



AMIA the association of moving image archivists

1994 Silver Light Award Winner: Eileen Bowser

Tribute by William Murphy

Eileen Bowser, well known as a film archivist and scholar, is the first recipient of the Association of Moving Image Archivists' Silver Light career recognition award. The award will be presented to her at a luncheon in Boston on November 16, 1994 during the association's annual conference.

Ms. Bowser retired last year as the Curator of the Department of Film at the Museum of Modern Art in New York. During a long career (starting in 1954) at the Museum, she was responsible for the film collections, acquisition, cataloging, storage, preservation, and access, establishing archival policies and shaping the holdings into one of the world's most important repositories for the history of cinema.

Long a well known figure in the international archival community, she has been an energetic supporter and proponent of the International Federation of Film Archives (FIAF), in which she has held several important positions, including vice-president (1977-85), president of the Documentation Commission (1972-81) and member of the executive committee (1969-91). Along with John Kuiper, she edited and wrote the FIAF manual *A Handbook for Film Archives*, first published in 1980 and reissued in a second, revised edition in 1991.

In addition to her work as an archivist, she is widely recognized as a leading scholar on the early history of cinema. She served on the executive committee of DOMITOR, the international group of film scholars of early cinema, and among her numerous publications is *The Transformation of Cinema: 1907-1915* (Scribners, 1990), volume two in the series *History of American Cinema*, which was awarded the Katherine Singer Kovacs Prize in 1991. She also co-authored books with Richard Griffith, Arthur Mayer, and Iris Barry.

Ms. Bowser has received other recognition awards including the Priz Jean Mitry of the Silent Film Festival of Pordonone in 1989, and honorary membership in DOMITOR, FIAF, and the Society for Cinema Studies.

In selecting Ms. Bowser, AMIA President Ernest J. Dick said that the purpose of the award is to recognize special achievement in archival work relating to moving images and to promote excellence in the field. "Eileen Bowser," he said, "was a clear choice because of her long and substantial contributions to the envelopment of the field. Her professionalism has been exemplary, and her uncompromising support for preservation of the film heritage has inspired a whole generation of archivists."