

UPFRONT/GEMS

AGA Awards Jobbins and Matlins



Alan Jobbins, award winner of the sixth annual Antonio C. Bonanno Award for Excellence in Gemology. Jobbins shared the honor with Antoinette Matlins.

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The Accredited Gemologists Association awarded the sixth annual Antonio C. Bonanno Award for Excellence in Gemology to internationally respected British gemologist E. Alan Jobbins, of the Gem Testing Laboratory of Great Britain, and to well-known author and gemologist Antoinette Matlins, of South Woodstock, Vt.

Previous winners of the award include Alan Hodgkinson from Scotland; C.R. Beesley from American Gemological Laboratories; John Koivula from Gemological Institute of America; Robert Crowningshield, GIA; and Henry Hänni from the Swiss Gemmological Institute (SSEF), Switzerland.

The Antonio C. Bonanno Award—named in honor of AGA's founding father—was created to recognize people who have made significant contributions to the gemological field. The award, which includes a check for \$2,000, calls attention not only to the outstanding contributions of the recipient but also to the responsibility of the gemological community to encourage and reward ongoing research, education, and dissemination of information.

The first of this year's two awards was presented to Jobbins, BSc, CEng, FIMM, FGA. Jobbins began his gemological career as keeper of minerals and gemstones at the Institute of Geological Sciences (The Geological Museum) in London. Over a span of more than 30 years, he conducted many important research projects, including a major study of East African garnets, the first papers characterizing the structure and identification of synthetic opals, the discovery of a new mineral (magnesian-axinite), and the field study of the Barwell meteorite fall. His work has taken him on assignment for the United Nations and the British government. Some of his most notable international

work included setting up a gemological laboratory in Yangon, Myanmar; a major study of the Pailin ruby and sapphire deposits in Cambodia; an assessment of diamond and opal deposits in Piaul, Brazil; and a survey of the Sri Lankan gemstone industry to improve cutting techniques.

In 1988 he turned his focus to China where he initiated gemological training at the China University of Geosciences in Wuhan. In the United Kingdom, he lectured for 32 years at the Sir John Cass College (now London Metropolitan University), spent 20 years as an examiner for the Gemmological Association of Great Britain (formerly GAGB, now Gem-A)'s gemology examinations, and eight years as editor of the *Journal of Gemmology*. He also was a member of the team that conducted the first gemological examination of the Crown Jewels from 1986 to 1989. He is an executive member of the International Gemmological Conference, current president of the Society of Jewellery Historians, and newly elected president of Gem-A.

Antoinette Matlins, P.G., was the recipient of the second Antonio C. Bonanno Award for Excellence in Gemology. A well-known author of many books on gems and jewelry and a leading educator both within the trade and to the public, Matlins's love and interest in gems was nurtured from childhood by her late father, Antonio C. Bonanno, in whose honor this award was created. Matlins obtained her Professional Gemologist title from the Columbia School of Gemology, outside Washington, D.C., the school founded by her father.

Angered by misinformation that had been appearing in various investment magazines for several

years regarding diamonds, gemstones, and gem investment, Matlins decided there was a real need for a book to protect consumers. Written by Matlins, with Bonanno as co-author, *Jewelry & Gems: The Buying Guide* is now in its fifth edition. She resigned from her executive advertising position and moved full time into the gem field. She was gemology editor for *National Jeweler* magazine for almost a decade beginning in the mid-1980s, and her work on consumer-related issues soon established her as a dedicated consumer advocate. AGA's nationwide campaign against gemstone investment telemarketing scams was spearheaded by Matlins, and she is often seen on television segments on ABC, NBC, CBS, and CNN, educating consumers and exposing fraud and misrepresentation.

In the educational arena, Matlins has developed an innovative, practical course for people in the trade without an interest in gemology. Her goal is to give people with no science or technical background the basic skills and tools they need to reduce risk and to gain greater confidence in buying and selling gems.

Also nominated for the 2005 awards were Branko Deljanin, director of EGL USA/Canada; Richard Drucker, president of Gemworld Publishing and Gemworld International Laboratories; Donald Palmieri, founder and president of Gem Certification & Appraisal Lab; and Thomas Tashey, founder and director of Professional Gem Sciences Laboratory.

Nominees for the Antonio C. Bonanno Award must have made a significant contribution to the field of gemology, or defended and upheld gemological standards in a way that has benefited the larger gem and jewelry community. Accomplishments can be in the field of education, research, instrumentation, or innovative/practical application of gemological procedures or standards.

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