The Marie Tremaine Medal / Médaille Marie Tremaine commissioned from Canadian medallist Dora de Péder-y-Hunt.
The Marie Tremaine Medal
La Médaille Marie Tremaine

The Marie Tremaine Medal is awarded annually by the Bibliographical Society of Canada / Société bibliographique du Canada for outstanding service to Canadian bibliography and for distinguished publication in either English or French in that field, preferably to a member of the Society or to a Canadian citizen. Members of the Council of the Society are not eligible for the award while they are in office. The Tremaine Medal Committee invites nominations for this award.

Previous recipients of the Tremaine Medal have been Marie Tremaine, 1970; John Hare and Jean-Pierre Wallot, 1973; Bruce Braden Peel, 1975; William F.E. Morley, 1977; Reginald Eyre Watters, 1979; Olga Bernice Bishop, 1981; Alan F.J. Artibise, 1983; and Douglas Grant Lochhead, 1985.

La Société bibliographique du Canada / Bibliographical Society of Canada attribue la Médaille Marie Tremaine tous les ans pour services exceptionnels rendus à la cause de la bibliographie canadienne et pour des publications de haute qualité dans ce domaine, soit en français, soit en anglais, préférence étant accordée aux membres de la Société et aux citoyens canadiens. Les membres du Conseil de la Société ne sont pas admissibles pendant les années de leur mandat. La Comité de sélection de la Médaille Marie Tremaine sollicite des candidatures pour le concours.


THE 1987 TREMAINE MEDAL
At the Annual Meeting of the Bibliographical Society of Canada / Société bibliographique du Canada on 10 June 1987, in Vancouver, B.C., Agnes Cecilia O’Dea was awarded the 1987 Marie Tremaine Medal. The following citation was read by Gloria M. Strathern on behalf of the Society:

Madam President, fellow members and friends of the Bibliographical Soci-
ety of Canada, I have the honour to present the 1987 Marie Tremaine Medal to Agnes Cecilia O'Dea on the unanimous recommendation of the Tremaine Medal Committee approved by Council. Our Society established the medal in 1969 to recognize outstanding service to Canadian bibliography and for distinguished publication in that field; the first recipient of the award was Dr. Tremaine in 1970.

A friend and colleague of Marie Tremaine and a long-time member of our Society, Agnes O'Dea began her association with Newfoundland at birth, joining a family distinguished for public service and leadership in preserving Newfoundland history and tradition. Her professional career began in 1932 when she obtained a Diploma in Library Science from the University of Toronto. She returned to Newfoundland as its first professional librarian to participate in the establishment of the Gosling Memorial Library, the first government-supported public library in St. John's.

At that time, publications relating to Newfoundland were scattered throughout those European countries with historical links, while local resources had been severely depleted through the two fires which all but destroyed St. John's in the nineteenth century. A nucleus for a historical collection was provided through the Legislative Library materials and the private collection of William Gilbert Gosling, the first Mayor of St. John's. On this basis, Miss O'Dea began to compile her bibliography of Newfoundland, documenting the rich history of her native soil from the Norse Sagas of the tenth century onwards.

Work was suspended in 1939 when Miss O'Dea returned to Toronto to obtain a Bachelor of Library Science degree, then to take up a position with the Toronto Public Library and later with the Ontario Research Foundation. Miss O'Dea returned to Newfoundland in 1952 to the Memorial College Library, now the Queen Elizabeth II Library of the Memorial University of Newfoundland. Her work in the exile years had honed her research skills and bibliographical expertise.

In 1955, the bibliography of Newfoundland again became a priority when Miss O'Dea became Research Librarian with the Memorial archives. After the archives were transferred to provincial jurisdiction, Miss O'Dea returned to the Memorial Library and, in 1965, established the Centre for Newfoundland Studies with a mandate to build a research collection. At her retirement some ten years later, the Centre's resources had grown from a modest collection of 40 volumes to a splendid resource of 20,000 books, films, maps, pamphlets, and periodical articles.

The card file of the bibliography was copied by the National Library of Canada in 1960 to serve as a resource for scholars working on Newfoundland studies. The Bibliography of Newfoundland was published by the University of Toronto Press in two stout volumes last year. This publica-
tation is only a partial record of Miss O'Dea's bibliographical odyssey. Excluded are periodical articles, an extensive file of which is maintained at the Centre for Newfoundland Studies.

The Bibliography of Newfoundland was compiled without the benefit of the retrospective national bibliographies, union catalogues, and major library catalogues that have appeared since. We recognize that we still need bibliographical studies of special subjects, including regional bibliographies, organized that they provide a guide to the literature and illuminate relationships among disparate publications, so that new knowledge will result. Miss O'Dea, assisted by the skilled editing of Anne Alexander, has done this for Newfoundland.

The nineteenth-century poetess, Henrietta Prescott, wrote of Newfoundland 'our lot hath fallen in a goodly place.' Thanks to Agnes O'Dea that goodly place is now accessible to all areas of scholarship involving Newfoundland publications. Bibliographical studies of Canadian interests have many strands, and our society encourages and recognizes major contributions to the national record. Miss O'Dea's work has been acknowledged elsewhere: she received the Canadian Historical Society's Certificate of Merit in 1976, the Newfoundland Historical Society's Heritage Award in 1977, and the honorary degree of Doctor of Laws from Memorial University of Newfoundland in May of this year. Now this Society honours Agnes O'Dea for her significant contribution to the documentation of our nation's history. It is a great pleasure to present to her the 1987 Marie Tremaine Medal on behalf of the Society.

The following response was made by Agnes C. O'Dea:

Ms. Strathern, Madame President, and fellow members of this Society: I certainly never expected to walk in the wake of those great Canadian bibliographers who have preceded me and who have been the recipients of this beautiful medal. Thank you so much for this great honour.

I knew, admired, and was inspired by Marie Tremaine when, like Doug Lochhead, I worked at the Toronto Public Library in the 1940s. Marie, bless her, finished her Canadiana before the Toronto Public Library ever thought of collecting Newfoundlandia, and she was compiling her Canadian Imprints just around the time of our Union with Canada, otherwise, I would not be here today, for with her tremendous drive and her very high standards, I'm sure she would have covered the field.

I have been fortunate in so many ways. I was lucky to have been in Newfoundland and to be involved in a number of 'firsts' relating to books and libraries. The compilation of my preliminary list coincided, fortuitously, with the advent of photocopying, making it possible for me to build
the Newfoundland Collection at Memorial. And it was my good fortune to have Anne Alexander around to work for me in 1978 and in 1981 to take on the responsibility for the final editing of the bibliography. She kept in constant touch but spared me the very arduous duties of those last miles – most of you know the labour such a publication involves. After a long haul, I doubt if I would have had the fortitude to carry on, and I wish to say how grateful I am and how fortunate I was to be able to rely on her competence and her cheerful enthusiasm. She is now living in England, or she would be here with us today.

I owe my heartfelt thanks to Miss Jean Houston of the University of Toronto Press for her advice, assistance, and encouragement when the Press became interested in publishing the ‘bib’ in 1976, and to Mr. Gerald Hallowell, who saw it through to its completion.

Another thing I want to mention is how much the Bibliographical Society of Canada has meant to me all these years. Most bibliographical work is a side-line occupation, like moonlighting, for usually the bibliographer is holding down a major position, as educator, collector, or librarian, at the same time. We bibliographers owe a multiplicity of debts to others and make many friends along the way, but a lot of our work is done in solitude, in quest of the elusive. It has been a constant source of comfort and inspiration to be one of you, and to know that you, too, feel all these bibliographical endeavours worthwhile.

When Newfoundland joined Canada in 1949, a sense of identity emerged as never before. Newfoundlanders became rabid Newfoundlanders – ‘I’m a Newfoundlander, not a Canadian,’ some would cry – and we began to take pride in our heritage, in our long and continual struggle for survival, and in the literature which tells our long and interesting story. I consider myself most fortunate and honoured to have had the opportunity to contribute to the mosaic of Canadiana and I thank you most sincerely for honouring Newfoundland, Memorial University, Anne Alexander, the University of Toronto Press, and for presenting me this day with the Tremaine Medal, which I shall always treasure.