

## **2003 Nancy DeLaurier Award**

### **Remarks by Allan T. Kohl upon receipt of the 2003 Nancy DeLaurier Award VRA Conference in Houston, TX, April 9<sup>th</sup>**

If I had unlimited time (and you had unlimited patience!), I could talk at length about what a wonderfully supportive environment the Visual Resources Association provides, marked by a general absence of the condescension, arrogance, and petty jealousy one hears about in some other organizations; and particularly, refreshingly, devoid of any sort of paranoia about letting others know what you're up to, for fear that someone else might steal your thunder. Here the spirit seems more often to be: "Need thunder? Here, take some of mine. Together, we can make a much bigger bang."

In this empathetic spirit, and since the VRA has been kind enough to honor me with the DeLaurier Award because of my Art Images for College Teaching (AICT) project and related image sharing endeavors, I'd like to use this opportunity to remind my colleagues how open resource sharing benefits more than just our membership, and the North American academic environment we primarily serve: it can offer a small but important way for us to have a direct, beneficial effect on education in developing and disadvantaged nations as well. One of the most gratifying and exciting (and totally unexpected) kinds of feedback that I've received regarding AICT has been from teachers and students in places such as Latin America, the Baltic states, and East Africa.

Despite spending my career in small institutions, I've always enjoyed the benefits of outstanding library book and periodical collections, which have facilitated my visual resources work. Perhaps you, like me, find it hard to imagine an educational environment trying to make the quantum leap from almost nothing directly to networked resources, without having available that rich intermediate level of printed resources that most of us take for granted. One instructor informed me that she depended heavily on Web-based resources, including AICT, because her college had no library, and her students had no textbooks in their native language.

Particularly under current geo-political conditions, I think it's important for us "haves" (which most of us really are, however much we like to grumble about our shortfalls from the ideal) to provide, whenever this is possible, what we produce for our specific patron base for use not only by our "extended colleagues," but also by the world's "have-nots" as well -- in part so that these others may come to appreciate our country as more than a purveyor of fast food, techno entertainment, and military hardware. Perhaps we, in our own modest way, can help promote a positive, hopeful, "win-win" outlook, in a world where "win/lose" confrontational paradigms too often prevail.

Thanks to the Committee for recognizing me and my efforts with this award; to Susan for her nomination, as for her friendly, knowledgeable advice over the years; and to all of you "extended colleagues" whom I've come to know and appreciate at these annual gatherings. It is you who have made the Visual Resources Association the kind of supportive, collegial

organization in which this small college functionary has been encouraged to play a part in our collective success.