

## **Julia**

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Hi, I am Julia Deal from Davidson College in Davidson, NC.

And this is

## **Marcia**

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Marcia Focht from Binghamton University, SUNY in Binghamton, NY

### **ROBB DETLEFS**

Is our

#### **VISUAL RESOURCES ASSOCIATION**

**DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD** Recipient for

**2019**

“The VRA Distinguished Service Award recognizes individuals who have achieved a level of distinction in leadership, research, or service to the profession.” Today we are honoring Robb Detlefs, and his contributions to our profession and our association. Robb has pushed the technology and built the architecture of tools we use daily in our visual resource administration (and digital humanities) lives. He effectively networks between organizations and commercial partners to support the creation of new tech tools. His dedication to his clients, his service on the Executive Board, his fearlessness in embracing new technologies, and charming and inclusive personality lifts all who know him.

Robb certainly is distinguished, but he wants you to know he’s not old. That said, many of us first encountered Robb in the exhibitors’ hall, back when that was still a thing. Since that time, his participation in the work of the association has grown through service on committees, and most notably his term on the Executive Board as our Public Relations and Communications Officer. In addition, his attendance at many museum conferences (MCN, AAM, CDOC, Museums and the Web) as well as committee work outside of VRA has provided insight and exposure as well as *a genuine exchange of ideas*. He is our king bee cross-pollinator!

#### **Robb’s continued service includes:**

- 20+ years as an exhibitor (Gallery Systems)
- Executive Board member  
(Public Relations and Communication Officer)
- Committee work:

Travel Awards  
Nominations  
Data Standards  
VRA Core Advisory Board

**Outside of VRA:**

- CDWA lite working Group
- LIDO (Light Weight Describing Object)

**“Everyone knows Robb!” *But did you know . . . ?***

**Julia** \_\_\_\_\_

*“His work across institutions enables him to make client connections for shared stories and learning—for smaller institutions and organizations this is critically important.”*

*“He is such a remarkable product manager, who provides such high quality, hands-on technical support, that I think most of us forget that he is a ‘vendor’.”*

*“Expanding the electronic tools VRA uses to communicate and manage projects rises to the top of his accomplishments. . . . Robb is a “just-do-it” kind of guy and accomplished a great deal of quality work in his two years in VRA Board office. He won the informal award for the longest annual report by any Board officer during my term, to give you some idea of the quantity of work he completed.”*

*“I don’t think he knows what the word “procrastinate” means.”*

**Marcia** \_\_\_\_\_

Look at all the panels Robb has served on! More importantly, Robb’s gregarious and fun loving nature prompted him to invite many to the hotel bar for the session after the session. This was a great venue for frank and free flowing exchange of ideas and connection.

**Panel Participation Points:**

- 2018: Commercial Partners: I want to be a Street Vendor
- 2018: "IIIF" Only it were so Easy
- 2013: CaVRAcon: VRA Leadership
- 2012: Vendor Slam - "EmbARK: Organize Your Data & Keep It Moving!"
- yearly EmbARK Special Interest Group meetings
- An early vendor cooperation session with Luna, Zoomify, Davis, Saskia

Even more impressive was his VRA board work. In the normal course of a meeting, each of us were inevitably assigned tasks, or asked to follow-up with a committee or VRA member. It seemed like the moment anything of this nature came up, Robb was already making the contact, completing the task, or crafting a solution. By the end of our meetings he had often already followed through on everything he had promised to do and more. We called him “Get-It-Done-Detlefs” or “On-The-Job-Robb.” He taught me the value of not procrastinating, and introduced to me to new ways of working more efficiently and effectively.

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*“I don’t think the trajectories of both my life and VRA would have been the same without Robb having been an ally and champion of my life and VRA.”*

*“. . . Once again, Robb was extraordinarily innovative in adapting the system to accommodate diverse data, and he worked above and beyond the requirements for providing customization and technical support for the project. .”*

## **Marcia**

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It is a rare individual who can draw others in, making work truly fun. He doesn’t stay just a colleague for long, he quickly becomes one of your dearest friends.

In conclusion, I’d like to read a quote from Robb’s VRA President, Maureen Burns. ““As a full-time, year-round public sector worker whose job is dependent on his performance, it is harder for him to justify the kind of volunteer work that Robb has accomplished, since there is no down-time between semesters or summer breaks.” In other words, Time is money, and let’s all consider how remarkable generous he has been with his time, to VRA’s benefit.