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Introduction to the 2001 papers

The session titled “Reflections on Sixty Years of SECAC” at the 2001 annual meeting of the Southeastern College Art Conference, convened at the University of South Carolina, Columbia, was proposed with the intention of arranging a forum for loyal, longstanding members to reflect on aspects of their involvement in the organization. The proposal envisioned three or four individuals reviewing their efforts over the years on behalf of SECAC, and then presenting those recollections formally—and perhaps humorously—as prepared texts. A few minutes at the end of the session would remain to allow persons in the audience to respond and reminisce as well. Assuming the idea met with success, the proposal called for this year’s session to be merely the first of perhaps several such colloquia, with a long-range goal of collecting written versions of all the papers read at these occasional sessions into a brief and somewhat idiosyncratic history of the organization, composed by the members themselves.

This year three respected individuals rose to the occasion and delivered superb, very different papers. Christina Updike provided a concise yet full report of the numerous contributions to SECAC made over the last quarter-century by the Visual Resources Curators affiliate group, which she was instrumental in forming. Anne Thomas reviewed the accomplishments of the administrative staff position that she has filled so ably for many years, integrating into her narrative recollections of her personal involvement in SECAC and that of her late husband, one of the organization’s founders. Martha Caldwell spoke about a few of the many SECAC meetings she has attended since her graduate-school days, singling out two for special comment and mentioning as well certain important organizational changes that she helped put into place through her innovative leadership. In various ways all three speakers referred to the companionship and mutual support that have brought them—and many others—back to the annual meetings repeatedly, and all three predicted continued vitality for the Southeastern College Art Conference in the twenty-first century. In conclusion, Christina Updike, Anne Thomas, and Martha Caldwell together set a high standard for participants in future “Reflections” sessions; potential speakers are urged to step forward and share with all of us their thoughts.