

AMIA the association of moving image archivists

2002 Silver Light Award Winner: The Image Permanence Institute and its Director, James Reilly

IPI's hard work in assisting film archives with preservation issues has been accepted as a matter of fact, without, perhaps, the thanks and recognition IPI deserves from our community. The Institute is very deserving of the 2002 Silver Light Award.

James Reilly is one of the most accessible executives in this field. He is well known across archival associations worldwide, due not only to his fine reputation spread by word of mouth, but from his publications and his willing and enthusiastic participation in conferences, workshops, seminars, and small meetings. Not only does he have the knowledge based on years of research into film degradation and preservation technologies, but he is able to share it on whatever level is required, from simple, layman's terms to detailed, technical terminology. He is always very willing to assist archivists with their needs. He is friendly, funny, interested in the work archivists are doing, generous, and available, despite a travel schedule that might make others buckle. He pays great attention to others' needs, despite the demands of his administrative and research responsibilities. IPI's Acid Detection Strip has been a marvelously simple and inexpensive tool, accessible to all kinds of organizations with film in their possession, from major studio film vaults to small historical societies. The A-D Strip makes it possible to show managers and funding sources an obvious, visible sign of deterioration, something that often turns on the light for preservation funding. This technology has also assisted in manufacturing new types of vented film cans. The A-D Strip was also important enough to have been awarded an Oscar® in 1997--a Technical Achievement Award in the Laboratory category. Cited were James Reilly, Douglas Nishimura, and Monique Fischer „for the creation of A-D Strips, a diagnostic tool for the detection of the presence of vinegar syndrome in processed acetate-based motion picture film.

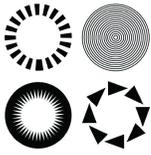
A free tool that IPI provides on their website is the downloadable Preservation Calculator. This tool allows anyone to type in their storage area's temperature and humidity numbers in order to calculate how long film will last under those particular conditions.

IPI created two field tests currently underway at locations around the country. One is Climate Notebook, a Windows®-based application for analyzing and organizing temperature and RH data from collection storage and display spaces in cultural institutions. The program is designed to extract useful preservation management information and report it in several different formats. The second field test began in 2000--the Preservation Environment Monitor (PEM), a battery-powered temperature- and RH-measuring device for monitoring the storage and display conditions in which collections of cultural materials are kept.

Education of the new generation of archivists is important to IPI. It offers an annual seminar on the preservation of photographic materials and on digitizing photographic collections at the George Eastman House. Also, James Reilly, Doug Nishimura, and Jean-Louis Bigourdan have all been lecturers at the L. Jeffrey Selznick School of Film Preservation courses, helping newcomers to the field of film preservation understand the hard work of preservation behind the fun of film history. Mr. Reilly has written extensively on the subject of photographic and film preservation, listed below, and these books are standards in the archival and museum fields.

Jim Reilly is one of several people providing regional work groups for holders of small audio-visual collections for the National Film Preservation Foundation under a grant from the Mellon Foundation. Guidelines and tools will then be developed to assist small media collections around the country.

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The Silver Light Award is made for substantial contributions to the field over an extended period, leadership in the field, work in professional societies or other professional activities, writings or publications, preservation and restoration projects, innovations that advance the cause of preservation, and patronage donated to archives or archival projects. IPI and James Reilly certainly fit all of those criteria.

For all of the years of hard work, the new technologies IPI has created and distributed, for IPI's long-term testing of housing, light damage, environments, pollution effects, and for its overall importance as a key member of the moving image archiving community; for Mr. Reilly's leadership at IPI and his accessibility to members of the archival field, IPI and James Reilly receive the 2002 Silver Light Award.