

**2011-2012 OCUFA TEACHING AND
ACADEMIC LIBRARIANSHIP AWARDS
CITATION FOR WINNER JIM BRETT**

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CITATION FOR JIM BRETT

Read by Patti Ryan, York University

It is with great pleasure that the OCUFA Teaching and Academic Librarianship Awards Committee presents a 2012 OCUFA Academic Librarianship award to Jim Brett, User Services Librarian at the University of Guelph. Jim has been a professional librarian at the University of Guelph for twenty-eight years. The list of professional responsibilities, positions, committees, and projects that Jim has been involved in during this time is, in short, dizzying. He has specialized in science librarianship, and he is particularly well regarded for his role as the Manager of the Ontario Veterinary College Branch Library. At Guelph, Jim carries out his day-to-day work in support of Guelph's academic programs with, as a colleague notes, "a fierce diligence, critical thoughtfulness and infectious passion." Several librarians at Guelph draw attention to his determination to explore and expand professional practices, try new things, and to his innate sense of independence, vision, innovative thinking, and to his personal commitment to self-reflection and development. Faculty members at the Ontario Veterinary College attest to his expertise, approachability, and his willingness to go above and beyond the call of duty in support of the research, teaching, and learning needs of the University of Guelph community.

Among Jim's most impressive contributions to academic librarianship is his unwavering commitment to the professional development of colleagues. Reading through his dossier, it becomes apparent that Jim's career exemplifies many of the core values of librarianship, which include: openness, knowledge sharing, lifelong learning, social responsibility, and a commitment to the public good. Jim has been a singular driving force in establishing formal mentorship and career development programs for librarians in Ontario. He founded the Ontario Library Association's (OLA) Career Development program, which continues to offer annual career development workshops, mock interviews, and resumé services for new and not so new librarians. His pioneering work with the OLA Mentoring Committee and the student chapter of



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the Canadian Library Association, and with outreach to library school students at the University of Toronto and the University of Western Ontario has meant that new librarians in this province have access to a permanent, vibrant and internationally recognized infrastructure to support their transition from graduate school to professional employment. His nominator notes that Jim's decision to devote his energies to mentorship and guidance of new professionals suggests a selflessness and dedication to the long term health of librarianship that is rarely, if ever, matched.

Jim's service to the profession goes beyond these important mentoring initiatives. Over the years, Jim has contributed to the professional librarian community in Canada in numerous capacities: as a Councilor-at-Large and Treasurer on the Ontario College and University Library Association Council, as member and later Chair of the Canadian Association of University Teachers Librarians' Committee, and as a member of OCUFA Librarians' Committee. And twenty-eight years later, there is no sign that Jim is slowing down. Currently, he is the Chair of the 2013 OLA Super Conference Planning Team, an enormous undertaking involving the coordination of one of the largest professional librarian conferences in Canada. It is not surprising that Jim was recently honoured for these myriad contributions by receiving the 2011 OLA President's Award for Exceptional Achievement.

As with mentoring, the work of an academic liaison librarian is fundamentally about cultivating relationships. In this respect, Jim is a master of his craft. His letters of support from colleagues, mentees, and library school students go beyond simply documenting Jim's vast knowledge of library principles and practices but also, speak volumes about the ways in which Jim's mentorship impacted the course of their professional lives. A former student writes "the conversations I've had with Jim, both informally and as part of formal development activities, helped to prepare me for my current position as an academic librarian...and have made a lasting impact on my career." A former mentee, who in a befitting twist of fate, is now Jim's supervisor and an internationally recognized speaker in her own right, writes: "Jim's passion for libraries, as well as his thoughtful approach to professional practice and service, struck a chord with me and



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made me deeply appreciative of all the reasons why librarianship matters.” The Teaching and Academic Librarianship Awards Committee pays tribute to these reasons by honouring Jim Brett, a most deserving candidate, with this award.