Current Comments

The ASIS Outstanding Information Science Teacher Award: Belver C. Griffith Wins the Third Award

On October 17, 1982, just prior to its annual meeting, the American Society for Information Science (ASIS) presented its Outstanding Information Science Teacher Award to Belver C. Griffith, School of Library and Information Science, Drexel University. This is the third year the award, which ISI® sponsors, was given.

Today's information science teachers are shaping the uniform curriculum that this young field needs if it is to become a well-defined discipline.[1] To encourage this maturation of the field, ISI approached ASIS in 1979 about establishing an annual award to encourage the teaching of information science. The award would honor an innovative, dedicated information science teacher. ASIS agreed, and ISI donated the $500 honorarium. In 1980, F. Wilfrid Lancaster, University of Illinois, won the first award.[2] Pauline Atherton Cochrane, Syracuse University, was the 1981 winner.[3]

Like the previous winners, Griffith was chosen from an outstanding group of candidates by an awards jury appointed by the ASIS education committee. The jury was chaired by Eileen Trauth, Boston University School of Management. I should mention that I was not consulted by the jury during its deliberations.

The award certificate presented to Griffith cites his contributions to education, and honors him "for his ability to stimulate thought and generate excitement about the field of information science, for his success in challenging his students to do difficult things, think hard thoughts, and to perform to their greatest potential, and for his leadership in the field as reflected in his significant research and his serving as mentor to many."

Griffith, incidentally, learned he had won the award just as he was departing for a honeymoon sailing cruise on the Chesapeake Bay. His wife, Carolyn Adams, is an MBA graduate from Drexel University. This is in addition to her career as a librarian.

We recently asked Griffith to comment on receiving the award. He told us: "It's hard to know exactly what you do that is right.... Although I can give good, set lectures, I don't feel that I'm always the clearest person in the class. I'm quite likely to come across an idea and just stand and think about it in dead silence." But, Griffith says, his strengths as a teacher are "knowledge of the field, empathy and concern for students, [and] enthusiasm...."[4]

In several of his courses he has adapted a traditional English teaching system called the tutorial method. In these courses, a student writes an essay, reads it to the class, and then defends it against criticism in open discussion.

Griffith says: "This is something that's very hard on people, but it proved to be very successful. I usually have a small

Belver C. Griffith

enough group of people in these courses so that students can read their essays, and discuss the various points of view, in a two- to three-hour period.... What I was trying to do, among the doctoral students especially, was to train people to defend their ideas."[4]

We also asked Griffith what he thought of awards as a social institution. He told us: "I think they're very important. They force a scientific society like ASIS, as a representative of a discipline, to negotiate among differing points of view to define its goals." He added that he was pleasantly surprised to be named recipient.

Griffith was born in Hampton, Virginia, in 1931. He speaks with what I always thought was a slight Southern accent. Griffith, though, denies this and says he is sometimes mistaken for a Canadian. He attributes that to the influx of Scots in certain parts of both Canada and Tidewater Virginia.

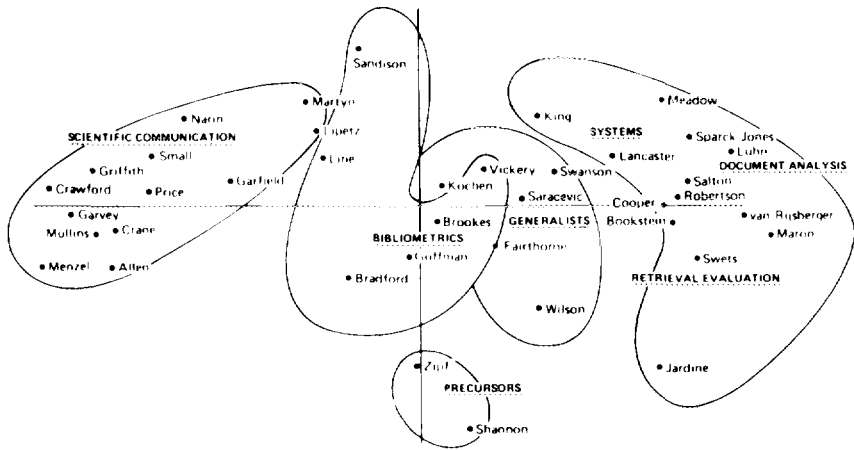Griffith received his bachelor's degree in psychology from the University of Virginia in 1951. He earned his PhD in experimental psychology at the University of Connecticut in 1957. He joined the Drexel University information science faculty in 1969, as full professor.

Griffith's early research dealt with linguistics and psychology.[5-7] His first involvement in information science overlapped with his training in psychology. In 1961, he became co-director and principal investigator of the National Science Foundation-sponsored Project on Scientific Information Exchange in Psychology. He also served as director of this American Psychological Association (APA) project from 1966 to 1969. The project attempted a broad study of communication, including psychologists' use of science journals, and the publication fate of psychology papers presented at various meetings. This research was done in collaboration with William D. Garvey, Johns Hopkins University.[8] Some of their papers have become information science classics.[9,10]

Griffith has published alone and with others many other influential studies of scientific communication. According to *Social Sciences Citation Index®* (*SSCI®*), his work has been cited over 500 times since 1966, when *SSCI* began. He and ISI's Henry Small collaborated on a two-part paper which extended Small's original work in co-citation mapping of specialties as a tool for sociologists of science.[11,12] With Nicholas C. Mullins, Indiana University, he published in *Science* a study of "invisible colleges."[13] With his colleague, M. Carl Drott, Drexel University, he has explored industrial journals,[14] Bradford's law as it relates to libraries,[15] and the aging of scientific literature.[16]

In developing refinements of co-citation analysis, Griffith and Howard D. White, Drexel University, have used cited authors rather than cited papers to create co-citation maps of core authors. They used online procedures applied to

Figure 1: A map of information science authors by Howard D. White and Belver C. Griffith.

the entire online files of *SCISEARCH®* and *Social SCISEARCH®*. Interestingly, White and Griffith created a co-cited author map for information science, based on *SSCI* data for 1972-1979. The map, reproduced in Figure 1, shows the five main author groups, or "schools," of information science.[17]

In addition to his papers, Griffith has also edited a book entitled *Key Papers in Information Science*.[18] He chose important papers on topics such as scientific communication, retrieval studies, and statistical studies of scientific literature. Some of them are older, highly cited papers, but many are more recent.

Griffith has served as consultant to a number of private firms and nonprofit government institutions. He has lectured extensively on his research. From 1975 to 1976, he was both honorary research fellow at University College, London, and visiting fellow at the University of Sussex. Recently, he was named visiting professor at the Royal Institute of Technology, Stockholm, for spring 1984.

Letters of nomination from Griffith's students testify to his effectiveness as a teacher. One of his former students, Toni Carbo Bearman, is now executive director of the National Commission on Libraries and Information Science, a federal agency which advises Congress on information policy. Bearman writes: "[Griffith] has a unique ability to inspire students to undertake and to stretch their minds into new areas.... [He] educates students in the original sense of leading the best out from the student rather than imposing thoughts or dicta from above.... He did not have to resort to gimmicky or flashy techniques to inspire thinking of the highest quality in his classes. Discussions in his seminars frequently became so lively and intense, even over the most seemingly esoteric topics, that they continued informally over beers after class...."[19] I imagine the latter testimonial cannot be surpassed.

The ASIS Outstanding Information Science Teacher Award is not the only award ISI sponsors. Since 1979, ISI and Annual Reviews, Inc., have been

sponsoring the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) James Murray Luck Award for Excellence in Scientific Reviewing.[20-23] The award is presented yearly by the NAS to honor outstanding authors of scientific reviews. It was established in honor of James Murray Luck, the founder of *Annual Reviews*. In April 1983, the fifth NAS award will be presented at the academy's annual meeting in Washington, DC.

ISI is also sponsoring two new fellowships given by the Association of College & Research Libraries (ACRL). The first is the Samuel Lazerow Fellowship for Outstanding Contributions to Acquisitions or Technical Services in an Academic or Research Library. The fellowship is intended to foster acquisitions or technical services by providing a practicing librarian with funds for research, travel, or writing. It is named after ISI's late senior vice president for administration. Sam, an innovator in library management, died in 1981.

The second award, the ACRL Doctoral Dissertation Fellowship, is for a doctoral student working on a dissertation in academic librarianship. Both fellowships carry a cash amount of $1,000. The winners will be announced at the American Library Association's annual conference in Los Angeles in June 1983. For information on the fellowships, write to Sandy Whiteley, ACRL, 50 East Huron Street, Chicago, Illinois 60611.

The Society for Social Studies of Science (4S) annually presents the John Desmond Bernal Prize for outstanding scholarly achievement in social studies of science.[24] ISI provides financial support for the $1,000 award. The first award, in 1981, went to Derek J. de Solla Price. In October 1982, the second Bernal Prize was presented to Robert K. Merton. I was delighted to be present. For information on 4S or the Bernal Prize, write to 4S President Arnold Thackray, Department of History and Sociology of Science, Edgar Fahs Smith Hall D6, 215 South 34th Street, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19104.

ISI and the Medical Library Association (MLA) are planning two new awards. One will honor MLA members for contributions to the delivery of health care information. The other will be a doctoral fellowship. The MLA is now drawing up criteria for the recipients, and their first presentation is planned for 1983.

We at ISI are gratified with the results of the Outstanding Information Science Teacher Award, and look forward to sponsoring the next award. ASIS will soon begin to solicit nominations for the 1983 award. For a copy of the award criteria, write to Samuel B. Beatty, Executive Director, ASIS, 1010 Sixteenth Street, NW, Washington, DC 20036.

* * * * *

My thanks to Thomas Marcinko and Amy Stone for their help in the preparation of this essay. © 1982 IS·

REFERENCES

1. **Garfield E.** Information science education—an ivory Tower of Babel? *Essays of an information scientist.* Philadelphia: ISI Press, 1981. Vol. 4. p. 494-502. (Reprinted from: *Current Contents* (22):5-13, 2 June 1980.)
2. --------------. The ASIS Outstanding Information Science Teacher Award: F. Wilfrid Lancaster is the first winner. *Current Contents* (1):5-7, 5 January 1981.
3. --------------. The ASIS Outstanding Information Science Teacher Award: Pauline Atherton Cochrane wins the second award. *Current Contents* (49):5-8, 7 December 1981.
4. **Griffith B C.** Telephone communication. 13 October 1982.

5. **Liberman A M, Harris K S, Hoffman H S & Griffith B C.** The discrimination of speech sounds within and across phoneme boundaries. *J. Exp. Psychol.* 54:358-68, 1957.
6. **Griffith B C, Spitz H H & Lipman R S.** Verbal mediation and concept formation in retarded and normal subjects. *J. Exp. Psychol.* 58:247-51, 1959.
7. **Goda S & Griffith B C.** Spoken language of adolescent retardates and its relation to intelligence, age, and anxiety. *Child Develop.* 33:489-98, 1962.
8. **Garvey W D & Griffith B C.** Scientific information exchange in psychology. *Science* 146:1655-9, 1964.
9. --------------------------------, Studies of social innovations in scientific communication in psychology. *Amer. Psychol.* 21:1019-36, 1966.
10. --------------------------------, Scientific communication as a social system. *Science* 157:1011-6, 1967.
11. **Small H & Griffith B C.** The structure of scientific literatures. I: identifying and graphing specialties. *Sci. Stud.* 4:17-40, 1974.
12. **Griffith B C, Small H, Stonehill J A & Dey S.** The structure of scientific literatures. II: toward a micro- and macrostructure of science. *Sci. Stud.* 4:339-65, 1974.
13. **Griffith B C & Mullins N C.** Coherent social groups in scientific change. *Science* 177:959-64, 1972.
14. **Drott M C, Bearman T C & Griffith B C.** The hidden literature: the scientific journals of industry. *Aslib Proc.* 27:376-84, 1975.
15. **Drott M C, Mancall J & Griffith B C.** Bradford's law and libraries: present applications—potential promise. *Aslib Proc.* 31:296-304, 1979.
16. **Griffith B C, Servi P N, Anker A L & Drott M C.** The aging of scientific literature: a citation analysis. *J. Doc.* 35:179-96, 1979.
17. **White H D & Griffith B C.** Author cocitation: a literature measure of intellectual structure. *J. Amer. Soc. Inform. Sci.* 32:163-71, 1981.
18. **Griffith B C,** ed. *Key papers in information science.* White Plains, NY: Knowledge Industry, 1980. 439 p.
19. **Bearman T C.** Personal communication. 20 October 1982.
20. **Garfield E.** The NAS James Murray Luck Award for Excellence in Scientific Reviewing: G. Alan Robison receives the first award for his work on cyclic AMP. *Essays of an information scientist.* Philadelphia: ISI Press, 1981. Vol. 4. p. 127-31. (Reprinted from: *Current Contents* (18):5-9, 30 April 1979.)
21. --------------, The 1980 NAS James Murray Luck Award for Excellence in Scientific Reviewing: Conyers Herring receives second award for his work in solid-state physics. *Essays of an information scientist.* Philadelphia: ISI Press, 1981. Vol. 4. p. 512-4. (Reprinted from: *Current Contents* (25):5-7, 23 June 1980.)
22. --------------, The 1981 NAS James Murray Luck Award for Excellence in Scientific Reviewing: John S. Chipman receives third award for his reviews in economics. *Current Contents* (18):5-8, 4 May 1981.
23. --------------, The 1982 NAS fourth J.M. Luck Award for Excellence in Scientific Reviewing goes to Victor McKusick for his mapping of the literature in human genetics. *Current Contents* (18):5-9, 3 May 1982.
24. --------------, J.D. Bernal—the sage of Cambridge. 4S award memorializes his contributions to the social studies of science. *Current Contents* (19):5-17, 10 May 1982.