

The OMA is pleased to announce the recipients of the 2018 Awards of Excellence!

Distinguished Career Award of Excellence

The OMA Distinguished Career Award of Excellence is presented to individuals who, over an extended period of time, have created a lasting and meaningful legacy in the Ontario museum community.

Rona Rustige **Curator, Glanmore National Historic Site**

Over the course of her career, Rona Rustige has made remarkable contributions and has had immeasurable lasting impact in both her local Belleville community and the province's broader museum sector.

As the Curator at Glanmore National Historic Site for the past 28 years, Rona has shown a strong commitment to the museum. During this time, she has led the site through 22 restoration projects, securing over a million dollars in funding support from government, charitable foundations and community groups. She has also worked hard to collaborate with a number of architectural and conservation-focused organisations to achieve a historically authentic and accurate portrayal of the building, winning a Peter Stokes Restoration Award from the Architectural Conservancy of Ontario in 2016. There is no doubt that the reason the site is still standing is due to Rona's hard work and dedication.

In addition to her work at Glanmore, Rona's roles at other organizations have included Heritage Consultant, Education and Community Relations Officer, and Historical Society Director/Curator. Over the years, Rona has given back to the museum community in many ways, including mentoring and hiring students at Glanmore. Many of these students came from the Fleming College Museum



Management and Curatorship program which Rona helped establish as part of the college's committee. Rona's legacy is cherished throughout the local community surrounding Glanmore, as well as in the wider museum community of Ontario.

"Among the staff and team of volunteers Ms Rustige is held in very high esteem, admired for her knowledge, skills and endless insistence on historical accuracy, but equally for her warm and engaging personality and leadership."

-Richard M. Hughes, President, Hastings County Historical Society, and Chair, Community Archives Advisory Committee

Promising Leadership Award of Excellence

The OMA Promising Leadership Award of Excellence is presented to emerging professionals, of any position or institution, who have shown promising leadership within the museum community. An emerging professional is an individual within the first ten years of their professional career.

Gracia Dyer Jalea Founding Executive Director, Toronto Ward Museum

As an emerging professional, Gracia Dyer Jalea has worked with remarkable speed and efficiency in establishing her vision for the future of Ontario museums. Within three years, she has not only become the Founding Executive Director of the Toronto Ward Museum, but also ensured its success through careful planning measures. Gracia has demonstrated promising leadership through the successful application of a "museum-without-walls" model, in administering decentralized public programs and outreach to help build cross-cultural community connections among Canadians. With immense commitment and energy, she has enacted this vision by reaching out to service-oriented community organizations to collaborate in providing innovative and inclusive programs for Toronto's diverse populations.



Gracia's role in the Ward Museum has been fundamentally dynamic, as her responsibilities have ranged from educational programming to fundraising. Relying on past experiences working to help disseminate the life stories of newcomers in the Montreal Life Stories project, and as a Pan Am Path program director, Gracia has applied her understanding of collaborative models to actively help the museum partner with 35 organizations, develop 7 exhibitions, 8 public education programs, and a tour series. In the process, she has secured government funding, and is working tirelessly in organizing the museum's strategic plans for financial stability.

"Gracia has helped create this Museum based on values dear to so many of us in the Museum sector...I have no doubt that the reason the Ward Museum is able to do all that they do is because of Gracia's abilities, vision and leadership."

- Cara Krmpotich, Director and Associate Professor of Museum Studies, University of Toronto

Volunteer Service Award of Excellence

The OMA Volunteer Service Award of Excellence is presented to individuals who have made a significant contribution to a museum or museums through volunteer work.

Warren Stauch Volunteer, Waterloo Region Museums

Serving for more than 50 years as a volunteer with Waterloo Region Museums, Warren Stauch's boundless dedication to preserving local heritage has had lasting, widespread impact.



Warren's contributions to his local Waterloo community have been invaluable, extending throughout his life. During his career as a high school geography teacher and university lecturer, Warren was always an active volunteer and held leadership roles in regional heritage organizations.

In the 1970's Warren served as President of the Board of the Ontario Pioneer Community Foundation, which administered Doon Pioneer Village, and spearheaded changes to the village and studies for the future of the site. Simultaneously, he was also involved in the Waterloo Heritage Foundation and the restoration of Joseph Schneider Haus. In 1983, both of these sites came under the jurisdiction of the Regional Municipality of Waterloo and through the subsequent years, right up to the present, Warren has been involved with both sites as a very active volunteer.

Serving on the Friends of Waterloo Region Museum board, Warren has helped support fundraising and programming initiatives for the Waterloo Region Museum, undoubtedly helping it achieve success in becoming the largest community museum in Ontario.

Warren's exemplary contributions of support and leadership are deserving of much praise and recognition, demonstrating the important impact volunteers have in heritage institutions across the province.

"I have used the word guide several times and I think that is the key to Warren's entire life... he guides rather than directs or orders... better still, he mentors young and old."

-Rych Mills, Ex-President, Waterloo Historical Society, and Chair, Publication Committee

Excellence in Exhibitions

The OMA Award of Excellence in Exhibitions recognizes the creation of an exhibit. Examples may include permanent, temporary, traveling or virtual exhibitions.

Waterloo Region Museum ***Trailblazing: Women in Canada since 1867***

Trailblazing: Women in Canada since 1867 was on view from September 2017 to January 2018 at the Waterloo Region Museum. The exhibition examined 150 years of women's history in Canada divided into five thematic areas: work, education, politics, body, and violence against women. Within each theme the exhibit examined specific events and the trailblazing women who have brought about, and continue to bring about, social and political change. The exhibit examined women's experiences based on race, ethnicity, and class, and juxtaposed the well-known "trailblazers" with "everyday" women.



Museum staff worked with an advisory committee of local academics who provided editorial review. All those involved in the creation of *Trailblazing* strived to transcend sociopolitical boundaries and integrate diverse and marginalized voices, including those of Indigenous and minority women previously underrepresented in Canadian history.

The exhibit incorporated interactive components using both leading edge responsive technology as well as low-tech activities that underscored the physical effort and skill of women's work through the 1960's. Audience response to the exhibit was very positive and the exhibit will tour for five years, continuing to shape the story of Canada's trailblazing women.

"At times rightly celebratory, these spaces also function commemoratively... Trailblazing acknowledges trails not yet blazed, a message reinforced by the winding, transitional pathways that both intersect and unify the overall display."

- Dr. Susan Roy and Dr. Julia Roberts

Excellence in Exhibitions – Honorable Mention

Markham Museum *Geared for Growing*

In their sesquicentennial exhibit, *Geared for Growing*, Markham Museum demonstrates how museums can inspire a high level of visitor engagement and become central to their communities, when exhibit planning works in tandem with programming.



On display from October 2017 until May 2019, *Geared for Growing* builds on the goals of the newly revised strategic plan of the museum, in celebrating and educating visitors about the work of their local Markham farming community. Unique in its exhibition planning approach, this particular exhibit is notable for its emphasis on high-quality targeted programming that was integrated throughout the exhibit from its early planning stages. Offering numerous opportunities for hands-on, experiential learning, the museum's carefully planned programs reflect the goals of Ontario school curricula, successfully attracting many school groups to its exhibition. By integrating artifacts into the programming space and sourcing information from interviews with local farmers in the community, the exhibition hooks audiences of both children and adults in learning more about topics like food sustainability and modern farming practice misconceptions.

In affording visitors many opportunities for physical interaction and active engagement with authentic artifacts, this exhibit is an innovative, noteworthy, and inspirational example for the Ontario museum community.

"Geared for Growing is an outstanding example of how an integrated, mindful and systematic approach to exhibit development can yield significant results on a modest budget."

- John Summers, Manager of Heritage Services, Regional Municipality of Halton

Excellence in Special Projects

The OMA Award of Excellence in Special Projects is presented to individuals, institutions, corporations or agencies for innovative initiatives, or new approaches or techniques that advance the museum profession.

Canada Science and Technology Museum Canada Science and Technology Museum Renewal

Over a span of three years, the Canada Science and Technology Museum Renewal managed to re-envision its museum exhibition spaces completely, a renewal project that stands out boldly in its beauty, breadth, creativity and innovation.



This remarkable renewal project marked both the museum's centennial celebration since its original opening in 1967, as well as Canada's 150th anniversary celebrations. After a disastrous contamination problem caused the building to shut down in 2014, the resulting renewal has been an exciting opportunity to strengthen the museum's vision for the future as a national institution that inspires the imagination in the next generation of innovators. This impressive vision has been embedded throughout the long stages of the museum's renovation and installation of 11 new permanent exhibitions, many of which include exciting technology-enhanced experiences. The museum has demonstrated its enthusiasm for partnership and creative possibility, creating stunning visual displays, like its immersive LED canopy at the museum's entrance, in partnership with the National Film Board.

This renewal project is especially notable for its collaborative opportunism, having worked with numerous partners across academia, industry and government. A main priority for the museum's renewal, reflected in its vision and values, was to incorporate high levels of accessibility through inclusive design. Moving away from an institutional approach, the museum has prioritized its open

data policy in making its exhibition content available to the public. Through extensive consultation process with surrounding communities, the museum has also prioritized giving voice to marginalized communities. Since its re-opening, the many approaches that the museum has taken in order to increase relevancy and outreach are especially noteworthy.

“Continuous public sharing of progress demonstrated an impressive degree of transparency and courage. Beyond generating and sustaining interest in the Museum’s renewal, this engagement heralded the Museum’s commitment to being visitor-centered.”

- Kathryn Lyons, Manager, Visitor Experience, Canadian War Museum

Excellence in Programs

The OMA Award of Excellence in Programs recognizes programming that creatively engages new audiences, or provides exemplary service to existing ones.

Halton Region Heritage Services *Partners in Time*

Since 2014, Halton Region Heritage Services has undergone many changes, renewing its organizational vision to focus on community-centered



heritage practice. A gap was identified in programming for secondary students that provided project-based and experiential learning opportunities related to social studies. *Partners in Time* began as an in-school program for high school history students and was then expanded as *Partners in Time: Classroom Curators* to grades 6-8 as well.

Students participated in exhibition design and storytelling workshops and began working on crafting their own exhibitions with the support of Halton Heritage Services staff and in partnership with local museums and historical societies. Students at Acton High School created exhibits based on items from their

personal lives installed in lockers with custom fitted plexiglass doors. With design support from Halton Heritage Services and research support from staff at the Niagara Historical Society and Museum, Grade 6 and 7 students at St. David's Public School created an exhibit on the history of their school and an exhibit on the history of their community using their own personal objects.

The model of using students' personal objects ensured that the exhibit projects were inclusive and not limited in scope by Halton Region or the partner museums' collections. The *Partners in Time* program emphasizes a strong and collaborative relationship between heritage organizations, teachers, and schools. The program is flexible and easily customizable to meet teachers' learning goals. The participatory model opens the field of museum practice and provides an accessible and equitable entry point that treats all voices equally as part of the larger historical narrative.

By partnering with, and making the program resources for *Partners in Time* available to, other museums and heritage organizations, Halton Heritage Services is building a community of practice focused on more sustainable museum education programs.

"A particular strength in the Partners in Time program is its emphasis on empowering secondary students to use their voice and share their story, and to know that it matters."

- Sara Nixon, Public Programmer, St. Catharines Museum & Welland Canals Centre

Excellence in Publications

The OMA Award of Excellence in Publications recognizes the creation of materials that are distinguished by their design & content. Examples may include books, catalogues, blogs, brochures, posters and other printed or digital materials.

John Summers

Creating Exhibits That Engage: A Manual for Museums and Historical Organizations

Published in March 2018, John Summer's book, *Creating Exhibits That Engage: A Manual for Museums and Historical Organizations* (American Association for State and Local History and Rowman & Littlefield), is distinguished for its accessibility and applicability as a practical and useful resource for both emerging and established museum professionals alike.

Creating Exhibits That Engage has been a work in progress arising from John Summers' experiences developing exhibits in small-to-mid sized museums and from teaching the Exhibit Planning and Design course as part of the Ontario Museum Association's Certificate in Museum Studies program. John Summers recognized a need for instructional material focused on exhibit development and funding for small-to-medium sized museums and related organizations. This comprehensive book draws its strengths from its practical, step-by-step methods, chapter checklists, templates, and diagrams.

This publication empowers and inspires experimentation and innovation in both emerging and established museum professionals, and encourages a visitor centred approach that breaks down silos between exhibit and program planning. John Summers has demonstrated significant leadership in creating a resource that is accessible to beginners and sophisticated enough to challenge and inspire mid-career professionals.

*"Audience-led, institution-wide exhibition planning that embraces best practice is not a new concept, but *Creating Exhibits that Engage* is a publication that provides the thinking, tools and guidance where it is needed the most."*

- Sarah Beam-Borg, Senior Exhibitions Manager, Aga Khan Museum

