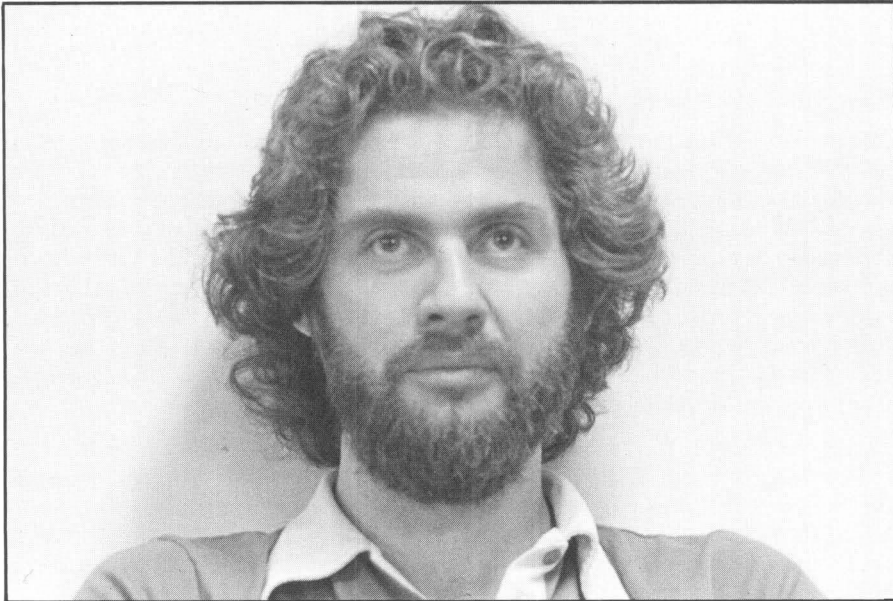


Obituary



James Andrew Fraser, 1946-1985

JAMES ANDREW FRASER, 1946-1985

Born in Chatham, New Brunswick, in January 1946, James Fraser grew up in nearby Loggieville, where he attended both public and high school. In 1964, he enrolled in St. Thomas University, graduating in 1969 with a B.A. (Honours) in Canadian history. From 1965 to 1966, James was a Holy Cross Novitiate, and although he did not enter the priesthood, he later (1970-71) took several courses in theology at the University of Windsor.

Following a brief period as a community worker for the YMCA in Niagara Falls, Ontario, James decided to pursue his interest in history and returned to New Brunswick. In September 1972, he joined the staff of the Provincial Archives in Fredericton. While at the PANB, but on his own time, he demonstrated his keen interest and energy by publishing some ten books on local history.

James left the Provincial Archives in September 1974 and spent most of 1975 travelling around the world. Upon his return to Canada, he worked briefly as a construction worker in rural Ontario; in September 1976, he joined the staff of the City of

Toronto Archives. James was on staff at the City Archives for the next seven years and made an immeasurable professional and personal contribution to its programmes during that time. Perhaps his foremost personal contribution was his sense of humour, wry and at times subdued, but nevertheless unrelenting and welcome. His good-natured, even-keeled approach to his work provided the City Archives with essential stability at a time when the institution was going through significant change and expansion. At the same time, having arrived with little or no knowledge of its historical collections or of local Toronto history, he soon developed considerable expertise in these areas. More than that, and perhaps in the best definition of an archivist, he went to great lengths and received great pleasure from encouraging colleagues and researchers by sharing this expertise.

Those who knew James know he thought eight hours of work a day were not enough, and were not surprised when he became involved in the Canadian Gay Archives. Basically a one cupboard reference collection in 1976, the CGA collection developed under James's guidance into the largest collection on homosexuality in Canada. Working lunch hours, evenings, and weekends, and often using his own money, James introduced professional archival standards and was particularly adept at attracting volunteers to assist in the archives. James's perseverance was instrumental in the successful incorporation of the CGA in 1980. He also found the time to institute a publication programme for the archives which included a newsletter and numerous bibliographical volumes on homosexuality in Canada.

In the summer of 1983 James enrolled in the Master of Archival Studies programme at the University of British Columbia. After a successful first year in the programme, he spent the summer of 1984 employed by the Public Archives of Canada at the Vancouver Federal Records Centre. There he completed a major project related to the custody of regional federal government records. Taking ill in the fall, James did not return to UBC. He died after lengthy hospitalization on 11 March 1985.

James Fraser was a tireless and dedicated professional. If a job had to be done, he attacked it quietly, efficiently, and with incredible vitality and uncommon expertise. We, his colleagues, have been fortunate to have had among us a man who readily and happily made important decisions in his professional and personal life that few have the courage to make, the interest to sustain, or the determination to complete.

**Victor Russell
Karen Teeple
Harold Averill**