

ALIA president honoured with a Fellowship

As we farewell the outgoing ALIA president, John Shipp, it is fitting that we can report on his honour of being awarded a Fellowship of the University of

Wollongong. Felicity McGregor, university librarian, read the citation, which is reproduced in part below.

'John Shipp was born in Paddington in 1950 and educated at Canterbury Boys' High, where he worked hard to avoid physical education and other athletic pursuits but was able to indulge his love of history and learning in general — interests which determined his choice of career. John has degrees in Education from Macquarie University, in Archives from the

University of New South Wales and in Arts from the University of Wollongong.

'John's managerial strengths and self-reliant style were evident from his first appointment to a one-teacher, rural school, a school where time had apparently stood still. In a pattern which was to be repeated many times during his career, John immediately developed strategies for change and improvement.

'Another strategy John used was participation in the committee system which underpins so much of the decision-making process in educational institutions. Committees were an excellent forum for John's analytical skills and his collaborative and consensus-building style.

'His interest in preservation led to his career in archives. At the time of his appointment to the University of Wollongong in 1977, archival records were widely dispersed in unsuitable accommodation where John waged a constant battle against damp, cockroaches and the forces of destruction. Working with eminent Wollongong academics such as Professor Jim Hagan and Dr Winifred Mitchell, John found suitable hous-

ing for the archives and developed a collection of importance both to the character of the local community and to the research interests of the University.

'Although happily immersed in the archives and the history recorded therein, John recognised the significance of the managerial and technological revolution occurring in the university environment. He realised also that it was imperative for the library to take a leading role in implementing the new technology and in training people to use the new resources. John has always presented that interesting paradox of being an historian with a strong sense of the importance of the past, as well as being a visionary, willing to embrace the latest in technology. Perhaps, like Gladstone, he appreciated that *you cannot fight against the future*, even though you should remember and record the past.

'His vision and managerial skills did not go unrecognised and, in the 80's, he was drawn rapidly into the mainstream of library management, culminating in his appointment to the position of University of Wollongong Librarian in 1986. This university was indeed fortunate in securing John's leadership through a period of fundamental change in the provision and management of scholarly information resources. John's understanding of the far-reaching impact of these changes positioned the library to take advantage of developments in scholarly publishing, an industry on which the university community depends. John was a founding member of the National Scholarly Communications Forum, a body established by the major academies to promote awareness of significant issues affecting scholarly communication.

'His election in 1992 to the presidency of the Council of Australian University Librarians, coincided with the growth of the Council from nineteen to thirty-eight members. John devoted considerable energy to the creation of open and participatory processes which minimised the divide between pre-Dawkins universities and the new-comers.

'John currently holds the prestigious position of university librarian, University of Sydney. He remains, however, loyal to the local community and both John and his wife, Val, choose to live in Wollongong. His contribution to such community projects as the Mining Memorial have been acknowledged widely. John has retained also his long-standing membership of the Illawarra Heritage Committee, the Illawarra Historical Society, the Illawarra Museum and the National Trust.'



Felicity McGregor, university librarian, University of Wollongong and John Shipp, university librarian, University of Sydney after the presentation ceremony

Photo: Courtesy Ken Robertson, Illawarra Mercury