

# Roy A. Huber: Albert S. Osborn

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The life of a forensic document examiner is, by definition, a quest for excellence. Over the years, many ASQDE members have contributed to the growth and success of our profession but, more often than not, they receive little recognition for their efforts. In 1997, that began to change with the creation of the Albert S. Osborn Award of Excellence.

In a demanding field such as ours, superlative performance takes on special meaning. Consequently, recognition by ones peers for exceptional conduct must be beyond the ordinary. During the ASQDE's 1995 meeting, the Executive Committee decided the ASO Award of Excellence would only be bestowed to members who meet the following criteria:

- a. The recipient must be a living member in good standing of the American Society of Questioned Document Examiners and may be either a regular or life member at the time of the nomination.
- b. The recipient must have been active in the field of questioned document examination for a period of at least twenty-five years and must have been a member of the ASDDE for a period of at least twenty years.
- c. The award shall only be bestowed on persons who have attained exceptional distinction in terms of:
  - i. Cumulative activities, such as professional research or literary accomplishments which advance the field of questioned document examination, and
  - ii. Outstanding service to the Society over a long period of time, such service resulting in generally recognized and beneficial improvements in the Society.

The inaugural honoree of the ASO Award was the late James V. P. Conway. John Shimoda presented Mr. Conway with this prestigious award during a private ceremony at his home in Lafayette, California during February 2001.

The November 2002 issue of this Newsletter contained a request from President Sperry asking members to nominate anyone they felt would be worthy of this distinguished award.

**CITATION:** *Albert S. Osborn Award of EXCELLENCE Presented to Roy A. Huber August 27, 2003. Effective reasoning and the skilled use of the mind comes as a result of patient, sustained study and practice. Not to anyone does this priceless ability come as a total and free gift from on high. The final quality of the mind absolutely depends upon what is done with the mind; industry must be added even to the highest endowment.*  
**Albert S. Osborn**

After careful consideration, the Executive Committee unanimously decided to honour Life Member **Roy A. Huber** for the many contributions he made to this Society and our profession during his career.

After joining the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) in 1940, Roy Huber worked as a police constable at various detachments in the Province of

Saskatchewan. In 1949, he transferred to the Document Section of the RCMP's Regina Laboratory to commence a career that would span more than fifty years. Under the tutelage of senior document examiners Hugh Radcliffe and Chester Eaves, Roy quickly completed his training program and moved to Ottawa where he completed casework at the RCMP's eastern laboratory. He also found time to complete a Bachelor of Science (Chemistry) degree at Carleton University in 1959. Commissioned in 1963, Roy moved back to Regina with his family to assume command of the Regina laboratory. Six years later, he returned to the Ottawa laboratory and occupied various positions before being appointed Director of the RCMP's

Laboratory and Identification Services - a position he held until 1975 when he retired to operate a private practice in Ottawa.

R o y ' s reputation for putting critical thought into words has long been recognized. He has written and presented more than

30 papers including such titles as *Typist Identification* (1955), *Modern Trends in Counterfeiting* (1959), *The Production and Identification of Embossing Seals* (1964), *The Philosophy of Identification - Damn Liars and Experts* (1972), *The Quandary of "Qualified" Opinions* (1979), *A Systemic Approach to Questioned Document Examination* (1984), *The Uniqueness of Writing*

# Award of Excellence Recipient

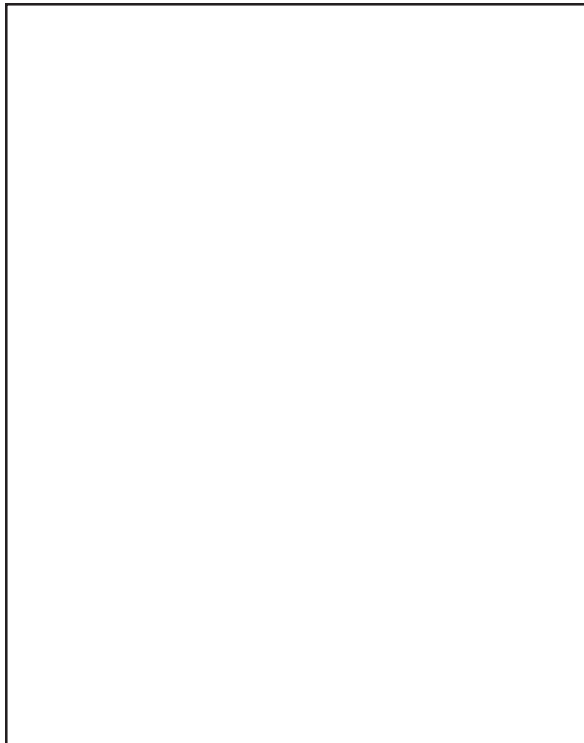
(1990), *Professionalism for the Document Examiner - Part III* (1995) and *The Heterogeneity of Handwriting* (2000) to name just a few. In 1999 he published a text book "*Handwriting Identification - Facts and Fundamentals*" - a subject that is often defined as the root or core of our profession. These works reflect Roy Huber's desire to promote thought on many subjects and encourage discourse on a wide scale.

Roy's interest in sharing information was responsible for two seminars hosted by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police during the 1950's. Seminar No. 4, simply titled *The Examination of Questioned Documents*, was held in Ottawa during May of 1956. This was followed two years later by Seminar No. 5, *Questioned Documents in Crime Detection*. Attendance at these gatherings was by invitation only and participants included such influential document examiners as David Purtell, Herbert Walter, Linton Godown, Jean Gayet and others. The proceedings of these seminars were eventually published largely through Roy Huber's persistent efforts.

Roy has been an active member of several organizations and honored societies. He attended meetings of the American Academy during the 1950's. Aided by Ordway Hilton, Clark Sellers and others, he helped establish its Questioned Documents Section. Roy was elected a *Fellow* of the Academy

in 1961 and served as Secretary of its Questioned Documents Section from 1962-63 and as Chair from 1963-64.

The Canadian Society of Forensic Sciences also benefitted from Roy's influence during its formative period. Roy joined the CSFS in 1954, almost



early enough to qualify as a charter member. He served on its Board of Directors for many years, as President from 1967-69 and more recently as Journal Editor from 1975-80. Roy was one of the first members to be elected a Fellow at the 1997 CSFS meeting in Regina.

Roy Huber was also one of the first document examiners to be certified by the American Board of Forensic Document Examiners. He received his

certificate in 1979 and later served as an ABFDE Director, Treasurer and Vice President.

The first ASQDE conference he attended was the 1955 meeting that was held in Houston. Invited by Clark Sellers, Roy presented his first ASQDE paper titled, *The Potentialities of the Blink Microscope Principle in Typewriting Comparisons*. Impressed by his early experiences, Roy joined the Society as a Provisional Member in 1961, wrote his examinations in 1963 and was elected a Regular Member during the 1964 conference. For over 40 years, Roy has regularly attended our annual conferences and missed only 2 meetings for reasons beyond his control. He served on its Board of Directors as Secretary, Vice President and President. Elected a Life Member in 2001, Roy continues to support the Society as a member of its Nominating and Journal Committees.

With great pleasure, President Sperry presented Roy Huber with the Albert S. Osborn Award of Excellence in recognition of his distinguished career and many contributions he made both to the ASQDE and the profession as a whole. During an emotional acceptance speech, Roy indicated how humbled he was and declared his gratitude to the Society. He also expressed his love and appreciation to Phyllis, his lovely wife of over 50 years, for her support in making many of his achievements possible. We congratulate Roy and give he and Phyllis our best wishes for health and happiness in the future.