

William J. Flynn: The 2012 Linton Godown Award Recipient

Jim Green and Kathy Annunziata Nicolaides

The stringent criteria of the Linton Godown Award require the nominee to have attained "...exceptional distinction in terms of producing a body of research which has been of benefit to the profession or demonstrating innovation which has created valid techniques or instrumentation." This year's recipient, Bill Flynn, has clearly demonstrated his award qualifications through a variety of different research projects which contribute significantly to our field.

Bill has been a document examiner for more than 44 years. He trained in the Philadelphia Police Crime Laboratory and the Pennsylvania State Police Crime Laboratory. From Philadelphia, Bill moved to Arizona and worked in their state crime lab from 1973 through 1991, where he retired as Supervisor of the Questioned Document unit. He has been in private practice since that time.

Bill is a Diplomate and past president of the American Board of Forensic Document Examiners, a founding member of the Southwestern Association of Forensic Document Examiners currently serving on its Board of Directors, and a member of both the American Academy of Forensic Sciences and ASQDE.

One example of the significant research Bill has completed is related to infrared light examinations. In 1992, Bill wrote "Light, Color & Filters," an

article which explained basic color and the theory behind various reactions of ink when viewed in infrared. In 1993, Bill and Gerry Richards co-authored, "Light, Color & Filters Revisited." These articles have continued to serve as references for document examiners.



Computer-generated documents pose unique problems and examination protocol. Bill has been a prominent figure in assisting examiners on an individual basis, as well as in group workshops. His research in the field was evident with training he provided during a workshop, co-conducted with Kathy Nicolaides, at the 2008 meeting in Asheville. The workshop, "Typography – Testing to Testimony" focused on the preparation of computer generated measuring grids. Training was provided for utilizing the grids to measure relative line spacing to verify insertion issues.

Another major research contribution by Bill to the profession is the development of a process to analyze electronically captured signatures. He de-

veloped a methodology to plot the raw data from a captured electronic signature in Excel. By doing this a document examiner is able to compare both the static and dynamic characteristics of the writing process. The process was groundbreaking because, for the first time, a document examiner was able to thoroughly evaluate an electronically captured signature, rather than make a feeble attempt to work with the distorted image commonly provided.

In October 2011, Bill Flynn's comprehensive research in the captured signature process was given scrutiny during his testimony at a Daubert hearing in a Mississippi Federal Court. The concerns presented to the court were successfully addressed by Mr. Flynn and his testimony was accepted. This is believed to be the first Daubert challenge related to electronic captured signatures and will likely be of great value to other document examiners following the protocol he has established.

Bill Flynn's research has been significant and practical to the work common to our profession. Congratulations to Bill on being one of the few recipients of the Linton Godown Award.