ACGS Fall Conference – Volunteer of the Year Award Speech

As many of you know, ACGS is a wholly volunteer-run and volunteer-staffed society. Every hour our library is open, every research request we answer, every outreach event we host — it all happens because someone in this community chose to give their time. We simply would not exist without our volunteers.

This year has reminded us of that more than ever. With the surge in membership brought on by the Canadian Citizenship by Descent law change, and with increased outreach across the country, our summer hours expanded, our research requests multiplied, and our library became busier than it has been in years. It's a good problem to have — growth is a gift — but it also means we rely even more on the people who step forward and say, "If you need me, I'll be there."

The Volunteer of the Year Award was created to honor that spirit. It recognizes the dedication, consistency, and willingness to help that keeps ACGS running day after day. It shines a light on the behind-the-scenes work that often goes unnoticed, and it celebrates the individuals whose commitment strengthens our society and inspires others to join in.

2026 Volunteer of the Year – Edward Lamarine

This year's Volunteer of the Year Award honors someone whose steady presence, cheerful spirit, and unwavering willingness to help have become part of the heartbeat of ACGS. Our recipient, **Edward Lamarine**, has been a long-time member whose contributions quietly support nearly every corner of our society — often without fanfare, always with a smile.

Ed is one of those volunteers who makes ACGS feel like home. He is always cheerful, always thoughtful, and always ready to help anyone who needs a hand.

His sense of humor brings levity to long shifts, and his kindness sets the tone for the welcoming environment we strive to create. When something needs doing, Ed is the person who steps forward — no hesitation, no fuss, just a genuine willingness to help.

For years, Ed has served as our **shipping manager**, a role that requires consistency, care, and a remarkable amount of behind-the-scenes work. He ships out all website orders, mails the journals three times a year, and handles anything else that needs to be mailed or shipped. It's a job that most members never see, but every member benefits from — and Ed has carried it out with reliability and pride.

In addition to all of that, Ed volunteers for **multiple librarian shifts every month**, covering the front desk, greeting visitors, answering questions, and helping members and researchers find what they need. His cheerful presence sets the tone the moment someone walks through the door. He makes the library feel welcoming, approachable, and alive — and his willingness to step in for extra shifts ensures we can keep our doors open and our community supported.

He also manages the **annual inventory** of the books we sell, ensuring our records are accurate and our shelves are ready for the year ahead. And in recent years, Ed has been **instrumental in the scanning project**, dedicating countless hours to organizing and transporting the digitizing materials to the scanning company, work that will serve researchers for generations to come. His work has strengthened our collections, expanded access, and supported one of the most important long-term initiatives for the society.

But beyond the tasks and responsibilities, Ed embodies the spirit of volunteerism that keeps ACGS thriving. He fills in wherever needed, supports others without being asked, and brings a thoughtful, positive energy to every interaction. His

contributions may not always be visible to the wider membership, but they are deeply felt — in our operations, in our library, and in the smooth functioning of so many processes that rely on his dedication.

For his long-term commitment, his cheerful presence, his extraordinary willingness to help, and the countless ways he strengthens this society every day, it is my honor to present the **2026 ACGS Volunteer of the Year Award to Edward Lamarine.**