2008 Librarian of the Year Citation

For his record of continued service to libraries and citizens of North Dakota and beyond for over 40 years and for his pivotal role in preserving the cultural heritage of an important ethnic group in the history of North Dakota, the North Dakota Library Association confers the 2008 Librarian of the Year Award to Michael M. Miller, Director and Bibliographer of the Germans from Russia Heritage Collection at the North Dakota State University Library.

Michael Miller has been a librarian at NDSU since 1967, and has been an active member of NDLA for 42 years. In 1978 he proposed the development of the Germans from Russia Heritage Collection. Building upon his own cultural heritage, he has dedicated his professional career to the preservation of the written, physical, and oral history of this major immigrant group in North Dakota.

Michael started with a small collection of donated books. Through the years, he has built the GRHC into a collection of thousands of items used by citizens and researchers in North Dakota and throughout the world. The Germans from Russia Heritage Collection, which contains materials in English, German, Russian, and French, is now one of the biggest, if not the biggest, scholarly resource on this cultural group.

Beyond books, Michael has sought the preservation of physical items to record the history of the Germans from Russia. He has partnered with a costume curator to preserve the textiles of this group. In 2005 Michael partnered with history faculty to launch the Dakota Memories Oral History Project. Through interviews with more than 150 individuals, the oral record of the Germans from Russia is being preserved before the memories of this generation are lost to future generations.

With the rich collection of resources at the GRHC on NDSU’s campus, Michael has engaged the larger community of users through innovative means. He has partnered with public broadcasting to reach a larger audience through video and audio. He has effectively used digital technologies to preserve records and make them accessible throughout the world. As one colleague writes, he “is an exemplar of the best of two worlds; the old North Dakota and the new North Dakota. He is a careful preservationist of much of our state’s cultural and social history, but he is also a pioneer who makes maximal use of web, video, and DVD technology, of partnerships with public media, and of cutting-edge historiographical practices such as oral history. He is a pioneer, if you will, in the living history of pioneers.”

Thus, for his continued record of exemplary work in the preservation of the cultural record of the Germans from Russia and for making that record accessible to citizens of North Dakota and the world, Michael M. Miller is hereby named the 2008 Librarian of the Year by the North Dakota Library Association.

Beth E. Postema, NDLA Past-President and Award Committee Chair
Marlene Anderson, Jeanne Narum, Ellen Kotrba, Award Committee Members