a hand and his eloquent voice to programs at the MHS for classroom teachers. Just last July, Gregg and two other members of the Adams Papers staff made six presentations to college instructors attending two NEH-sponsored programs. On a more scholarly level are the papers he has given at conferences, such as the one in the fall of 2008 that celebrated the 225th anniversary of the signing of the 1783 Treaty of Paris concluding the peace between Britain and the United States. And only this summer he presented a paper on Adams’s diplomacy at the week-long meeting on *John Adams & Thomas Jefferson: Libraries, Leadership, Legacy*, co-sponsored by the MHS and the Robert Smith International Center for Jefferson Studies. Gregg also stands as a model for veteran editors faced with technological change. At the Adams Papers, says one colleague, “Gregg’s longevity with the project has given him an important role in long-term planning. Most recently, he has helped us to shape our plans for digital editions. Although he remembers a time when word processors were cutting edge, Gregg has not shied away from embracing new technology and making the most of it in service to editing.” And I particularly enjoy the comment of one of his youngest and most technologically gifted colleagues: “Gregg has also impressed me with the openness and ease with which he has embraced the latest technical advancements in publishing and his cheerful willingness to learn new software—he is an old dog that *can* learn new tricks—with great aplomb and humor.”

All of which reminds us of how Gregg has become someone who can be described as “a hero of the documentary editing community. We need more like him and we badly need to recognize such persons for the really important roles they play, behind the scenes, in our profession.”

I will conclude by admitting that I take special pleasure in honoring Gregg tonight, for I was a member of the team that interviewed him for his job at the Adams Papers in 1975. It is always nice to have my own good judgment validated in such a public and deserving way.