



Gary Strawn
MOUG Distinguished Service Award Recipient
Presented February 19, 2019

The Executive Board of the Music OCLC Users Group (MOUG) is honored to name Gary Strawn (Northwestern University Libraries) as the sixteenth recipient of MOUG's Distinguished Service Award. This award was established to recognize and honor those who have made significant professional contributions to music users of OCLC. The MOUG Executive Board selects recipients based on nominations received from the membership. The Board thanks Casey Mullin and Morris Levy for liberally contributing to this award letter.

Gary is well known in the broader cataloging community for his tireless efforts to develop tools that streamline the creation, enhancement, and manipulation of library metadata in the OCLC environment. An early instance of this is CLAAR, a program that ran alongside the NOTIS library management system and greatly assisted with authority control.

More recently, Gary was appointed Chair of the Program for Cooperative Cataloging Acceptable Headings Implementation Task Group in 2012. In that role, he developed specifications for the phased conversion of the LC-NACO Authority File to RDA compliance. As a result, over 800,000 authority records were algorithmically updated and enhanced, including many thousands of music name-title records.

Subsequent to his work for the PCC task group, Gary developed the Authority Toolkit. The Authority Toolkit facilitates the creation and enhancement of robust authority records of all kinds, increases discoverability of authority data by an order of magnitude, and drastically reduces the potential for human error. Gary's most recent accomplishment is the Music Toolkit, which employs an algorithm, developed in collaboration with the Music Library Association's Vocabularies Subcommittee, that generates faceted terms based on Library of Congress Subject Headings and coded data in MARC bibliographic records.

Those who know and have worked with Gary are quick to acknowledge his intelligence, strong work ethic, good humor, and generosity. D. J. Hoek, Associate University Librarian for Research & Engagement at Northwestern University Libraries, writes, "When I started working at Northwestern, I found Gary to be every bit as clever and helpful as CLAAR was, plus he was funny and knew a lot about music. In the years since, I've seen Gary again and again apply his smarts and energy to solving problems, operating in a perpetual state of productivity that, in turn, has made libraries—and those of us who work in libraries—more productive. While Gary's record of innovation and creativity is remarkable in itself, even more impressive is how freely he has shared his inventions and expertise." Tomoko Shibuya, Music Metadata Librarian at Northwestern University Libraries, notes that Gary "is open minded, passionate about his toolkits, and welcomes questions about his software and suggestions to improve them."

Gary has been a friend to technical services librarians for decades, and his collaborations with the music cataloging community are commendable. Although Gary is not a music specialist, his interest in music, indefatigable service ethic, and keen programmer's mind have inspired him to actions that have transformed the environment in which music catalogers now thrive. His efforts have saved the music cataloging community countless hours of effort. We are grateful to Gary for his time, ideas, and collaborative spirit.