

Past Winners of the Hazel de Berg Award for Excellence in Oral History

Jill Cassidy (2015)

Jill Cassidy has made an outstanding contribution to the cause of oral history in Australia for almost 30 years, undertaken both in a professional and voluntary capacity.



Working at the Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery (QVMAG) in Launceston, Jill conducted oral histories which formed the basis of exhibitions to commemorate Australia's Bicentenary in 1988. She later authored a number of publications including *Launceston Talks: Oral Histories of the Launceston Community*. As a result of the project's success in documenting the history of northern Tasmania, Jill was appointed as the Museum's first Oral Historian. She went on to initiate, manage and conduct

further oral histories, exhibitions, publications and ran engaging and successful public programs. Jill firmly established the Museum's collection and her commitment to recording and preserving interviews ensured the collection continued to grow and that oral history became an integral part of QVMAG exhibitions. Jill's contribution here was exceptional. She was also a member of the Editorial Committee for *The Companion to Tasmanian History*.

In 1991, soon after being appointed as Oral Historian at QVMAG, Jill initiated the formation of the Tasmanian Branch of the Oral History Association of Australia, now Oral History Tasmania. She has been either branch President or Secretary since its inception, and has edited the newsletter *Real to Reel* for most of that time. Jill has tirelessly contributed to the promotion of oral history practice in Tasmania. She has conducted annual oral history workshops in Hobart and Launceston, along with others around the state when requested. She has given talks about oral history to many groups from historical associations to school groups and has contributed a number of oral history papers to conferences and seminars. Jill ran a local oral history symposium for *Deviot* – the community where she lives. She has also played a central role in the national association, as President and as the Convener of two very successful national conferences. She has been a member of the national executive since 1991.

Jill has played a central and critical role in Tasmanian oral history. She continues to be the heart of Oral History Tasmania and has generously mentored many Tasmanian Oral Historians.

Photo: Jill Cassidy receiving her award from Oral History Australia President Sue Anderson ©Sandra Blamey

Francis Good (2013) has made an outstanding contribution to the cause of oral history in Australia for close to 30 years. Appointed as manager of the Northern Territory Archive's Oral History Unit in 1985 he actively and enthusiastically promoted the collection and preservation of oral interviews, introduced high standards in sound recording, and ensured interviews were easily accessible.



Francis initiated oral history projects focusing on disaster survival including the Japanese bombing raids on Darwin in 1942; Cyclone Tracy in 1974; and the 1998 Katherine floods. He has recorded stories of the pastoral industry and of Aboriginal communities including outstations; he trained indigenous people in oral history techniques; he commissioned interviews and travelled widely undertaking interviews. His own recordings coupled with those he commissioned have resulted in over 2,000 recorded hours; they represent a legacy of inestimable value to the Northern Territory, and an important

contribution to the nation's history. Francis became the voice of oral history in the Territory.

Despite the Northern Territory being the focus of his professional employment Francis's influence has been extensive. Throughout his career and since retiring he has steadfastly contributed to raising awareness of the value of oral history within the community and the profession, and he has been generous in sharing his experience and knowledge with others.

Francis has also been active in the Oral History Association; on the National Committee for almost 20 years; on the Association's editorial board since 1994; while Journal Editor for four years he introduced peer review and ensured maintenance of high quality standards and credibility; he managed the website for many years; updated the Journal's index; and he has regularly attended and contributed to oral history conferences. Francis's article in The Oral History Reader is used by students and practitioners alike. In 2007 Francis was honoured with the award of life membership of the Oral History Association of Australia. In retirement he continues to provide training and consultancy services.

Photo: Francis Good receiving the 2013 Hazel de Berg Award from Di Ritch, Hazel de Berg's daughter © Jenny Scott

Frank Heimans (2011)

Franklin (Frank) Arthur Heimans' oral history activities began in the mid-1970s with documentary films for television, as writer, director, producer and interviewer. At that time there was little awareness of the value of oral history within the film and television community. Over the ensuing 35-year period Frank has produced twenty-five documentary and biographical films for television with a strong oral history component.

Frank's is an imposing record - he has conducted more than 850 audio interviews with a wide cross-section of the community, people in the arts, religion, literature, music, theatre, education, medicine, architecture, aviation, sports, economics, politics,



science, engineering, broadcasting, law, business and administration. He has produced eight documentary films for television with a strong oral history component, and as originator of the first truly Australian archival interview series, Frank produced 32 programs in the Australian Biography series.

He deposited his material with the National Film and Sound Archive following its establishment in 1984, with footage of the Australian Biography series being transcribed, timed, documented and deposited with Australian Archives.

Frank has given many lectures and presentations to OHAA conferences, community groups and local libraries and has presented at the IOHA international conference in Mexico. Since 2001 he has written on oral history topics for OHAA Journals and Voiceprint newsletter and he has often participated in OHAA workshops to bring knowledge, practices and skills to participants.

Frank was one of the first Australian filmmakers to carry out interviews on film and to then log, transcribe and archive the material. He also pioneered a prototype archive system for documenting video material which was subsequently adopted by the CSIRO and named 'Frank'.

Frank has been a valued mentor and for many who feared new recording technologies, has made good sound recording appear effortless. As testament to the quality and significance of his work, Frank has won many awards.

Janis Wilton (2009)

For more than thirty years Janis Wilton has raised awareness of oral history within the oral history profession, amongst historians, and within the general community. She is the author of many books about oral history as well as those based on extensive oral history research such as her groundbreaking *Old Worlds and New Australia: the post-war migrant experience* (Penguin 1984) and *Golden Threads: the Chinese in Regional New South Wales 1850-1950* (2004), which was also the basis for a major touring exhibition and an historical resource website.



Oral history has been integral to her academic teaching career. She pioneered the teaching of oral history as a university subject in the 1980s, and has inspired many of her students to pursue oral history in varied and diverse ways in their subsequent careers. She is a passionate promoter of the relevance of oral history to academic research and history-writing.

Janis has provided a crucial link between international oral history movements and the practice and theory of oral history in Australia. From 1998 to 2006 she was a member of the Council of the International Oral History Association and served terms as journal editor, Vice President and President.

An early member of the Oral History Association of Australia, Janis has served several terms on the OHAA National Council. From 1982-86 she co-edited the OHAA Journal and recently helped to transform the Journal into a publication for both academic and general audiences. Her list of oral history collections and organisations in Australia was published by the OHAA and was successful in raising public awareness of the institutional support for oral history from local to national levels.

She is a true oral history enthusiast. Through her active involvement in oral history organisations, community-based projects, university teaching and her own research and writing, she continues to inspire and assist people and local communities to capture the power and beauty of people's life stories.

Photo : Janis Wilton receiving her award from Jan McCahon Marshall, National President OHAA © Jill Cassidy

Michael Clarke (2007)

Michael Clarke commenced the Public Works Department's Oral History program in 1991; he chaired the committee until retiring as Chief Engineer in 1992, and remained a member until 2000. As manager of the Sydney Engineering Heritage Committee's Oral History Program he developed policies, procedures and training for volunteer interviewers as well as undertaking interviews himself. Michael arranged for the master tapes, logs, biographies and related documents to be progressively donated to the State Library of NSW - they presently amount to 194 interviews. Since the Engineering Heritage Committee became a member of the Oral History Association of Australia in 1996, he has been its representative. Michael's volunteer efforts have contributed significantly to the conduct of oral history within the engineering profession. His work in developing the OHAA A Guide to Commissioning Oral History Projects has provided guidance for both oral historians and those wishing to engage their services.



Photo : Michael Clarke receiving his Hazel de Berg Award from Hazel's daughter Diana Ritch in 2007 © Suzanne Mulligan

Beth Robertson became the inaugural Hazel de Berg Award recipient at the International Oral History Conference held in Sydney in 2006.

Beth Robertson has made outstanding contributions to oral history in Australia since joining the committee of the Oral History Association of Australia (South Australia) in 1981, in which she has had a long and distinguished career. As Oral History Officer at the State Library of South Australia Beth has been an exceptional advocate for the crucial significance of oral history collections to Australia's national heritage. She has been an inspiring mentor and her personality and enthusiasm has encouraged many oral historians to deposit their collections with libraries and other collections around Australia. Beth is probably most widely known for the Oral History Handbook first published in 1983. She published the most recent edition in 2006 with an entirely new chapter on digital recording. The Handbook is the national standard for Australia. (2006)



Photo: Beth Robertson is presented with her Award by Hazel's daughter Diana Ritch © Cynthia Nadai

The Hazel de Berg Award for Excellence in Oral History is awarded biennially by Oral History Australia