

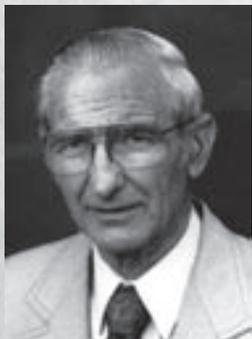
The PSA Journal's History Series

Celebrating 75 Years of PSA

Dedicated to the memory of longtime
PSA Historian, Tony Patti, Hon PSA, FPSA

Honors and Distinctions

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Honors

Those who fostered the formation of the Photographic Society of America (PSA) described their purpose with the phrase “the promotion of the art and science of photography.” In all likelihood this phrase was sourced from the Royal Photographic Society (RPS), which also uses the phrase. This remains the focus of both PSA and RPS to this day.

There are indications that some of the early leadership in PSA were involved with the *Royal* and no doubt were influenced by that contact. The early distinctions of PSA did not truly copy the format utilized by RPS. They were however cognizant of the need for recognizing those elements that were outlined by that long (1853) established group. These major factors were of course the artistry of the photographer, related scientific developments and advancement in physics and chemistry, and also the educational process.

To this end a system of recognition was developed that would be referred to as the

“Honors Roll.” These honors would emphasize the contributions to the “advancement of the art and science of photography” and not just proficiency. At the top of the roll would be the **Honorary Fellowship (Hon. FPSA)**. This would be the highest level in the honors program and be conferred only for unique and/or outstanding contributions of major importance to photography. It is not necessary to be a member of the Society for this award. The **Honorary Membership (Hon PSA)** is conferred for outstanding contributions of service to photography via organizational work and/or similar contributions. Again, membership in the Society or proficiency in photography is not a requirement.

The **Fellowship (FPSA)** is awarded for outstanding contributions or service and proficiency in photography. Personal achievement alone does not qualify a person for this recognition. The **Associateship (APSA)** is granted for material contributions to the advancement of photography. This can be for service alone and does not require proficiency as is outlined for the Fellowship.

The outlined “Honors Roll” began when the first honors were conferred in October of 1940 at the convention in Cleveland. It is not surprising that among the very first “Honorary Fellows” were **William Henry Jackson** who first documented Yellowstone, and **Dr. C.E.K. Mees** research specialist and director of Kodak Laboratories. Obviously these individuals made vital contributions of major importance to photography. It is also interesting to note that Dr. Mees was the first one to receive the Society’s highest form of recognition, *The Progress Medal Award*, in 1948.

Among the first Fellows were **Dr. Max Thorek**, first president of PSA and **Adolph “Papa” Fassbender**. Both were among the top exhibitors in the “Salons” and both provided very devoted leadership and guidance to the fledgling Photographic Society of America as well as other groups of photographers.

Each generation of photographers have found



1996 - Herb Gustafson, FPSA, PPSA, Carol Hagaman, APSA (later FPSA) Chairperson of the Honors Committee and Alfred Jendroszek, FPSA, EPSA from Germany, at the PSA Tucson Conference when both received Honorary PSAs.

their idols, teachers and devoted leaders both artistically and organizationally. A perusal of the "Honors Roll" finds many familiar names: **Fred Archer, A. Aubrey Bodine, Steichen, Stieglitz,** and **Edward Weston**, among the Honorary Fellows. You can also add **Charles Heller** who became treasurer in 1945 and remained in that capacity for over forty years.

On the list of Honorary Members there are former Presidents of the Society, and many other dedicated former officers and supporters that went far beyond just serving a term in Office: **Byron Chatto**, the first secretary, *and it was all snail mail*, and the first *Journal* editor, also did a stint as treasurer; and **Victor Scales**, the first editorial Vice President, who also served in several other functions. All of the above names are part of the first six decades and only remain in memory. There are a myriad of Fellows and Associates and to selectively list any would just be inappropriate.

The current procedure for honors recognition has been carefully followed for sixty plus years. A formal application form (which has recently been subject to the first change in decades) is obtained from Headquarters. When completed with the requested information and returned, a copy is sent to each member of the eight members of the "honors committee." These eight members represent a cross section of the Society's membership. This refers to both the geographical location and the various divisions. These members have already been recognized and honors previously received. These members exchange their views, observations and opinions. A series of votes are taken to determine the acceptance of the submission.

For the Honorary Fellowship, an eighty percent acceptance vote is required. The Board of Directors must also approve it. For the Honorary Membership, a three-fourths vote is required and it must also be approved by the Board of Directors. A three-fourths vote of approval by the committee is also required for the Fellowship. A simple majority vote is required for the Associateship.

Distinctions

Note that evidence of service or contribution to the advancement of the art or science of photography is required for "honors" recognition. This is in contrast to other groups that grant distinctions based only on proficiency. Modes of acquiring those distinctions vary among the groups but photographic skill or performance is the measure. There was from time to time, a question and request for a similar form of recognition for

PSA members. In 1996 this concept was under review and a proposal was developed under the guidance of **Pauline Swezey Fredrickson, Hon. PSA, FPSA**, president at that time. The proposal was adopted and put into practice at the 1996 convention in Tucson, Arizona.

Three elements were included in the adopted "distinctions" program and this concept was separate and differed from the "honors" process. The applicant must be a member of PSA and continue to be a member if the distinction were to continue to be recognized. The member would utilize the star ratings system from any of the appropriate divisions to meet the qualification for the recognition. **Thirdly there would be two levels of distinction: the Proficiency level (PPSA) and the Excellence level (EPSA).** These "distinctions" would not require a vote but would be conferred upon validation of the submitted requirements.

This recognition process is based on the current star ratings systems already in place for the Society. There were two major bases for this decision. It is an objective (quantitative) measure and is not subject to interpretation, evaluation or considered opinion. Thus the evaluation of a submitted set of images is not subject to any one individual or panel. It is based on an extended period of time and many panels of selectors. It also enhances the value of the star system and the meritorious aspect of photographic achievement over a more extended period of time and an increased number of images. It was also expected that this would likely encourage continued participation in PSA-recognized exhibitions as well as continuing membership and participation in the Society and its activities.

The Recognition of Photographic Achievement Awards, (ROPA) recognizes members who adhere to the PSA Ethics Standards and Policy of the Society and who have excelled in the International Exhibitions to the Stars and Galaxy levels. Members, who have achieved five (5) stars in a single category of a division or ten (10) stars in various categories of various divisions, qualify for the Proficiency (PPSA) distinction. Members, who have achieved five (5) stars in three separate categories in one or more divisions or three (3) levels beyond the fifth star in a single category of a division, qualify for the Excellence (EPSA) distinction. (Director of ROPA, Joseph J. Zaia, FPSA)

The last decade has demonstrated that these levels of distinction are popular, feasible and satisfying to the numerous members of the Society earning this recognition. Thus participation

and involvement in the exhibitions has been encouraged and in a related sense the Society itself.

If the stated purpose and function of the Society is to promote the advancement of the art and science of photography did the early leadership accomplish this with development of the "Honors Roll?" Did the recognition of those that did contribute in turn lead to the encouragement of others to also contribute? The mere fact that the Society was founded seventy-five years ago and has actually functioned for the most part

primarily with volunteer leadership, guidance and operations for that period of time, gives credence to their decision. The continuing participation and dedication of participating members in some instances exceeding over half a century is testament to the sagacious decisions made in the thirties by that early leadership and continued by those that followed in the succeeding decades that held to the stated objectives by recognizing those who fostered the "artistry, science and educational efforts" that continue to advance the world of photography. ■

Historical Vignette:

Wilmington International Exhibition of Photography

By disclosing the 75-year history of the Wilmington International Exhibition of Photography (WIEP), much is discovered about the history of photography and the Photographic Society of America (PSA).

- 1934:** 1st Wilmington Salon of Photography is held in Wilmington, Delaware.
- 1936:** Jurors use individual "electrical scoring devices" to score each monochrome print.
- 1941:** The entry fee is \$1 and 1051 entries are received including prints from 8 foreign countries.
- 1942:** Awards are given for the first time.
- 1944:** Colored prints are received and the jurors are instructed to "give their full consideration to these prints."
- 1947:** The entry form states, "Four prints, in any photographic medium, may be entered..."
- 1948:** The catalog makes first mention of the Photographic Society of America (PSA).
- 1952:** A color slide section is added; The Salon name is changed to the Wilmington International Exhibition of Photography.
- 1954:** The color slide section is recognized by PSA.
- 1956:** WIEP awards the first PSA Silver Medals to the best 2 color slides.
- 1958:** The entry fee is \$1.50 per print and slide section.
- 1959:** A Color Print section is added. PSA Gold Medals are awarded to the best slide, color and monochrome prints.
- 1962:** WIEP loses \$111.14 due to increased cost of returning prints (79 cents) and slides (18 cents).
- 1967:** The catalog reproduces all medal-winning images for the first time.
- 1971:** Fees are increased to \$2.50 for one section and \$4.50 for two; slide fees are \$1.50.
- 1972:** Carousel trays are used for the first time in exhibition slide shows.
- 1980:** Lynn Troy Maniscalco receives her first acceptance.
- 1981:** The 48th Exhibition receives 4,478 entries and breaks all records.
- 1986:** Photojournalism (PJ) slide and print sections are added. Computerized record keeping is initiated.
- 1995:** For the first time foreign entries, from 39 countries, outnumber domestic entries.
- 1997:** PSA Silver PJ medals are awarded for "Human Interest."
- 1999:** Fred Greene, FPSA, EPSA, becomes the second Senior Fellow of WIEP. (100 or more acceptances).
- 2005:** A slide show is produced digitally allowing permanent retention of the show.
- 2007:** Electronic score cards are sent to entrants.
- 2008:** A Dual-Projected Image category is added. To date, there are 9 Senior Fellows including PSA members: Martin Bruce, FPSA, EPSA (2004); Fred Greene, FPSA, EPSA (1999); Karl Leck (2000); Lynn Troy Maniscalco, FPSA, EPSA (2007); and Gerardus Van-Mol, EPSA (2001).

All facts cited are taken from the commemorative booklet: *Wilmington International Exhibition of Photography, 75th Anniversary*.

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