

Library Assessment Award Remarks for Gordon Fretwell

Presented by

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We are honoring Gordon Fretwell for his lifetime achievement in the areas of assessment and statistics. As the press release says our emphasis this year is to honor those “who were instrumental in the definition and use of standardized and consistent statistical data” for libraries.

Mr. Gordon Fretwell has contributed to, and led, many ARL assessment efforts prior to his retirement from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst; for 16 years he was the editor of the ARL Annual Salary Survey; he spent numerous days in the wee hours over Christmas and New Year’s Holidays reviewing these data ensuring consistent and reliable data submission from member libraries; in 2002 he was a Visiting Program Officer working to collect and analyze e-metrics data recommended from the ARL E-Metrics project and most recently his research paper presented in 2008 in Seattle on the LibQUAL+® comments informed the design of the new LibQUAL+® platform launched in 2010.

Gordon served in the past and has been recruited again to serve as consultant to the ARL statistics and Assessment committee. As Jay Shafer, Director of the University of Massachusetts, Amherst library observed: “Gordon has a keen and careful eye for reporting and reviewing data. He interprets data with a perceptive mind; his astute observations bring the story in the data to life. Gordon challenges us all to do our best and maintain the highest standards of integrity.”

A few more things about Gordon that you should know – he is still working part-time at the U of Massachusetts library and furthermore he has just assumed a consulting assignment to work with ARL, Bill Potter and the Task Force on Reviewing the ARL Annual Salary Survey, the ARL Statistics and the ARL Supplementary Statistics for streamlining these annual surveys.

Gordon is a great mentor. He takes care in teaching you how to approach data, interpretation and analysis and over the next two years ARL staff will benefit from these strong mentoring and coaching skills he brings to us.

Last but not least, he has a life outside libraries. Fay, his lifelong companion, tells me that he loves poodles and poodles love him. He lives behind a Buddhist monastery in a rural area where broadband internet access is not readily available and one of his proudest moments is receiving this award together with Kendon Stubbs from the University of Virginia.

On a personal note during my first phone conversation with Gordon back in 1994 when I first joined ARL, he called himself a ‘grumpy old man.’ He says that he is older than dirt but Gordon seems to be getting younger and younger as the years go by (you may have heard that boys take longer to mature). Gordon is still ripening reaching new levels of achievement and accomplishment and in a way that makes all of us near him prouder and prouder for our love for him!

One of my proudest moments is being here to see these two 'great men' are honored in a small and modest way for their lifelong contributions to library assessment.

On behalf of this conference I am honored to present Gordon Fretwell the Library Assessment Career Achievement Award.