

HCL ANDERSON AWARD

Cheryl Hamill

The HCL Anderson Award is the Association's highest honour that can be bestowed on an Associate Member of ALIA. It is awarded in recognition of outstanding service to the library and information profession in Australia and to ALIA; and to either the theory of library and information science or to the practice of library and information services (or to both of these areas).

The award commemorates HCL Anderson, principal librarian of the Free Public Library of New South Wales from 1893 to 1906. Anderson created a collection and service policy to give his infant colonial library a stature of national importance. He worked with DS Mitchell, wealthy collector of Australiana, adding, to the bequest of justice Edward Wise, Mitchell's extensive collections of books, manuscripts and maps, to build and preserve the first collection of national significance. Anderson persuaded Mitchell to finance the housing of the collection in what is now the Mitchell Library of the State Library of New South Wales. In addition to this protracted task, Anderson promoted the education of librarians and the expansion of services to the community, (including those in remote areas), as well as to business and industry. His vision, dedication and achievements provide a model for those nominated for this award.

This award is peer-nominated. Nominations are considered by the Excellence Awards Panel which makes recommendation to the Board of Directors.

Cheryl Hamill is a recipient of the HCL Anderson award for 2020. Cheryl has enjoyed a distinguished career in health librarianship in Australia and has made a significant contribution to the Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA) over more than 30 years. She was awarded a fellowship in 2013 in recognition of her tireless work to 'enhance the professional status of health librarians and the role of health libraries'.

Cheryl has not only been a high achiever in the field of health librarianship on her own account, but has also stepped up to a leadership position, which has shown the way for others. This has taken many forms over the years, including efforts to promote open access, expert searching, research to inform evidence-based practice, advocacy, advances in library and information science education, professional development and recognition.

Cheryl is a model of all that is best in health librarianship, constantly looking for ways to improve the services and resources provided to clinicians and other library users. She demonstrates expertise in her own practice and seeks out the very latest

information in order to drive further improvements – not only for herself and her immediate team, but also for her broader network of colleagues in ALIA Health Libraries Australia. Through her collaborative approach, including committee work, editorial contributions, original research, publications, presentations and papers, Cheryl has helped others develop a greater understanding of the field. Through her persistent advocacy, she has progressed the standing of health librarians in Australia.

She has been described by her peers as knowledgeable, inclusive, supportive, mentoring, generous, collegial, sharing and ultimately, inspirational.

‘Cheryl’s knowledge of health librarianship in all its facets is extraordinary, and she never stops learning. Additionally, she never stops sharing that knowledge. She has contributed her time and expertise to the Australian and international health library community in many ways, including via active and long-standing membership of ALIA Health Libraries Australia.’

‘Cheryl is the ultimate team player, contributing her knowledge and expertise, a practical, common sense approach, and a collegial spirit.’

While her nominators say she does not seek out recognition for herself, the ALIA Board is pleased to recognise Cheryl Hamill’s substantial contribution to the goals of the Association by making her the recipient of the distinction of the HCL Anderson Award, ALIA’s highest honour.

Or, as the JoHILA editor’s feeble attempt at poetic doggerel notes:

There once was a health librarian named Cheryl,
Whose name was not amenable to limerick writing,
Unless she had colleagues named Beryl, or Meryl,
And they co-authored papers, and were diligent in citing.

Still, even if the rhymes elude a limerick,
The HCL Anderson award is worthy of something poetic.
A sonnet in MeSH, perhaps, announced with a gong,
Or NLM classification reworked as the Dockers theme song.

I know. A Haiku. It’s
True, I do know a haiku.
See, told you I do.

But back to Cheryl, and all that she does,
For WA, and HLA, and NLA, and ALIA;
For committees and sub-committees and all their paraphernalia;
And, well, frankly, for all of us.

(Sidenote - ALIA is not the Australian Liquor Industry Association ... although that would explain some MARC records I've seen – boom-tish).

But back to Cheryl, and all that she does,
In collecting and parsing and sharing,
And building and joining and supporting,
And setting an example for all of us.

There cannot be a pubmed search string she has not run,
An interdisciplinary comment thread she has not begun,
A publisher price she has not negotiated down,
Or an uppity rep she has not run out of town.

So all hail Cheryl, a paragon of the profession,
A most worthy recipient of the HCL Anderson.
Who knows, if the border is made permanent,
Her next award could be... the WA president!

(Side-note – Nat Fyfe, obviously, would be vice-president; the national anthem would be the Dockers theme song; the national colours would be purple and white; and the constitution will enshrine in law the sequestration of all mining profits to fund health libraries in perpetuity).



Viv Barton, President of ALIA, presenting Cheryl Hamill with the HCL Anderson Award at ALIAWest's "Quench your thirst" event at Curtin University, Perth on 12 September 2020.