

## Archivist Robert Vay—Mason’s “De Facto University Historian”—Makes History with the University Libraries’ First Distinguished Library Faculty Award

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By Mark Schwartz, communications and marketing officer, University Libraries

It seems appropriate that the library faculty member who has been referred to by his nominators as “the *de facto* university historian” and as “the archivist of the university” has been selected to make history as the first ever recipient of Mason’s Distinguished Library Faculty Award: the inaugural award goes to Mr. Robert (Bob) Vay, digital collections and exhibitions archivist, Special Collections & Archives.

“Bob was selected among outstanding nominees for the inauguration of this award,” says John Zenelis, university librarian and dean of libraries. “As we congratulate and thank Bob for his leadership, innovation, and collaborative spirit, we also look towards to other outstanding library faculty colleagues being recognized in future years with this award.” The criteria for the new award include exemplary and enduring professional performance, as well as consequential contributions within the University Libraries, the university, and the broader academic and scholarly community.

Professional colleagues outside of Mason and librarians, faculty, and staff within Mason nominated Vay for his skill in sharing of knowledge of Mason and Northern Virginia through his varied presentations, publications, and exhibitions. “Not only is his knowledge of Mason’s history expansive,” states Yvonne Carignan, head, Special Collections & Archives, “his flair for communicating the story of Mason to diverse audiences while employing interrelated media combine to make him a key resource in the Mason community.”

At the university, he remains a leading figure in three recent grant-supported library projects including *Reston at 50*, an originator in interactive archives including the web portal *George Mason University: A History*, and an active contributor to state-wide endeavors including the *Desegregation of Virginia* (or DOVE) project.



University Librarian and Dean of Libraries, John Zenelis; Bob Vay; Yvonne Carignan, Head, Special Collections & Archives; John Walsh, Associate University Librarian for Resources and Collection Management Services

“Through his enthusiasm—whether in person or reflected in his multi-faceted work—as he shares his extensive knowledge, Bob fully embodies the Libraries’ mission, vision and organizational values,” says Zenelis. In the words of one of his nominators, Vay is “a true Mason hero.” On Monday, April 21, University Provost Peter Sterns reiterated Vay’s status as a Mason hero as he handed him his award during the 2014 Celebration of Teaching.



Bob Vay with his wife, Amy, and daughter, Cassie.