



647.343.3334



[aao@aao-archivists.ca](mailto:aao@aao-archivists.ca)



[www.aao-archivists.ca](http://www.aao-archivists.ca)



720 Spadina Avenue,  
Suite 202, Toronto,  
Ontario M5S 2T9

## ARCHIVES ASSOCIATION OF ONTARIO AWARDS - 2022

The AAO Awards Committee were pleased and honoured to announce the winners of the 2022 AAO Awards at the AAO's Annual General Meeting held on May 27<sup>th</sup>, 2022.

### AAO EMERGING LEADER AWARD – JAMES ROUSSAIN

The Emerging Leader Award was created in 2018 to mark the 25th anniversary of the Association. The award recognizes early-career archivists (who have been in the profession between two and ten years), whose work and service demonstrate consistent growth, leadership, and promise to the archives profession in Ontario. Achievements may include involvement in professional organizations, and/or participation in relevant projects, and/or written and scholarly work. This award is intended to recognize cumulative contributions rather than any single activity.

The AAO Emerging Leader Award for 2022 was presented to James Roussain.

James earned his Master of Information (Archives and Records Management concentration) from the Faculty of Information at the University of Toronto in 2013. Upon graduation, he was hired as an Archives and Corporate Records Archivist by the Scotiabank Records and Information Management Office, where he served for nearly four years. In 2017 he left the business world for academe when he joined the Kelly Library at the University of St. Michael's College in his current position as Outreach and Instruction Archivist. In addition to his regular duties, he also served as Interim Head of Public Services throughout 2021. In both roles he served on many institutional committees.

James's participation in professional archival associations began in his student days,



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when he served on the executive of the Association of Canadian Archivists (ACA) Faculty of Information Student Chapter (2011-2013) and was a member of the ACA's Canadian Archives System Taskforce (2011-2013). He joined the Toronto Area Archivists Group (TAAG) in 2013, serving as its vice-president and president between 2014 and 2018. When the AAO held its 2017 conference at the University of Toronto, James served as co-chair of the Local Arrangements Committee. As AAO VP/President Elect (2018-2019), James stepped into the role of president 6 months early to cover an illness-related resignation. His achievements as AAO president included negotiating a 3-year contract with Managing Matters to provide Board support and office management, dealing with a five-figure cut in provincial funding, and shifting the 2020 AAO conference to a digital event. James is currently serving as a Director at Large on the Board of the ACA.

James has also contributed extensively the broader community through his teaching, presentations, and writing. He has regularly taught a course on "Libraries, Special Collections and Archives" in St. Michael's Undergraduate Book History and Media Studies program. During the winter 2022 term, he taught "Primary Source Research as Inquiry" at U of T's Faculty of Information. In addition, he has served as an invited guest speaker/panelist at various other iSchool courses and at various professional conferences in Canada and the U.S. His passion for the role of archivists as educators is reflected in his article "Pedagogue in the Archive: Reorienting the archivist as educator" (*Archivaria* 90 [2020]). In addition to his professional responsibilities, he is complementing his archival training and expertise with graduate level training in education as he pursues a Master of Education degree at OISE, specializing in Leadership and Higher Education.

In recognition of his teaching, speaking, and writing on archives and his dedicated leadership of professional associations, the AAO is pleased to present James Roussain



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with the 2022 AAO Emerging Leader Award.

### ALEXANDER FRASER AWARD – IONA MCCRAITH

Named after the first Archivist of Ontario, the Alexander Fraser Award is given to individuals who have contributed in a significant way to the advancement of the archival community in Ontario. Achievements may range from written and visual work to involvement in organizations or participation in projects. This award is designated to recognize cumulative contributions rather than any single activity. Generally speaking, contributions need to go beyond a specific archives or community.

The 2022 Alexander Fraser Award was presented to Iona McCraith.

For nearly four decades, the Ontario archives community and beyond has benefitted from the notable expertise, leadership, and friendship of Iona McCraith.

For the myriad of responsibilities that she managed through the years, Iona's professional qualifications are second to none – a Bachelor of the Arts in Fine Art and Anthropology from York University; a Diploma in Museum Technology from Algonquin College; a Museology Certificate through the Canadian Museums Association; Care of Historic Photographs Certificate from the Getty Conservation Institute; and a Preventive Conservation Certificate from the International Centre for the Study of Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property and the Canadian Conservation Institute.

Her job titles are equally impressive – Senior Conservator of the City of Toronto Archives, Head Conservator at the Archives of Ontario, AAO Preservation Consultant, AAO Archives Advisor, and an instructor for the Collections



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Conservation and Management Program at Sandford Fleming College. Her service to various archival committees and working groups across Canada is also a lengthy and inspiring list.

For 23 years, Iona served the AAO membership, first as Preservation Consultant (1999-2013) and then as Archives Advisor (2013-2022). In these roles, she provided advisory services to the 300 plus members of the Archives Association of Ontario on all aspects of archival preservation and management including but not limited to: collection storage methods and materials, environmental monitoring and control, care and handling of collections, emergency planning and response, preservation policy and procedures development, and exhibition of archival materials. Iona administered the AAO Environmental Monitor Loan Program and created and managed the Archives Emergency Response Network. She taught workshops at basic and advanced levels for the Professional Development Committee of the AAO on a variety of preservation related topics. She wrote articles for the AAO newsletter "*Off the Record*" and distributed helpful information through the AAO website and social media platforms. In some way, directly or indirectly, every archivist in Ontario has connected with Iona.

There can be no question of Iona's dedication to her craft and the wealth of knowledge that she brought to her positions. But just as important is the way Iona conducted her work throughout her career. She was always prompt in providing useful answers that could be implemented by a large, small and/or under-resourced facility. Iona possesses a down-to-earth warmth that made everyone she worked with feel welcome and respected. She has been described by her nominators as a "guiding spirit" for the profession and as someone who lifts people up and takes joy in the successes of others.



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In recognition of an exceptional career dedicated to advancing archival preservation and accessibility in Ontario through advocacy and education, the Archives Association of Ontario is pleased to present Iona McCraith with the Alexander Fraser Award.

### AAO INSTITUTIONAL AWARD

The AAO Institutional Award is given to an archival institution that has contributed significantly to the advancement of the archival field or community, or has demonstrated a significant level of innovation and imagination in the establishment of outstanding or model programs or services. Recognition may be granted for an individual project of particular merit or for a program that integrates many facets of archival enterprise.

### AAO INSTITUTIONAL AWARD – LAMBTON COUNTY ARCHIVES

The first 2022 Institutional Award was presented to the Lambton County Archives for its project “Remembering Lambton County’s 2010 Snow Emergency”.

Marking the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the event, the Lambton County Archives collaborated with the County of Lambton Office of the CAO, County of Lambton Planning & Infrastructure Division, and multiple Emergency Management Coordinators (EMC’s) from townships across Lambton County, to preserve the collective memory of the 2010 major snow event that impacted portions of Lambton, Middlesex, and Huron Counties which saw an estimated 1500 people stranded on roadways over a three-day period. Of those rescued, half were placed in local emergency shelters and the remainder were housed by local community members.



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In order to capture the both the institutional memory of those working for the affected municipalities and the memories of community members, the project had two components. In order to preserve the corporate memory, a virtual community forum was held which was moderated by the Archivist of the Lambton County and which featured seven key emergency personnel who oversaw the emergency response for the County. They looked at the major snow event from a first responder's perspective recounting their personal experiences, discussing the challenges faced and the successes realized, and outlined key factors in the decision to call in Canadian military support. Viewers also had the opportunity to ask panelists questions, share their experiences live, enriching the event.

To better gain an understanding of the experiences of a wide range of community members, the archives, along with the Lambton Emergency Management Coordinators, created an online submission form where people could provide written submissions as well as photographs which would be preserved by the archives and shared on Lambton Archives' blog. The project received significant media coverage and the archivists gave several talks to local organizations about Snowmageddon and the request for community stories. The County of Lambton & Lambton County Archives received 33 stories and 195 photo submissions to add to the archival record as a result of the project, and the submission form is still open so people can continue to contribute stories of their experience from 2010 and subsequent major weather events.

Along with asking people to provide their recollections of the events of December 2010, the submission form also asked individuals what steps they are taking to be better prepared for future emergencies and for travelling in the winter. So, in addition to creating an archival record of a significant event in the County's history,



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the information acquired from this project is also assisting Emergency Management Coordinators to better understand how people responded to the 2010 Snow Emergency in order to assist future emergency planning endeavors. Stemming out of this project, the County's EMCs have updated their road preparedness guide and recommendations for winter travel emergency kits.

In recognition of the Remembering Lambton County's 2010 Snow Emergency, an outreach and engagement project that not only captured corporate and community memories of a significant event but also has influenced emergency preparedness efforts in the County, the Archives Association of Ontario is pleased to present the Lambton County Archives with the Institutional Award.

#### AAO INSTITUTIONAL AWARD – MIDDLESEX CENTRE ARCHIVES

The second Institutional Award for 2022 was presented to the Middlesex Centre Archives.

Middlesex Centre Archives (MCA) is a volunteer-run archives located in Delaware, ON. It was founded in 2013 after a proposal to establish a county archives was rejected by the Middlesex County Council. Undaunted, a group of volunteers came together and garnered the support of the Mayor and Council of Middlesex Centre Township, and the Archives was established to preserve the township's at-risk documentary heritage.

MCA incorporated in 2015 under the Ontario Historical Society and obtained charitable status shortly thereafter, an important step that allowed the Archives to access grants, which are the only source of funding other than donations.



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The Archives has been very successful in securing grants, beginning with a Trillium grant in 2014-2015 to fund a part-time archivist position. In subsequent years, funding was obtained from Trillium, the Documentary Heritage Communities Program, and other grants to continue funding the work of a part-time archivist.

The archivist directs a group of dedicated volunteers, ensuring that the archival work is done to professional standards. Ten volunteers work at the Archives on a regular basis, contributing over 23,399 volunteer hours between 2013 and 2021 and processing over 500 archival donations.

In addition to processing and responding to user requests, the volunteers also are actively involved in fundraising and outreach activities. They sell local history books, produce historical landmark driving tour books and calendars to raise funds, and, for the past two years, they have held very successful online auctions.

The outreach activities include writing a monthly column published in the local Villager magazines and active social media accounts. The Archives organizes the annual Middlesex County heritage fair, which brings together groups and individuals from throughout the region, and participates in community events throughout the year to promote the Archives and local history. The group also continues their advocacy working towards the establishment of an archives for Middlesex County.

In recognition of the exceptional work of preserving and making accessible the documentary heritage of the Township of Middlesex Centre, the Archives Association of Ontario is pleased to present the Middlesex Centre Archives with the Institutional Award for 2022.