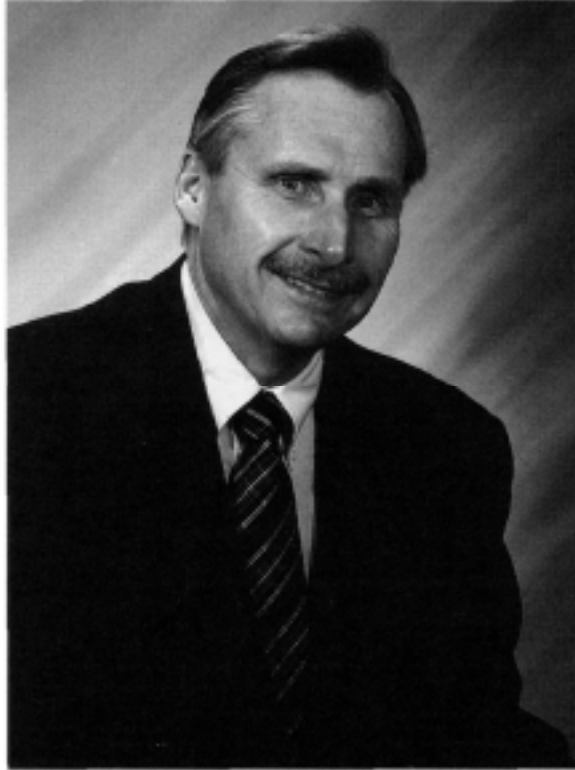


## Carol V. Ruppé Distinguished Service Award

RONALD L. MICHAEL 1998



The Society for Historical Archaeology created the Carol V. Ruppé Distinguished Service Award in 1990 to honor those individuals who have contributed sustained, outstanding service to the society. These award winners have promoted “archaeological and historical studies by advocating scientific research, interdisciplinary cooperation, professional standards, conservation of historical resources, and dissemination of knowledge” (The Society for Historical Archaeology 1996:A5-2). Our 1998 recipient, Dr. Ronald L. Michael, is a model of dedication and commitment to the organization and to those cherished ideals. Every member of this society who has received an early morning, late night, or weekend call from Ronn in pursuit of his editorial responsibilities, recognizes the vast amount of time he has so generously committed to the advancement of historical archaeology and the society. As the beneficiary of thousands of these calls myself, not to mention being the person who pays Ronn’s telephone bills, I can attest to the diligence with which he has served the society as its editor for nearly twenty years.

Like many historical archaeologists, Ronn came to the field by a circuitous route through other disciplines. Ronn began reassessing his undergraduate physics major when he realized that he was not interested in spending his professional life in a laboratory. He refocused his studies to incorporate history after experiencing the enticements of a summer ranger-historian position at Grand

Portage National Monument and observing Alan Woolworth's excavations. After receiving a Bachelor of Science degree in physics and history from Jamestown College, North Dakota, in 1963, he completed a Master of Arts degree in American history with an anthropology minor at the University of North Dakota in 1965. Membership in Lambda Alpha and Phi Alpha Theta, national honor societies in anthropology and history, respectively, recognized his commitment to excellence. With aspirations to teach history in a wealthy suburban Chicago high school, Ronn received offers from those schools to teach physics and coach tennis. Finally he accepted a position as instructor of history and tennis coach at Lakeland College, Sheboygan, Wisconsin.

Shortly thereafter Ronn began seeking a doctoral program in historical archaeology that would enable him to combine American history and anthropology, but he found little encouragement from most universities. The graduate history program at Ball State University was receptive to incorporating archaeology, and Ronn received an Doctorate of Education degree in 1969 in social science with an emphasis in anthropology/archaeology. He accepted the position of Associate Professor of Anthropology in the Social Science Department at California University of Pennsylvania in 1969 and was elevated to Professor in 1972. Ronn has chaired and participated on a variety of university committees and since 1970 has directed the university's archaeology programs and administered the Center for Prehistoric and Historic Site Archaeology. These duties have included supervising field and laboratory programs at prehistoric and historic sites, managing field records and artifact collections, and soliciting grants and foundation support for the program. As Project Manager/Principal Investigator, Ronn directed the completion of nearly twenty grants and contracts he secured from 1979 to 1988.

In 1973, Ronn began his extensive suite of volunteer activities by accepting editorship of *Pennsylvania Archaeologist*, a position he held for 21 years. In the late 1970s he edited *Northeast Historical Archaeology* and served as an executive board member of the Council for Northeast Historical Archaeology. During the next decade Ronn also edited the *Eastern States Archaeological Federation Bulletin* and served as a member and chair of the Pennsylvania Review Committee for the National Register of Historic Places, vice-chair of the Commonwealth Historic Preservation Board, President of the Pennsylvania Archaeological Council, and the Pennsylvania Representative to the Committee on Public Archaeology, Society for American Archaeology. Ronn directed more than 150 survey, determination of eligibility, and data recovery projects under the auspices of his corporation, NPW Consultants, Inc., from 1978 to 1994.

Ronn accepted the position as SHA editor in early 1978, just as the society was beginning to experience a membership explosion and the diversification that accompanied the emergence of cultural resource management (Deagan 1992:19). Many new members were not historical archaeologists, but sought information to recognize and address historic archaeological resources in the context of their new responsibilities. Despite this urgent need for visibility, production of the annual journal was two years in arrears and the society's only active outlets for promoting historical archaeology were the quarterly newsletter and the annual conference (Schuyler 1992:36). The need for a committed, productive editor was critical.

The society was extremely fortunate that Ronn's accomplishments in his life before SHA and the society's needs were so closely aligned when he accepted the editorship. His personal struggle to secure a PhD that combined American history and anthropology paralleled the difficulties of the emerging discipline of historical archaeology. His service as editor of *Northeast Historical Archaeology*, *Pennsylvania Archaeologist*, and the *Eastern States Archaeological Federation Bulletin* honed his editorial skills, established an enviable record of producing timely publications, and provided critical experience with the operation of other voluntary organizations. Ronn's personal diversifica-

tion also paralleled the changes experienced by the society. His position in the academic community provided a strong foothold in the traditional home of historic archaeological interests. Simultaneously, his service on the Pennsylvania Historical Review Board and the Pennsylvania Archaeological Council and his corporate involvement in conducting cultural resource management projects embraced the profound changes in the profession. Ronn's multidimensional experiences positioned him well to be responsive to the rapidly changing needs of the society.

Ronn has executed his responsibilities as editor with energy, enthusiasm, dedication, and creativity and his tenure is marked by expansion, change, and constancy. In 1978 he inherited an annual journal with an uncertain future and a checkered past, and few "exceptionally brilliant or especially enlightening manuscripts" (Adams 1993:26) awaiting publication. Through his personal commitment and dedication, and the help of Associate Editors Ronald Carlisle and later Donna Seifert, Ronn quickly transformed the annual journal into a timely and respected professional publication. Despite early opposition from some quarters, Ronn promoted the critical need to expand the journal to improve recognition of historical archaeology. The first semi-annual issues appeared in 1981 and *Historical Archaeology* emerged as a quarterly in 1990.

As the number of journals increased, Ronn refined the infrastructure to support their production. The initial associate editor and book reviews editor became a cadre of ten associate editors (now constituting the core of the Editorial Advisory Committee), without whose countless hours of nurturing manuscripts the journal could not be produced at such a reasonable cost to the membership. Ronn coordinates their activities, solicits their counsel, and personally encourages their voluntary contributions. Sarah Turnbaugh began part-time service as the society's copy editor in 1988 and has served with distinction to improve the quality and consistency of the society's publications. Ronn's personal involvement in and commitment to this volunteer editorial "staff" have enabled the society's journal to expand far beyond the level that only membership dues could support.

Despite the challenges of managing this ambitious editorial enterprise primarily through volunteers, Ronn has continually sought new avenues to expand the publications program. During 1984 he revitalized the *Special Publications Series* that had languished for nearly a decade, as an outlet for thematic issues before they became a regular feature of *Historical Archaeology*. He experimented with the production of the *Proceedings of the Conference on Underwater Archaeology* as *Special Publication* No. 4 in 1985 before accepting the opportunity to produce the volume annually in a new series beginning in 1987, now titled *Underwater Archaeology*. This new responsibility required Ronn to develop a different editorial structure and work with an annually rotating editor who also serves as the underwater program chair for the annual conference. Although the complexities involved in editing and producing this volume greatly increased Ronn's personal contribution to the society, he embraced this additional work to emphasize the society's commitment to our underwater colleagues.

In honor of the Columbus Quincentenary the society inaugurated a new publication entitled, *Guides to the Archaeological Literature of the Immigrant Experience in America* in 1990. Ronn again expanded his commitment to the organization to oversee the production of five guides from 1990 to 1997. These bibliographies, with their critical analysis of the literature, were designed to facilitate the identification and use of the diverse, often obscure, published references on historical archaeology. The society's first reader, entitled *Approaches to Material Culture Research for Historical Archaeologists*, developed primarily by George Miller in 1991 for the academic market, has become a widely accepted text in many universities for courses in historical archaeology.

Recently Ronn initiated alternative format publications for the society. Just last year he coordinated the production of the society's first CD-ROM containing the initial 23 volumes of *Historical*

*Archaeology*. This already promises to be a best seller—it allows the society to offer the knowledge contained in the earliest issues of the journal at an affordable price. The integral search engine replaces the need for separate, but financially taxing indexes.

Ronn also has realigned the editorial infrastructure in response to recognized needs and technological improvements. For example, nearly a decade ago the society discovered during a survey that some groups in the organization believed themselves to be underrepresented in the percentages of published papers and disenfranchised from the book review process. Although a review of journal articles and reviews revealed the opposite trend, Ronn initiated workshops at the annual conference to help new authors and worked diligently with the reviews editor to expand review opportunities.

During the past two years Ronn has grappled with the myriad of changes necessary to incorporate the society's new corporate image into the publications program, the full magnitude of which were not known until implementation began. As the society moves to disseminating information through electronic media, his involvement in the inception of the society's web page and continued contributions to its development and maintenance bring new dimensions to the editorship. Ronn's current challenge is the conversion of the editorial process to electronic publishing, an effort not without difficulty in 1997. His already considerable skill in the publishing process is augmented daily as he and the publishing industry adapt to the "benefits" of new technology.

Throughout the expansion of the publications program and the changes in infrastructure and technology, Ronn's constant commitment to furthering the goals of the society has never wavered. The profession would greatly benefit from archaeologists, young and old, who emulate Ronn's extensive and generous contributions to historical archaeology. Just as Ronn has given freely of his time and talents to historical archaeology, the extraordinary value of his contributions should challenge each of us to make these commitments to our profession and to ourselves:

—to be satisfied with nothing less than the advancement of knowledge about historical archaeology through active publication of scholarly documentation;

—to invest our personal time and resources in advancing the interests of this organization and historical archaeology in the broader public context; and

—to explore creatively new opportunities, as he has done, to expand the society's horizons and promote historical archaeology in ways that reach beyond the organization's limited financial resources.

Ronn, your legacy to the society is more than 10,000 printed pages that document the evolution of the discipline. These pages are the voice of our society for the future, enabling researchers to build on the record of the past. The chosen media, including the emerging electronic formats, have enabled historical archaeologists to reach wider and wider audiences with new ideas. Your work is a selfless example of dedication to the goals and ideals of the society and an inspiration for the future, challenging new scholars to build on the past you have given us with equal enthusiasm, fairness, creativity, and tenacity. Your friends and colleagues salute you for your leadership and devotion to this organization and to all it represents.

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