

Obituary



Harold Naugler, 1942-1992

On 26 April 1992 our colleague and friend, Harold Naugler, died as the result of a lengthy illness. Harold was well-known in the national and international archival communities for his dedication to the development of electronic programmes and the advancement of archival education.

After serving as the head of Queen's University Archives, Harold joined the Manuscript Division of the National Archives of Canada as an archivist in 1970. In 1976 he became the Director of the Machine-Readable Archives Division and spent the next ten years building an internationally-recognized programme that has served as a model for others to follow.

At the professional level, Harold was a member (1980-1988) and later chairman (1988-1992) of the Automation Committee of the International Council on Archives, co-chairman of the Task Force on Automated Records and Techniques of the Society of American Archivists (1979-1988), and chairman of the Education Committee of the Association of Canadian Archivists (1984-1988). For his contributions to the profession he was formally recognized by being named a Fellow of the SAA.

Harold was far-sighted. His vision and his commitment were what helped to shape not only the electronic records programme, but many professional programmes and initiatives in which he took an active interest over the years. The Five-Year Strategic Plan

for the Machine-Readable Archives Division, the “Guidelines for Appraising Machine-Readable Records” and his contributions to numerous papers and journals reflect the vision that he brought to the archival management of electronic records.

Harold was a leader. He inspired innovation, creativity and the willingness to explore new ideas and new ways of looking at things. He understood the concept of risk-taking well before it came into vogue. In a self-effacing way that often frustrated his colleagues, he helped to guide us through uncharted territory.

Harold was fair and conscientious. He was proud of the achievements of his staff and took the time to express it. Regardless of his personal feelings (not to mention a streak of stubbornness), he would always seek to understand the other side of an issue. Rather than confront, Harold would probe. Rather than reject, he would question, seek clarification and analyse. More often than not, he was the one who offered the second sober thought that helped to chart a clearer course.

He loved his profession. He was proud of being an archivist and dedicated himself to the advancement of those programmes (particularly electronic records and education) that would help to strengthen the profession. He had a particular interest in those who were new to the profession and worked tirelessly to guide and encourage them.

He also had a healthy sense of the ridiculous. Always dedicated to and serious about his work, he never lost sight of the context within which he worked. As many of us know, Harold loved a party. He loved the dancing, the high-spirited conversations and, above all, the warm feelings that collegiality and friendship could generate.

To all of us Harold was a caring individual. As much as we eulogize him for his professional accomplishments, we deeply appreciate him for the personal way in which he touched us all. As a colleague remarked recently, “as much as Harold taught me about electronic records, he also taught me about what it was to be a human being.”

Devoted to his family, friends and colleagues Harold was continually concentrating on the well-being of others. Over the years many of us experienced the frustration of finding that just as we thought we had turned the conversation to matters that concerned him, he had turned it right round again. He was genuine in wanting to know how we were—not enquiring just about day-to-day matters but also about those things that affected us as individuals. As he was never afraid to express his feelings, he helped many of us to express our own.

To the end Harold insisted that no one “fuss” over him, and in many ways he left us in the same unassuming way he had behaved when with us. He would not have wanted anyone to feel sad. He would have expected us to carry on, probably as if he had never been with us. Yet the personal and professional legacy that he left behind is profound. He gave us a great gift, and his memory and spirit will be alive among us always.

John McDonald
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Sue Gavrel
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