



**AMIA** the association of moving image archivists

## **2003 Silver Light Award Winner:**

### **Ray Edmonson, former Director of National Film and Sound Archive of Australia**

Ray is a man who gives unstintingly of his time and expertise in the moving image archiving field. He is truly one of the founding fathers of Australian audio-visual archiving, and retired as Deputy Director of ScreenSound Australia (the National Film and Sound Archive of Australia). From one of ScreenSound's webpages, here is a brief note on his career:

"After graduating from the School of Librarianship at the University of New South Wales, Ray joined the National Library of Australia where by 1978 he was head of the Film Section. In 1984 the National Film and Sound Archive separated from the National Library and Ray became its Deputy Director. In 1987 he was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) for his work in the audio-visual archive sector. Ray was foundation chair of the Australian Council of Government Film Libraries, Music Roll Australia, and Australian Centenary of Cinema Committee. He has long been active in the international audiovisual archiving federations including FIAF (International Federation of Film Associations), IASA International Association of Sound Archives, and co-ordinates AVAPIN, the Audiovisual Archiving Philosophy Interest Network. He is the President of the Southeast Asia-Pacific Audiovisual Archive Association (SEAPAVAA) and is a member of the UNESCO Memory of the World International Advisory Committee. Ray conceived and directed *The Last Film Search* (1981) and *Operation Newsreel* (1988), projects that became international benchmarks for film archives. More recently, his advocacy of formal professional education for audio-visual archivists led to an internet-delivered distance-learning course, the only one of its kind in the world, now offered by the Archive in conjunction with Charles Stuart University." More information on how Ray got to his position can be found in the third issue of *The Moving Image*, AMIA's journal.

Web pages galore can be found which showcase Ray's work over a long period of time. He has written on the subject of ethics in the archiving world, most usefully with *A Philosophy of Audiovisual Archiving*, with members of AVAPIN (Audiovisual Archiving Philosophy Interest Network) for UNESCO in 1995. He has discussed this philosophy in panels at past AMIA conferences. Ray is a very active member of AMIA, FIAF, FIAT, SEAPAAVA, and CCAAA. Within AMIA, he is Chair of the Internationalization Task Force.

Ray's work is regularly cited in preservation circles. His writings on the basics of film preservation are truly standards, especially now that there are several schools for film archiving around the world to which he travels to lecture.

Ray's work on the philosophy of AV archiving constitutes a significant boost to the maturation process of our profession. It shows that, despite our necessary preoccupation with issues of preservation and technology, the profession has reached a point where it is important and useful to re-examine some of the philosophical assumptions underlying what we do, why we do it, and when it is best done by organizations and people who specialize in moving images. He has demonstrated a willingness to ask tough questions, but does so with humor and wit. His argument that moving image archiving is sufficiently distinct from archiving in general to warrant specialist education and organizations is in harmony with the spirit of AMIA.

Ray's arguments in favor of audio-visual archiving as a separate profession and his work to preserve and further the distinctiveness of the Australian film and sound archives resonate with archivists who work within an environment where film and broadcast archives struggle to find a place in larger heritage organizations.

Ray meets the Silver Light Award criteria of "substantial contributions to the field over an extended period, leadership in the field, work in professional societies or other professional activities, [and] writings or publications." For his longtime generosity to the moving image archiving field world-wide, the Awards Committee enthusiastically recommends Ray Edmondson for the Silver Light Award.