

## **Nomination Statement 2021 IAS Career Achievement Award – Dr. Duane Esarey**

With a career extending over 40 years in length, it is difficult to capture and summarize the depth of contributions to Illinois archaeology that Dr. Duane Esarey has made. An extensive field, publication, and administrative record of service are a professional tour de force of accomplishments, and his research interests and contributions span nearly the entire archaeological record of the Midwest. From publications ranging on chert sources to contact period interactions, coupled with a decades long service record at the Illinois State Museum, and years of practical boots on the ground experience, Duane exemplifies the contributions that we believe are deserving of the IAS Career Achievement Award.

Beginning in 1977, Duane spent six years involved in intensive work in western Illinois and the Central Illinois River Valley including leading several years of fieldwork at the immensely important Orendorf site. From there he spent the next 21 years at the Dickson Mounds Museum as Collections Manager and Assistant Curator, successfully shepherding the Museum through a period of profound change during the closure of the burial exhibits and redesign of interpretive displays. Through his thoughtful and forward looking vision, many of these displays are still standing and have passed the test of time in their relevance and content. Except for a brief stint in North Carolina to pursue his PhD (awarded the Manning Outstanding Dissertation in Anthropology 2013), Duane's entire career has been devoted to understanding and preserving the Illinois archaeological record. Well over 100 publications and professional papers attest to these efforts.

His administrative accomplishments and public service record are notably impressive as well. He was the founding editor of the Illinois Antiquity journal (1991) as well as the founding professional advisor for the Illinois Valley Archaeological Society Chapter (1987) of the IAAA; both of which still continue to the present. He has served on the Board of Directors for the IAS and as an invited member of the Nature Conservancy's Emiquon Advisory Council. His efforts on behalf of the history, research, and establishment of the Emiquon Preserve also bear noting. During his five-plus year tenure with the Illinois State Archaeological Survey, he was tasked as Assistant Director with providing oversight and program implementation of one of the largest archaeological cultural resource programs in the U.S., including direct oversight of the central office and five field stations of the statewide Illinois Department of Transportation archaeological survey, ISAS Special Projects reporting section, and most notably the IDOT New Mississippi River Bridge analysis and report portion of the massive ten-year long ISAS archaeological mitigation effort, at the time the largest archaeological excavation in the US. He also served as PI of the five-year Cook County Forest Preserves program. Most recently, his steady administrative hand and experience proved invaluable during the change of leadership at the Illinois State Archaeological Survey.

In 2019 Duane returned "home" to his roots to serve as the Director of the Dickson Mounds Museum. During his short tenure there he has worked to reinvigorate the Museum by strengthening ties with the local community, Emiquon Preserve, and Native American groups with historical and cultural ties to the region.

Duane's career achievements and contributions stand toe-to-toe with those other luminary individuals who have been awarded the IAS Career Achievement Award in recent decades. It is for these reasons that we are honored to nominate Duane for recognition of his service and contributions to Illinois Archaeology.

Nomination prepared by:  
Thomas Loebel, PhD, RPA  
ISAS Assistant Director