

It is with the utmost pleasure that the North American Branch of the International Arthurian Society presents its Grail award for a lifetime of achievement and service to Arthurian Studies to Joan Tasker Grimbert. This exceptional commendation was created in 2014 specifically to honor Norris J. Lacy for his extraordinary contribution to our field and to the Society, and it has been awarded only once since, last in 2021 to Bonnie Wheeler. The Grail Award for Lifetime Service to Arthurian Studies, like its namesake, the Holy Grail, only reveals itself to the most worthy. Joan Grimbert, you have been found to be most worthy.

Joan Grimbert's publications have been important references and inspirations for generations of Arthurian scholars. Her first book, which appeared in 1988, was pioneering; "*Yvain*" dans le miroir: une poétique de la réflexion dans le "*Chevalier au lion*" de Chrétien de Troyes [Yvain in the Mirror; a Poetic of Reflection in *The Knight of the Lion* by Chrétien de Troyes] asked us to look at Chrétien's method of establishing meaning in his romances in a new way and it remains perhaps the most significant monograph written on the Yvain material of the last 40 years. Among Joan's other publications that we, her colleagues in Arthurian Studies, have benefitted from most greatly are *Tristan and Isolde: A Casebook*, which she edited and published in 1995, and the 2005 volume that she co-edited with Norris Lacy, *A Companion to Chrétien de Troyes*. And Joan's scholarly activity has not been limited to conventional criticism on medieval texts, but rather she has been quite adventurous, bold, and even pathbreaking, engaging in other types scholarship that have become increasingly important in especially North American Arthurian scholarship. Thus, she entered the arena of translating Arthurian romances with her 2011 *Chrétien de Troyes in Prose: The Burgundian Erec and Cligés*, which she co-translated and co-presented with Carol Chase. And Joan was among the first Arthurian scholars whose work centered around philology and medieval textual criticism to see the value in working

simultaneously on contemporary interpretations of the Matter of Britain. With her essays on medieval-themed films, especially those inspired by the Tristan and Isolde legend, Joan has encouraged so many of us to avoid the narrow and to expand our research focus and our appreciation of the Matter of Britain from its beginnings to the very present. Indeed, Joan has served as an example of what an Arthurian scholar should strive to be.

But the Grail award is not solely, or even primarily, about research accomplishments, but rather it is a recognition of what an individual has done to forward our field and support the people within it. Joan Grimbart has a most distinguished record of service to our profession and our beloved field of Arthurian Studies. She once told a younger colleague who was about to become the NAB secretary-treasurer what a former branch president, Hans Runte, told her; namely, as secretary-treasurer in our organization, you will be the one who actually runs the branch. And our branch had the fortune of having Joan as a guiding force when she was, in fact, branch secretary-treasurer from 1994 to 2000. And Joan's term as branch secretary-treasurer was followed up by an almost decade-long term, from 2002-2010, as the International Treasurer of the IAS. In 2011, Joan then became the president of our branch, and it was during her term, from 2011-2014, that so many of the practices were initiated that have allowed our branch to be so vibrant and even to remain a growing organization now, ten years later. We mention here only one; namely, making branch membership free for graduate students, something that cemented the branch's reputation as being welcoming of younger colleagues and which has permitted us to become an organization that fosters colleagues at every stage of their careers.

For these reasons, the 2023 Grail Lifetime Achievement Award for Exceptional Service to the International Arthurian Society is presented to Joan Tasker Grimbart.

Joseph M. Sullivan, President IAS-NAB