

Geography in the Service of Government or Business Award Dr Joan Schwartz

Dr. Joan M. Schwartz has followed an unconventional career path for a Geographer (BA Hons. UofT 1973; MA UBC 1977; PhD Queen's 1998). Working in positions and fields outside the usual scope of Geography, she has bridged professional and disciplinary divides, bringing visual and archival concerns to the attention of historical and cultural geographers, and raising geographical concerns among archivists and photographers, artists, art historians, and social historians.



In 1977, she successfully challenged the hiring practices of the Government of Canada and took up a position as an archivist in the Photography Acquisition and Research Section of the then Public Archives of Canada. She went on to an exemplary career at the National Archives, receiving the National Archives of Canada 125th Anniversary Award for her contributions to both the institution and to the profession. Her career as an archivist was capped with the prestigious promotion, possible only through external peer-review, to the highest level for an archivist / historical researcher in the federal public service.

A well published and innovative scholar who habitually facilitates the research and learning of others, she has paved the way for further investigations and a deeper understanding of the power of visual images to mediate the experience of place. Her key theoretical interventions, drawing on her expertise as a geographer and her experience as an archivist and historian of photography, have greatly advanced the study of the relationship between photography and geography, and set new agendas for historical and critical analysis of visual archives. Arising from her doctoral research, her book, *Picturing Place: Photography and the Geographical Imagination* (IB Tauris, 2003), co-edited with James R. Ryan, was a pioneering effort to re-frame work on the relationship between photographic images and geographical imaginings. Bringing together prominent scholars and curators from a visual range of academic arenas, the collection focuses the attention of a broad, interdisciplinary readership on the power of photographs to shape notions of place. Favourably reviewed in such leading Geography journals as *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, the *Canadian Geographer*, *Gender, Place and Culture*, *Area*, and the *Journal of Historical Geography*, as well as in major journals in archival studies, photographic history, and history, it has become a definitive and oft-cited text, setting a new standard for work in this field.

In 2003, never having studied Art History, Dr. Schwartz was awarded a Queen's National Scholar position in the Department of Art at Queen's University, possibly the only geographer teaching in an Art History program in Canada. In her teaching, she has created courses in the history, theory, and criticism of photography that incorporate issues of space and place, include readings from the geographical literature, and highlight the role of photography in travel, exploration, and the construction of imaginative geographies.

Following an unusual career path, she has been able to contribute in a highly distinctive way to the profession of Geography, at the same time shaping scholarship and debate in cognate fields. For these reasons, she is a worthy candidate for the CAG Award for Geography in the Service of Government or Business.