

Bentley receives Archival and Preservation Achievement Award

By Angela Gismondi

King's Deputy Chief Librarian Sharon Bentley has been awarded the Ontario Library Association's (OLA) Archival and Preservation Achievement Award.

Through the OLA Archival and Pr



ervation Achievement Award, The Ontario Library Association recognizes Ontario-based individuals and institutions who have made significant achievements on a personal or institutional level in the field of preservation and/or conservation for library and/or archival materials.

The award was presented to Bentley at the Feb. 24 King council meeting by Mayor Steve Pellegrini.

"I am very grateful to be recognized for my contribution in the area of preservation of local history of King Township," stated Bentley. "It gives me great satisfaction to know that the King Township Public Library has played a significant role in capturing and preserving the local history of the Township and surrounding area. I am particularly proud of how the library was able to leverage technological advancements to ensure this information is widely accessible to all through the library website."

Bentley was nominated for the award by Murray McCabe, the former CEO of King Township Public Library (KTPL). McCabe is now the chief librarian for Wellington County.

In his submission to the OLA, McCabe highlighted Bentley's efforts to develop strong local partnerships over her well-established career.

"Over the last 15 to 20 years Ms. Bentley has been responsible for developing an important local history collection," reads McCabe's letter. "She has worked tirelessly to promote, preserve and digitize documents. Her work has attracted considerable attention and admiration from the general public, educators, authors and historians alike."

Bentley has also become a noted authority on local history in the township and "developed a deep bond with the community," McCabe added.

"This relationship has encouraged many members of the public to share their most treasured family histories with their library and their community," McCabe wrote. "Her expertise with new technology has allowed her to safeguard historical materials by creating a bank of digitized historical information that is easily accessible to all. I cannot think of a finer example of a senior library manager that has contributed so much over such a significant period to safeguard and preserve information for generations to come." Rona O'Banion, KTPL's CEO, endorsed Bentley for the award.

"Ms. Bentley is highly regarded as a local history expert due to her significant contribution in the area of local history in King Township and neighbouring municipalities in Ontario," reads O'Banion's endorsement letter. "After more than 30 years at King Township Public Library, Ms. Bentley is responsible not only for establishing, cataloguing and indexing an extensive archival collection, but she has also leveraged technical innovations to ensure this collection will be digitally preserved and easily accessible from anywhere with an Internet connection."

Bentley has championed and contributed to a number of projects over the years including Timeless King Online, an archival database of materials which supports the King Township Archives; the digital record of Walter Rolling, one of Ontario's first black educators who taught in King; a Remembrance Day digital collection which features the stories of local veterans; digital versions of the Women's Institute minute books and albums; the digitization of two significant local history books "The Early Settlements of King Township" and the Album of Oldies and the King Township Public Library website.