

A LOOK AT THE LAA'S AWARDS: No 1: The Maria Gemenis Award for an Outstanding Contribution to Special Librarianship

The annual presentation of the Maria Gemenis Award was established to encourage members of the Special Libraries Section to contribute to group activities and to continue the work which Maria Gemenis actively carried out. The Award criteria are listed in the 'Call for Nominations' notice.

Maria Gemenis

In 1967, Maria Gemenis graduated from the University of New South Wales with a Bachelor of Arts degree and a Diploma in Librarianship. In September of that year she became Librarian of the NSW Department of Works (now the Department of Transport and Construction), later becoming Data Services Manager and then Information Service Manager in charge of the Library, Trade Information and Plan Records Section.

Maria joined the LAA in 1967 and made a distinctive contribution to the NSW Group of the Special Libraries Section. She joined the committee in 1975, serving as Chairperson from 1976 to mid-1979, working tirelessly. For example, she organised a very successful series of lunchtime visits to special libraries in Sydney and several innovative seminars, such as the micrographics seminar which she arranged very quickly, given that micrographics was then a little know topic.

As a long-standing member of ACCESS (Architects, Construction and Consulting Engineers, Specialists Services), Maria became concerned about isolated librarians and urged the NSW Group to cater for their needs. Maria further championed special libraries through her participation on NSW

Branch Council, AACOBS, and TAFE. She brought to the attention of these bodies the particular needs of special libraries which, until then, had been largely unheeded.

Maria was a creative leader and supportive committee member; she had a pragmatic approach to problems and concern for users of library services and for the quality of the profession. The vital life of a loving wife, active marathon runner and practical and energetic librarian ended prematurely with Maria's death on 1 February 1983.

Recipients

Eve Ahern was the first recipient of the award in 1983, in recognition of her activities on many LAA committees, in which she often promoted or represented special libraries. Also, for many years, Eve was the editor of the *Australian Special Libraries News*, a publication which helps to overcome isolation and facilitates sharing of professional expertise.

Kaye Cox received the award in 1984, mainly in recognition of her successful efforts as a Regional Librarian for the NSW Department of Agriculture. She established a library network, throughout the New England,

Hunter and Metropolitan regions, which is so successful that it is to be implemented state-wide. Furthermore Kaye's successful promotion of the library and the network within the organisation was recognised when she was nominated for the award by one Regional Director and accompanied to the presentation dinner by another.

Elizabeth Swan, who received the Maria Gemenis Award in 1985, is noted for her efforts in advancing the professionalism of colleagues, and for advocating a marketing approach to promoting and selling library services within the parent organisation. Elizabeth has utilised this approach successfully, and through difficult times, for her own ACI Information Services.

Annette Murphy who received the award last year has been a source of constant support to her colleagues, and always prepared to act immediately to help with a problem. Annette's research skills are now utilised with Enterprise Information for the creation and development of library analysis and research throughout New South Wales.

Nyree Swan

Perhaps you know of other special librarians exhibiting these professional characteristics in the context of their own library and/or the broader special libraries' environment. Recognition, of their efforts by their peers is provided through the Maria Gemenis Award. So read the 'Call for Nominations' notice and obtain a nomination form now. **Nominations close 30 April 1987.**

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