

Presentation of the 2008 Leahy Award to Kenneth Thibodeau

October 19, 2008
Las Vegas, Nevada

Introductory Remarks Charles Dollar, Chair, 2008 Leahy Awards Committee

Good evening. I am Charles Dollar, Chair of the 2008 Emmett Leahy Award Committee.

For more than two decades, the Institute of Certified Records Managers has graciously included the presentation of the Emmett Leahy Award as part of its Annual Business Meeting. Through these years, the Committee has welcomed the opportunity to annually recognize a distinguished leader of our profession before this gathering of records management expertise and experience that the ICRM embodies. The Emmett Leahy Award Committee looks forward to continuing its association with the Institute of Certified Records Managers in 2009 and beyond.

The Emmett Leahy Award Committee is made up of the previous ten recipients of the Emmett Leahy Award. Tonight we have five members of the 2008 Emmett Leahy Award Committee present: Christine Ardern, Eugenia Brumm, James Coulson, Charles Dollar, and John Philips. Mary Robeke, Luciana Duranti, John McDonald, Bruce Miller, and Anne Thurston could not be with us.

As some of you already may know, in 2008 the Huron Consulting Group began underwriting the expenses associated with the Emmett Leahy Award. The 2008 Emmett Leahy Award Committee believes this support establishes a solid foundation for the Committee to continue recognizing individuals whose impact on the information and records management profession at the global level perpetuates the information and records management legacy of Emmett Leahy.

In addition to selection of the recipient of the 2008 Emmett Leahy Award, the Committee undertook an initiative to promote a greater awareness of the Emmett Leahy Award. One feature of this initiative is the design of an Emmett Leahy Award Logo that is being incorporated into the Emmett Leahy Award web site. The logo, which is displayed on the brochure in your seat, captures the global dimensions of the Emmett Leahy Award. Another feature of this initiative is the placement of advertising in the Information Management Journal and distribution of the Emmett Leahy Award brochure, which I just mentioned. Please note that the brochure displays information about the 2009 Emmett Leahy Award, including February 1, 2009 as the deadline for submission of nominations. More information about the nomination process, award selection criteria, and other background information is available at leahyaward.com.

The first Emmett Leahy Award was made in 1967 and except for the years 1981-1984 it has been presented annually since then. We have in attendance tonight several previous recipients of the Emmett Leahy Award: Bill Benedon, Fred Diers, Mark Langemo, Don Skuptsky, and Bob Williams. Incidentally, Bill Benedon is the 1968 recipient of the Emmitt Leahy Award.

As in previous years, the Emmett Leahy Award Committee continues its existence as an independent entity and the selection of the Emmett Leahy Award recipient is the exclusive responsibility of the Committee.

It is now my pleasure to turn to the important business at hand, the presentation of the 2008 Leahy Award.

Named after Emmet J. Leahy, the Emmett Leahy Award is presented annually to recognize an individual whose contributions and outstanding accomplishments have had a significant impact on the records and information management professions. It is differentiated from other awards in the following ways:

- Membership in a professional organization such as ARMA, the SAA, AIIM, or the ICA, among others, is meritorious but it is not a threshold requirement.
- Demonstration of service to a profession also is meritorious but it is not a differentiating requirement.
- Authorship of professional and presentations is commendable but it is not a threshold requirement.
- Original contributions that fundamentally moved the information and records management discipline in a direction that it might not otherwise have gone is a threshold requirement.

The Emmett Leahy Award Committee selected Ken Thibodeau, Director of the Electronic Records Archives Program at the National Archives and Records Administration, as the 38th recipient of the Emmett Leahy Award because of his contributions to the preservation of electronic records. A member and Fellow of the Society of American Archivists. Thibodeau has had major leadership responsibilities within the archival community, both nationally and internationally, in addressing the management and preservation of electronic records. Over the last decade he has written more than ten seminal articles and essays and made scores of presentations on the management and preservation of electronic records in professional conferences in a variety of other disciplines, including library and information science, museum studies, computer science, electronic engineering, statistics, natural science, and the humanities.

Ken Thibodeau had a major role in the development of DoD 5015.2 and conceptualization of ISO 14721, the Open Archives Information System. In conjunction with computer scientists and engineers at the San Diego Supercomputer Center he established a conceptual architecture for the persistent preservation of electronic records. This architecture included an archival system that is independent of its information technology infrastructure so that hardware or software components can be replaced with minimal impact on the system as a whole and negligible impact on the records preserved in it. All of this work culminated in the design, development, and successful roll out of the Electronic Records Archives (ERA) Program of the National Archives and Records Administration. The success of the initial deployment of ERA has enabled NARA to take on the challenge of ensuring the preservation of more than 100 Terabytes of electronic presidential records of George W. Bush. The Emmett Leahy Award Committee believes that Thibodeau's work has established a practical and technical basis for electronic records preservation that will persist far into the future.