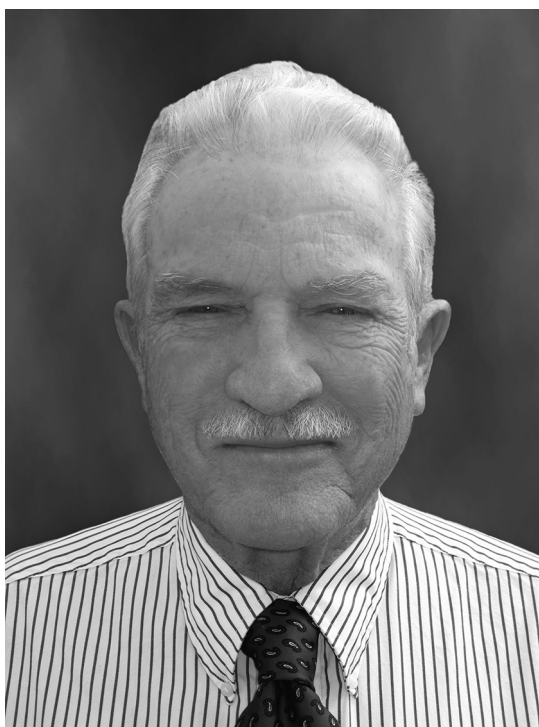


Carol V. Ruppé Distinguished Service Award



James Edward Ayres

At the 47th Annual Conference on Historical and Underwater Archaeology in Quebec City, Canada, James Edward Ayres was honored as the recipient of the 2014 Carol V. Ruppé Distinguished Service Award, which was created by the Society for Historical Archaeology (SHA) to recognize individuals who have a “sustained and truly outstanding” record of service to the organization. It should come as no surprise that the award has been conferred on relatively few occasions. Created in 1988 and publicly announced in 1990, Jim Ayres is only the seventh Ruppé recipient to date. Given his years of dedication to the society and extensive contributions, it is only possible to touch upon the highlights of Jim’s extraordinary service in the ensuing paragraphs.

Fortunately, the task was eased a bit by the fact that Jim’s distinguished career in historical archaeology has already been thoroughly summarized in a testimonial prepared by Charles E. Cleland and Teresita Majewski (2008) when Jim received the J. C. Harrington Medal in Historical Archaeology at the 2008 SHA awards banquet. (It is worth noting in passing that only one other person, the late Roderick Sprague, has ever won the high honor of both a Harrington Medal *and* a Ruppé Award.) That testimonial reviews Jim’s interesting personal history, his academic background, and his many and varied scholarly accomplishments. However, it is appropriate to quote from the conclusion of that earlier publication, for it is relevant to the subject at hand.

In praise of Jim Ayres, Cleland and Majewski (2008:5) had this to say:

For more than 40 years, he has focused on promoting historical archaeology through tireless service as well as broad-ranging and lasting scholarly contributions. For Jim, service and scholarly contributions are inextricably linked in a circle of cause and effect. He has never been a self-promoter, but his work has inspired countless others to pursue service and scholarship in historical archaeology.

So, let us examine more closely this remarkable record of SHA service, mindful that Jim also capably served other organizations—always with the same passionate commitment to duty, but hardly to the same degree as his contributions to the SHA, where he has dedicated so much of his time and energy.

Jim Ayres joined the SHA soon after the organization's 1967 founding, and it was not long before he began volunteering. In 1971, he began serving as a regional news coordinator for the *SHA Newsletter*, a duty that he continued to discharge faithfully for the next 28 years through 1999, which could well be a record tenure among newsletter coordinators. In that capacity, Jim regularly filed items on current research in the American Southwest that he had solicited from colleagues in the region. He also served on the SHA Newsletter Editorial Advisory Committee, once Norman Barka took over the newsletter editorship and organized that committee. Jim was an active member of that committee over the years, participating fully in the deliberations on content and policy development.

Jim quickly was recognized as a thoughtful and dedicated member of the SHA, and consequently he was nominated and elected to the SHA Board of Directors, serving from 1972 through 1975. His work on the board was clearly extraordinary, for in the final year of his term he was nominated for the office of president-elect. Winning the election as he did, Jim continued service on the board for another three years without a break—as president-elect (1976), president (1977), and immediate past president (1978). Jim provided steady leadership as president of the society, serving capably and deliberately during a time of membership growth and diversification of the discipline.

Several years after his presidency ended, Jim had the idea for a gathering of fellow past presidents each year at the conference. Initially conceived as an advisory body to the SHA leadership, Jim and Rick Sprague began organizing those meetings in the 1980s. In time, the gathering evolved into the Past Presidents' Luncheon, which has since become a standard feature of the annual conference. Now more of a social event than political, perhaps, the luncheon still provides an important sense of camaraderie and continuity among those who have held SHA's highest office.

Jim's stellar performance as president earned him a much-deserved reputation for sound judgment and hard work on behalf of the SHA. For that reason, his successor as president, Kathleen Gilmore, appointed Jim to chair a search committee to find a new editor for *Historical Archaeology* at a time when the annual journal was a few years in arrears and in dire need of firm stewardship. Identifying a capable individual to fulfill that role, therefore, was critical to the success of the society's still-fledgling publications program, and Jim's committee went about its charge with great care and efficiency—ultimately recommending Ronald L. Michael to the board for appointment. As the new editor of *Historical Archaeology*, Ronn quickly formed an editorial advisory committee, and naturally Jim was one of the initial members appointed in 1978. Jim served on the committee throughout Ronn's long tenure as editor and beyond that to the present day for a total of 35 years, which is unquestionably a record for service on that now more-encompassing body reborn as the Journal and Co-Publications Editorial Advisory Committee.

Other organizations also have benefited from Jim's leadership. It merits mentioning that he served from 1975 to 1982 as SHA's representative to the Advisory Council for Historic Preservation's International Centre Committee. Then, from 1983 through 1987, Jim also ably served as the SHA's representative to the board of the former Society of Professional Archeologists—now the Register of Professional Archaeologists. The task of representing one organization's interests on a committee or board of another organization is a challenge requiring considerable political skill, as well as a sense of purpose to do right by both organizations, and Jim proved equal to that challenge during those years of service. SHA placed its absolute trust in Jim Ayres as a spokesperson for the organization and was never disappointed in the results.

A further testament to Jim's reputed leadership and dedication to governance of the SHA is the fact that, 20 years after he was first elected to the SHA Board of Directors, he was elected to a second three-year term, serving from 1992 through 1995. I overlapped with Jim for a year on the board during his second term (in 1995), so I had the opportunity to witness firsthand his keen

intellect in deliberations and his ability to offer insightful contributions to the discussion of matters at hand. Indeed, Jim's knowledge and experience often proved invaluable to moving discussions quickly along to a satisfactory conclusion. By the fine example he set, Jim was an unassuming role model to those like me who were new to service on the SHA Board.

Last, but certainly not least, is Jim's long service to the SHA on the Dissertation Prize Subcommittee (which has morphed into the selection panel for the prize, renamed in 2011 as the Kathleen Kirk Gilmore Dissertation Award). He joined the subcommittee as a member in 2001 and chaired it from 2003 through 2012. As many will realize, this assembly of dedicated volunteers undertakes a huge annual workload within a very short timeframe, reading and evaluating many worthy submissions each year, and it was largely through Jim's strong leadership that it always concluded its important business in timely fashion. That he was willing to take on and continue this very consuming responsibility late in his career—completing his assignment more than 40 years after he began volunteering for the society—is an incredible reflection of Jim's steady devotion to scholarship in historical archaeology and the organization whose mission is to promote it. Indeed, perhaps nowhere in Jim's illustrious career is the aforementioned linkage between service and scholarship more clearly evident than in his exceptional performance on the Dissertation Prize Subcommittee.

In conclusion, let me point out again that the foregoing outline of Jim's service represents a review of the most remarkable highlights only, for he has served the SHA in many other capacities and on many other occasions over the years. To give but one example, I immediately called upon Jim to serve on the search committee for Ronn Michael's successor as journal editor when I chaired that undertaking in 2003. I felt from the start that Jim's presence on the committee would lend important continuity to the effort, since he had chaired the previous editor search 25 years earlier. If agreeable to the proposition, it seemed to me that his unique perspective on the proceedings would be very useful in our pursuit of a new editor. To my delight, but not to my surprise, Jim did not hesitate for a moment to honor my request, and he proved to be an invaluable member of the search committee during teleconferenced candidate interviews and our deliberations. This is so typical of the man—always willing to serve the society no matter what the task and always to be counted on for a job well done. Jim's professionalism in behalf of the SHA is exemplary, and the organization could not possibly wish for a more steadfast volunteer.

Jim Ayres has repeatedly and competently volunteered his valuable time and considerable energy to the SHA for more than four decades, and so it is with heartfelt thanks and extreme gratitude for his extensive, inspirational dedication to SHA affairs that the Society for Historical Archaeology now honors him with the Carol V. Ruppé Distinguished Service Award.

Reference

CLELAND, CHARLES E., AND TERESITA MAJEWSKI

2008 J. C. Harrington Medal in Historical Archaeology 2008: James Edward Ayres. *Historical Archaeology* 42(2):1–5.

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