

IMCS MAP JOURNAL

北京



北京畿高莫莫究三井地東懷渤海西挾恒行燕然為桓列障於後九
 河雍沮會同于前從刺背而左則關平大率止刺背而右則興和東腹蓋
 黃帝顛頊皆都千里帝畿王畿故明
 成祖文皇帝初潛龍於此暨繼承大統遂定鼎焉畿甸之不可下比于邦
 國即縣也自古為大鎮故大徐同大雍三代記之則勢不在居庸古北
 守不在宣府大同衛畿甸以為制大而勢大勢大而守廣何憂憂

禹頊鉤盤而津水史胡蘊
 徒駭大河故道俱出史史

濟水故道原遶滑入獲過梁山澳會
 汶東北至濟南為馬類今海大河
 濟俱下豐沛合泗沂而入淮矣

DAVID RUMSEY

WINNER OF THE 2026 IMCOS/HELEN WALLIS AWARD

Citation by Peter Barber

The recipient of this year's IMCoS/Helen Wallis award is not only a perspicacious map collector, with a precocious grasp of the significance of hitherto generally disregarded examples, and the creator of one of the world's greatest, initially private, map collections. He is also one of the most munificent living cartographic philanthropists, inspired innovators in the techniques of map digitisation and generous enablers of history of cartography scholarship throughout the world.

He obtained a master's degree in fine arts from Yale University and worked there as a lecturer in fine art, specialising in electronic technologies, before embarking on a highly successful 20-year career in real estate on the East Coast of the USA. He began collecting maps, initially relating to the Americas, in the early 1980s, long before moving to the West Coast and settling in southern California. He first concentrated on nineteenth- and twentieth-century maps at a time when few were interested in them. He acquired these comprehensively, not shying away from collecting enormous, multi-sheet series. He also moved into more conventional – and expensive – areas. He purchased examples of almost all the significant single sheet maps, multi-sheet wall maps, atlases, travel accounts, maritime charts and globes, dating from the dawn of printing to the present day. Today the collection is encyclopaedic, including more than 150,000 items and still growing: so much so that dealers have been mentioning that maps they are selling are not in his collection as an indication of rarity! Not the least of his achievements has been to ensure that all the maps in his collection get catalogued to the highest, internationally accepted, standards.

But the personal satisfaction that every collector gets from his collection has not been enough for him. From the first, visitors to his house, wishing to look at his maps have been made welcome. He was happy to discuss carto-bibliographical details over the phone and more recently via Zoom with fellow-enthusiasts – who left impressed at the depth of his knowledge. Before long, taking advantage of the latest technology and his own mastery of the medium, he decided to make his collections freely available to the world.

From his home he supervised their digitisation in the most expert manner possible, to ensure that they were as close as possible in all respects to the originals and that the smallest details could be clearly seen. He also allowed high resolution images to be downloaded free of charge. In the process he pioneered digitisation techniques that have since set the international standard and have been copied by libraries, public as well as private, throughout the world. The process of digitisation is ongoing, with over 120,000 maps from his total collection digitised to date, and more being added monthly. His action in sharing his collections digitally has proved over the decades to be an enormous boon: not only for collectors in all corners of the globe but also to scholars – whether or not they are researching the history of cartography.

In 2016 he decided to secure the long-term future of his collection by gifting it to Stanford University together with an endowment, thereby creating a Map Center bearing his name. This provides classroom instruction in the field, and the chance for the public to inspect the maps in person in the elegant surroundings of the Bing Wing of the Green Library. The Center also organises digital exhibitions, conferences, talks and other events. It is perhaps the greatest publicly available centre for the study of historic maps on the West Coast. In doing what he has, in the words of another leading map collector, he 'has inspired students, collectors, and researchers, the world over to love maps and learn from them'.

But his generosity in making his collection and the related records available to scholars is only a part of his contribution to our field. Behind the scenes he has made significant donations to scholarly institutions and has helped to underwrite scholarly projects in the map history field being undertaken by universities and libraries not only in the USA but throughout the world, including the United Kingdom. To give only one example: he contributed substantially to the digitisation by the National Library of Scotland of almost all sheets of early Ordnance Survey maps at all scales.

I can think of no worthier recipient of this year's IMCoS /Helen Wallis award than David Rumsey.



David Rumsey, winner of the 2026 IMCoS/Helen Wallis award, at work at the Map Center that bears his name and which this year celebrates its 10th anniversary. © Micaela Go/Stanford University Libraries.

Nominations for the IMCoS/Helen Wallis Award, 2027

The IMCoS/Helen Wallis Award goes to an individual who in the opinion of the selection sub-committee has been responsible for cartographic contributions of great merit and wide interest to map collectors worldwide.

You can nominate a collector, dealer, librarian, independent researcher or academic. Though the award is intended to recognise individual merit, in special circumstances a group of people or an organisation could be considered. The nominee should demonstrate their enthusiasm by actively

promoting the history of cartography, be that through study, publications, assistance to other categories (for example as benefactors) or in the field of organising societies, visits, symposia, exhibitions, talks, internet activities or the like.

Past winners can be viewed on the IMCoS website (www.imcos.org).

Please send your nominations to the Chairman of the Committee Peter Barber (peter_barber@me.com) or the Editor (ljljana.editor@gmail.com) by no later than 15 February 2027.