



Remembering John Riddick, NASIG's Founder and First President

Tina Feick, 2nd and 3rd NASIG President, Retired,
Former Director of Sales and Marketing, North America, HARRASSOWITZ

On March 13, 2017, John Riddick, 75, passed away at his home in Mt. Pleasant, Michigan. He was the retired head of Technical Services at Central Michigan University and he is recognized as the founder of NASIG. John was the co-chair (with Becky Lenzini) of the initial NASIG Study Group and the first NASIG President. Without John's leadership and determination, NASIG would not exist. He made it happen!

To honor John, the NASIG Executive Board has made a donation in John's name to the Central Michigan University library as well as written a letter to the family.

Susan Davis wrote a profile of John in the December 2012 *NASIG Newsletter* after it was announced that the Student Grant Awards would be named for John. He was instrumental in starting this annual award. As Katy Ginanni, 25th NASIG President, noted, "...his idea of creating the student awards was brilliant. Quite a few of those student winners entered the profession as serialists, and some have even had leadership positions in NASIG. At least two that I know of (Jill Emery and Angela Dresselhaus) have been elected President! What foresight on his part." (For further information about John and the background of the founding of NASIG, please see the [citations](#) at the end of this article.)

John was a very private person, and after his time as President of NASIG, he took a step back. He told me later that he felt reassured that the organization would carry on and so it has as NASIG moves into its 32nd year.

To hear from others about John, I contacted the past presidents of NASIG. Many did not have the opportunity to know him; three provided me with some insights and memories. All mentioned his drive, his personal approach, and especially his sense of humor and insisting that we have fun along the way. These three past presidents, as well as myself, were greatly influenced by John and he motivated us all to commit to the NASIG organization and to ensure its continuation into the future.

Mary Beth Clack, NASIG's 5th President (1990/1991), formerly at Harvard University, now retired, submitted the following:

"I think that John was remarkably consistent in how he worked with people. He'd listen carefully and respectfully, and then was able to relate to people, and engage them, in ways that resonated for each of them. He keyed into what was important to each of us, as well as what we valued as a professional group. The ability to do this, and then to mold policies and practices from this raw material of perceptions, commitments, values, and good will, is truly a singular gift. That is what I think about when I remember John – how his humor, warmth, and focus encourage us to be both generous and purposeful. We are all the better for it."

From retirement, previously at the University of Akron, Julia Gammon, NASIG's 10th President (1995/1996), provided her thoughts:

"I met John in the mid-1980s, in Columbus Ohio, when we were both on the OCLC Serials Control

System Users Group. We were both head of Acquisitions Departments, me at the University of Akron, and John at Central Michigan University. Following that first introduction, when he began recruiting for NASIG, I received a formal, printed, and mailed letter from him (John wrote lovely letters!) inviting me to the first NASIG conference at Bryn Mawr [College]. (When I retired a few years ago, I found John's letter in one of my files and was so impressed at the personal approach he took in forming NASIG.) Unfortunately, I was not able to attend that first conference, but managed to make the second one, in 1987, at Denison University in Granville, Ohio. NASIG was one of the highlights of my professional library career, and I owe that all to John for initially 'recruiting' me. I remember him to be such a kind, and modest man, always the ultimate professional librarian. His drive helped with the founding of the organization for which I am grateful."

Susan Davis, 12th NASIG President (1997/1998), wrote from her desk at the University at Buffalo:

"John believed in the power of conversation and a respectful exchange of ideas. Understanding another's perspective was key to resolving problems and what better way to hold a civilized conversation than with a glass of a favorite libation! In John's case, sherry was that beverage. One of John's many gifts to NASIG was the belief in the even playing field where everyone, regardless of industry segment or position, was an equal member.

On a more personal level, John had a way of enticing you into taking on whatever task, position or responsibility he placed before you. Somehow, he made you believe you were exactly right for the opportunity, and of course, that you were completely capable of accomplishing whatever he had in mind. I will always be grateful that he coaxed me into becoming NASIG's 1st treasurer."

Finally, my contribution, Tina Feick, retired from HARRASSOWITZ, 2nd and 3rd President (1987/1988 and 1988/1989), is below:

"John and I had a close collaboration starting in 1984 when he asked me to be the vice-chair of the initial Study Group. He wanted all sectors of the serials

information chain to be represented and I was to stand for the commercial sector – vendors and publishers - along with Becky Lenzini (Faxon) and John Tagler (Elsevier). I was then working for Blackwell's Periodicals Division covering North America and he wisely saw that to promote this new organization, he needed ambassadors traveling around the country. As I visited libraries, I dropped off brochures and evangelized about NASIG and the upcoming conference at Bryn Mawr College. And by the way, we had fun!

To me, John was a mentor who motivated me to be more and to do more on behalf of NASIG. I am also eternally grateful for the opportunity that he handed to me and for making a difference in my career and my life."

Our thanks go to John for having the insight and the drive to found this wonderful organization called NASIG.

Additional Information about John Riddick and the Founding of NASIG

Official obituary for John:

<http://www.charlesrlux.com/obituaries/John-F-Riddick?obid=1437431#/obituaryinfo>

Davis, Susan. "Profile of John Riddick." *NASIG Newsletter*, 27, no. 4 (December 2012), 1-3.

<http://tigerprints.clemson.edu/nasig/vol27/iss4/10/>

NASIG Executive Board. "Passing of John Riddick."

NASIG Blog (blog), April 6, 2017,

<https://nasig.wordpress.com/2017/04/06/passing-of-john-riddick/>

Feick, Tina. "NASIG Tenth Anniversary Conference Panel." *Serials Librarian*, 28, 1/2 (1996), 23-35, [doi: 10.1300/J123v28n01_05](https://doi.org/10.1300/J123v28n01_05).

[Panelists included Keith Courtney (Taylor and Francis), Tina Feick (Blackwell's), Becky Lenzini (Carl Corporation, formerly Faxon), John Merriman (founder of UKSG and Editor, *Serials*, formerly Blackwell's) and John Riddick (Central Michigan University).]

Annual Conference, Special 10th Anniversary Issue.

NASIG Newsletter, 10, no. 6 (1995),

<http://tigerprints.clemson.edu/nasig/vol10/iss6/1/>

[Includes background on NASIG's founding and a chronology of NASIG.]

"NASIG," *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*,

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/NASIG>

[Includes information about the start of NASIG.]