

January, 2025

Charles Ennis, Chair
RASC Awards Committee

Dear Charles and Awards Committee Members,

On behalf of the RASC Halifax Centre, we hereby nominate Paul Gray for the designation *Fellow of The Royal Astronomical Society of Canada (FRASC)*. The Fellow of the RASC award is intended to be the Society's most senior award and the highest honour the Society can pay to a member. The service and contributions to the Society must have had a significant positive impact on the work of the Society over an extended period beyond that of the Service Award, and they must have contributed to the Society's success in attaining its stated objectives, mission, and vision.

Since the age of fifteen, when he first became a member, Paul Gray has been giving freely of his time and ever-growing expertise in many ways, to further the objectives of the RASC. We believe that Paul Gray more than qualifies for the Fellow of the RASC (FRASC) Award and offer the following information in support of our nomination.

Paul, a technologist with the Municipality of Kings County, resides in South Greenwood where he is an avid observer and astro-imager. He received three RASC Observing Certificates – *Messier Catalogue* (1994), *Finest NGC Objects* (2001), and *Explore the Universe* (2016).

He became a member of the RASC Halifax Centre in January 1988. Paul is a natural leader and an inspiring mentor to novice and experienced observers alike, including his own children. Two at age 10 were recognized internationally for their discoveries of supernovae. He attended the international Starmus Festival three times: in Norway, Canary Islands, and Switzerland with his family. Each time he informally acted as a worthy ambassador for the RASC.

Paul gave substantial and exemplary service in many roles both at the Centre and national level and consequently received the RASC Service Award in 2016. The original submission for Paul's Service Award nomination which includes his activity prior to 2016 is attached.

Service to the RASC Halifax Centre:

In the RASC Halifax Centre, Paul served as a director in 1997 and again in 2019, its President 2015-2018, and its Vice-President in 2020. He has served since 2015 on the Nova East Planning Committee (our Centre's annual star party) where at various times he has also been a speaker, lead organizer of the barbecue and the Astronomer's Breakfast, and liaison with Smileys Provincial Park where the event is still being held.

He is very knowledgeable of our Centre's history, has a vision of what it can become, and takes pride in what has been accomplished to date. He and Dr. Roy Bishop, FRASC, presented Roy's compiled 1951-2019 history of our Centre at our January 2015 member meeting. His love of observational astronomy is evidenced by the many presentations he has made at Member and Public meetings, including this sample of talks since 2016:

- 2016: "The Great American Eclipse in August 2017"
- 2017: "How to Clean Optics"; "Family Trip Travelog" (trip to 2017 Solar Eclipse)
- 2018 (at RASC Halifax Centre AGM): "The Roar of the Draconids!"
- 2019: "Dark Nebulae in New Light"
- 2020: "Meteors"; "How to Observe and record variable star observations"; "The RASC Calendar – Front to Back and Back to Front" (at RASC Halifax Centre AGM)
- 2024: "Solar Eclipse 2024: where best to view it, things to consider"; "Member Eclipse Stories" (his trip to watch the eclipse with New Brunswick Centre friends)

He has been actively involved with our Centre's St. Croix Observatory (SCO) since its conception. In 1996, he drew the site plot after an exhaustive day of surveying the site and was involved in the clearing of the land and construction of the buildings prior to its official opening on June 21, 1997. Over the years, he has assisted with site and building maintenance and, despite the distance from home, has also been present for the Annual SCO BBQ and occasionally for member observing nights.

Paul volunteers at the annual *Dark-Sky Weekend (DSW)* hosted by Kejimikujik National Park and National Historic Site (the Park's most popular outreach program) and has been involved in the DSW planning and implementation.

Service to the RASC New Brunswick Centre:

He was an active member with the RASC New Brunswick Centre (2004-2011). He led and coordinated By-Law revisions to have the Moncton Centre name changed to New Brunswick Centre – Centre du Nouveau Brunswick. He also served as Editor of their newsletter *Horizon* 2008-2010. He was the National Council Representative for New Brunswick Centre. He also served on their Council for four years. While there, he successfully led efforts to achieve Dark-Sky Preserve (DSP) designation for both Mount Carleton Provincial & Kouchibouguac National Park (2009) and Fundy National Park (2011). He promoted and organized their star parties at Mactaquac Provincial Park.

Service to the RASC

Paul has always been a strong supporter of the RASC. His interest in observing is exemplified in his RASC national involvement for more than two decades. He was the Editor of the *RASC Observer's Calendar* in 2012-2022. With a special interest in E.E. Barnard's Dark Nebulae, he has contributed the section *Dark Nebulae* in the *RASC Observer's Handbook* since 2004 – 22 editions! He and co-author Don Kelly had their article regarding New Brunswick Centre's grant report published in JRASC in the June 2008 edition.

In addition to contributions to the Society's publications, he took on administrative roles as outlined in his Service Award nomination, serving as a Board Director and as a member of the Board Pilot Committee, acting as the liaison to the Observing Committee then chairing it, and serving on several committees (Observing, Publications). In 2013, he served on the RASC Board of Directors.

While in New Brunswick, he served as Chair of the 2010 RASC New Brunswick GA Committee where his drive and experience was responsible for the highly successful GA. His energy and drive were shown again when he served on the GA Advisory Group and acted as Treasurer for the 2015 Halifax GA.

Summary

For almost four decades, Paul has been an educator to many RASC members and non-members, a mentor to youth interested in astronomy and to novice amateur astronomers and a firm believer in the goals and mission of the RASC.

Instead of promoting just the better-known aspects of astronomy, he chose to focus on meteors and meteor showers, planets, and dark nebula – to have an “oh wow” moment watching a fireworks-like display, to observe changing planetary appearance through the seasons (and their moons), and the latter to inspire members to look for, to understand, and to be in awe of these supposed empty spaces in our night skies.

We the undersigned, nominate Paul Gray for the designation *Fellow of The Royal Astronomical Society of Canada (FRASC)*. The RASC Halifax Centre is very proud to have him as one of our members.

Respectfully Submitted,

Judy Black, Secretary, RASC Halifax Centre
Mary Lou Whitehorne, FRASC

James Edgar, FRASC / Editor Observer's Handbook / Associate Member RASC Halifax Centre
Dave Chapman, FRASC
Patrick Kelly, FRASC
Board of Directors, RASC Halifax Centre

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Nomination for 2016 Service Award

November 27, 2015

Glenn Hawley, Chair
RASC Awards Committee

Dear Glenn & Awards Committee members;

On behalf of the Halifax Centre, we hereby nominate Paul Gray for the 2016 Service Award. The Service Award is a major award of the Society given to a member in recognition of outstanding service of a well-defined nature, rendered over an extended period of time, where such service has had a major impact on the work of the Society and/or of a Centre of the Society. Such service should have had a major, constructive impact on the life and vitality of the Society and would involve a very substantial and continued commitment on the part of the nominee.

Paul Gray joined the Halifax Centre of the RASC in 1988 as a teenager. During his early years as a member, he served on the Centre's executive as Observing Chairman and as a Councilor. He was actively involved in most Centre initiatives and was an enthusiastic observer.

In 1998 Paul moved to the United States for work, interrupting his RASC involvement, but becoming an active member of the Delmarva Stargazers for four years, until 2002. In 2003 he returned to Canada and again took up RASC membership in the Halifax Centre in 2003, then in the Moncton Centre in 2004. He has maintained an active role in the Society ever since.

A brief summary of his Moncton (now the New Brunswick) Centre contributions include the following:

- 1st Vice President 2005-2006
- New Brunswick Centre President 2007-2008
- Chair of the GA 2010 Committee where his drive and experience was responsible for a highly successful GA in a relatively new RASC Centre.
- NB Centre newsletter: Paul served as printer, distributor, and editor, transforming it from print to electronic format
- He led and coordinated challenging By-Law revisions to change Moncton Centre's name to the New Brunswick Centre - Centre du Nouveau-Brunswick.
- He was instrumental in starting the Centre's first annual star party at Mactaquac Provincial Park in 2005.
- He was active in promoting and running NB Centre star parties for several years at Fundy National Park and at Mount Carleton Provincial Park.
- Paul led and coordinated the effort to achieve the Dark Sky Preserve designation for both Mount Carleton Provincial and Kouchibouguac National Parks in 2009 and was involved in the designation process for Fundy National Park in 2011.

But he did not restrict his contributions to the Centre level! At the national level, Paul Gray's contributions include, but are not limited to, the following:

- National representative for the NB Centre
- Board pilot committee member 2007

- Member of the RASC's first board directors 2013-2014
- National Observing Committee Chair 2008 - 2010
- National Observing Committee member 2013-2014
- Observer's Calendar editor for four years, from 2012 – 2016
- Publications Committee member 2012-2013
- GA advisory working group 2012-2014
- Contributor to the Observer's Handbook (Dark Nebula) 2004 to 2016 - 13 editions

Paul Gray returned to the Halifax Centre in 2012 and has been an active member ever since. He has most recently been the treasurer of the 2015 GA, and is currently in his second term as the Centre's president.

Paul Gray's energy, commitment and enthusiasm contributed enormously to the growth and strength of the New Brunswick Centre (he put it on the map, so to speak). Paul is a natural leader. He inspires others to action. He encourages people and instills a sense of fun and confidence in others, enabling them to accomplish a variety of personal astronomical objectives, be they observing programs or in Centre-based management.

As chair of the RASC national observing committee he raised the profile of the Society's observing program and increased the uptake on the observing certificate programs. His Dark Nebulae section in the Observer's Handbook has brought a whole new area of observing to many amateur astronomers, not just in Canada, but also well beyond our borders. His many solar filter-building workshops conducted at various star parties have contributed to the skills, abilities and observing success of dozens of RASC members.

Paul Gray has been an active member of the RASC for 22 years, albeit with a four-year interruption while his work took him out of the country. Since his return to Canada, he has given substantial and significant service of an exemplary nature to the Society in many roles, at his two home Centres and nationally, for twelve consecutive years. That exemplary service continues now, as President of the Halifax Centre. We believe the nature and scope of his contributions merit the recognition of the Service Award.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Lou Whitehorne, FRASC, Halifax Centre
 June MacDonald, President, NB Centre
 Curt Nason, Secretary, NB Centre
 Paul Heath, 1st VP, Halifax Centre
 Ian Anderson, 2nd VP, Halifax Centre
 Pat Kelly, National Rep, Halifax Centre
 Chris Young, Secretary, Halifax Centre
 Jim Millar, Treasurer, Halifax Centre
 Sean Dzafovic, Observing Chair, Halifax Centre
 Dave Chapman, Observer's Handbook Editor (retired)
 Quinn Smith, GA Chair (retired), Halifax Centre