

IASSA AWARDS 2021

IASSA Honorary Lifetime Membership Awards:

Gail Fondahl, Canada

Natalia Novikova, Russia

Piers Vitebsky, United Kingdom

Dr. Gabriella Nordin-Sköld IASSA Service Award

Alona Yefimenko, Norway

IASSA Honorary Lifetime Membership Awards:

Dr. Gail Fondahl, Canada

Text by Gary Wilson, Canada; Diane Hirshberg, USA and Peter Sköld, Sweden



Over the past three decades, Dr. Fondahl has demonstrated sustained and significant contributions to Arctic social sciences and humanities. Her dedication to research, service and teaching in the area of Arctic studies has been truly outstanding and, as a result, we feel that she is fully deserving of this award.

Dr. Fondahl is a Professor of Geography at the University of Northern British Columbia (UNBC) in Prince George, Canada. She is one of the founding faculty members of UNBC and has played a critical role in its development as one of Canada's leading small research-intensive universities. She holds a PhD and an MA in Geography from the University of California Berkeley and a BA in Geography and Russian Studies from Dartmouth College. Dr. Fondahl's research focuses on the geographies of Indigenous rights in Russia and Canada and,

more broadly, human development and the cultural and legal dimensions of sustainability in the Arctic. She is the author or co-author of numerous publications and reports in these fields, including 32 academic journal articles, 16 book chapters and several books. Of particular note is her 1998 book, "Gaining Ground? Evenkis, Land and Reform in Southeastern Siberia" (Allyn and Bacon) and her 2017 co-edited book, "Northern Sustainabilities." Understanding and Addressing Change in the Circumpolar World (Springer Press). She also co-edited the 2010 Arctic Social Indicators Report and the 2014 Arctic Human Development Report II: Regional Processes and Global Linkages.

Dr. Fondahl is one of the leading western experts on Indigenous Peoples in Russia. Her connections to Russia are deep and stretch back to her time as an undergraduate student, when she first developed a passion for the Russian culture and language. Over the years, she has collaborated with colleagues and stakeholders throughout Russia and is well-respected for her work with Indigenous communities in the Sakha Republic (Yakutia). She is a tireless advocate for the promotion of Russian and Siberian studies within the Academy.

Dr. Fondahl's contributions to the Arctic research community go well beyond her academic publications and demonstrate a strong commitment to international collaboration at the highest levels. From 2011- 2018, she served as the Canadian Representative and Chair of the Social and Human Sciences Working Group of the International Arctic Science Committee (IASC). She also served as the Co-Chair of the Social, Economic and Human Expert Group of the Sustainable Development Working Group (SDWG) of the Arctic Council from 2013-2017 and was a member of the Arctic Council's Social, Economic and Cultural Expert Group (SECEG).

From 2011-2014, Dr. Fondahl served as the President of the International Arctic Social Sciences Association (IASSA). She represented the Arctic social sciences community for three years across the globe, and in 2014, was Co-Convener of the International Congress of Arctic Social Sciences (ICASS VIII) in Prince George, where the conference theme was “Northern Sustainabilities”. ICASS VIII was a very successful gathering; it was the largest ICASS to date, with 470 delegates from 26 countries participating in 109 sessions and presenting 411 papers.

Dr. Fondahl has played an important role in the coordination and development of international Arctic research initiatives. She was actively engaged in the organization of the International Polar Year (IPY) and represented IASSA in its work with the 3rd International Commission on Arctic Research Planning (ICARP III). Under her presidency of IASSA, efforts were made to improve the Association’s Terms of Reference, and much time was dedicated to the meetings of the IASSA Council. Dr. Fondahl has promoted Arctic social sciences and through her efforts has influenced our general understanding of Arctic science. She has brought a strong dimension of international collaboration to the Arctic research community, and has also built a network of researchers from non-Arctic states such as Japan, Korea and China.

Throughout her academic career, Dr. Fondahl has taught numerous courses within the discipline of Geography that complement her Arctic research and service. These courses have inspired her students to learn more about the circumpolar north and pursue further academic studies on Arctic and northern issues. Dr. Fondahl has also supervised many graduate students and early career scholars, thereby contributing to the training and development of the next generation of Arctic social scientists and humanities scholars.

Through her research, service and teaching, Dr. Gail Fondahl has displayed a strong and unwavering commitment to the values and mandate of IASSA. She has been a role model and mentor to many IASSA members, including her nominators for this prestigious award. Moreover, she has made a significant contribution to the growth and development of both IASSA and social science research in the Arctic. It is with the deepest respect and gratitude that we submit this letter of nomination for your consideration.

Dr. Nataliya Novikova, Russia

Text by Gertrude Saxinger, Austria, Emma Wilson, United Kingdom, Stephan Dudeck, Russia and Joachim Otto Habeck, Germany



Dr. Nataliya Novikova is a lead researcher at the Department of the North and Siberia at the Institute of Ethnology and Anthropology, Russian Academy of Sciences. She has a doctorate in history. Nataliya has carried out extensive field research among the Khanty, Mansi, Nenets, Nivkhi, Oroki and Yupik peoples of Russia, the Inuvialuit of Canada and the Sami of Norway. She is author of more than 170 scientific works, particularly in the domain of legal anthropology, relating to Arctic and Northern Indigenous peoples and their interrelations with extractive industries in the context of international, national, and customary law. She works as executive director of Ethno-Consulting, a company that provides expert assessments and other applied services connected with ethno-cultural dimensions of industrial activities on Indigenous land. She has collaborated with many international research organizations, such as the Scott Polar Research Institute (University of Cambridge, United Kingdom), the Arran Lule Sami Centre (Aluokta/Drag, Norway), and the International Institute for Environment and Development (London), among others.

Nataliya Novikova has remarkable passion for the Indigenous Peoples of the Arctic, their rights, wellbeing, agency and social justice in a world of extractivism and neo-liberal regimes of resource use. She has inspired us immensely as fellow researchers and collaborators. We also believe that presenting this award to a candidate from Russia would recognize the valued – yet often under-acknowledged – place of Russia in our IASSA family. This nomination helps to promote Russia as a place where social scientists are committed to research of global relevance, combining political awareness with moral integrity.

Nataliya Novikova is a leading figure in applied legal anthropology, developing this field with respect and attention to the Indigenous peoples of Russia. In her earliest field research days, she worked with the Mansi; and later used her fieldwork as an opportunity not only to learn and engage with local people, but to expose the injustices she encountered, particularly in the context of industrial development. Expertise in applied anthropology in Russia is nowadays frequently in demand of authorities and big companies with a vested interest in large-scale projects. Obviously, the parties involved in such consultations hold differential leverage. Nataliya has succeeded in defending her position and scientific integrity in the face of seemingly omnipotent industrial and bureaucratic actors. She never gave up the hope and conviction that ecological and indigenous interests might be reconciled with state and industry interests in the long run.

Dr. Nataliya Novikova has greatly advanced the field of legal pluralism in Russia and beyond. After the emergence of classical studies in the late 19th century on the topic, the field was later reduced to an auxiliary historical discipline. Since the 1980s, Nataliya Novikova re-developed it as a leading scholar. While the dominant sociological view on questions of customary law and indigenous legal systems often employed essentialist concepts of "tradition", Nataliya took a different approach. She based her analysis on fieldwork with Indigenous partners, observing and understanding the real-life interactions of Indigenous concepts of law and justice, retaliation, negotiation, reciprocity, all of which are always "in the making" and in interaction with outside forces. Nataliya thus managed to draw attention to cultures of informality, state law and jurisprudence, corporate entrepreneurial cultures and also bureaucratic cultures. In the course of her career, she has frequently appeared in international forums presenting her findings on the significance of customary law and legal pluralism to the lived realities of Russia's Indigenous peoples, and to the need for sustainable operation of industrial projects and their co-existence with Indigenous groups.

A highly important theoretical achievement is Nataliya's development of the concept of Russian *oilism*, when short-term economic interests of extractive industries dominate state policies at the regional as well as federal level in Russia. She conducted anthropological research on case studies of such *oilism* in the Khanty-Mansiiskii Autonomous Okrug and other regions. The concept is explored in her major work 'Hunters and Oil Workers' – a book that has had widespread resonance in Russia and beyond. In this book and elsewhere, Nataliya has also sought to explore and elucidate the concept of *corporate social responsibility* and how it relates to community-industry relations in the Russian North and the wider Arctic. This has led to collaboration with international organizations and to field work in Norway and Canada, where her works and findings have been very well received.

One of her major contributions to applied anthropology has been to explore theoretically and methodologically, and to implement in practice, the concept of *etnologicheskaya ekspertiza*. This concept translates as *anthropological (or ethnological) expert review* but is closer in practice to a socio-cultural impact assessment. Her experience in promoting this concept spans work with lawmakers, Indigenous rights' groups, and international impact assessment experts. She has also pioneered practical implementation of *etnologicheskaya ekspertiza* through consultancy work with oil and gas projects. This combination of experience has allowed her to develop and share unique and valuable insights in this important and rapidly developing field.

IASSA AWARDS 2021 (Cont.)

Nataliya Novikova has also come to be known as a staunch supporter of Indigenous scholars and writers; be it the renowned indigenous poet and activist Yuri Vella or her present-day PhD student Elizaveta Yaptik (to name just two). She has organized practical seminars with anthropologists, lawyers and Indigenous activists to endorse their competence in dealing with legal pluralism. She is also active in law-making processes, attending different forums in ministries, the federal and local parliaments, aiming to improve the Russian legislation relating to Indigenous people of the North. Nataliya is convinced that only a collaborative approach will lead us to a sustainable future and that all, including the business sector, will benefit from social justice and the realization of social and ecological security.

Nataliya Novikova's enthusiasm and open-mindedness have enabled dialogue to take place between a wide range of different groups and – we believe – has increased the possibility of a more sustainable future. She truly deserves to be acknowledged for her achievements. IASSA may be proud of her being a member. We congratulate Nataliya Novikova on this award.

Dr. Piers Vitebsky, The United Kingdom

Text by Florian Stammer, Finland; Igor Krupnik, USA and Gail Fondahl, Canada



IASSA is honoring the lifetime contribution of Dr. Piers Vitebsky to the Arctic Social Sciences. There are few scholars with such a broad impact of their work for the science community, for polar Indigenous people, and for the recognition of Arctic Social Sciences, in society in general.

Dr. Vitebsky served as the head of social science studies at the Scott Polar Research Institute (SPRI) in Cambridge, UK in 1986–2016. Following his 30 years of service, he remains active in continuing his own diverse research programme. This nomination specifically recognizes his influential publications, innovative research projects and programmes, assistance to colleagues, and particularly early career scientists in advancing their own research, empowering indigenous researchers, moving Arctic social science themes to the forefront of general polar research, and making Arctic social science known across wider society.

When Piers joined SPRI in 1986, IASSA did not exist and international Arctic field-based social sciences could hardly be called circumpolar, as a full half of the Arctic areas was accessible only to Soviet scholars. Piers was among the first to dare the adventures offered by the opening of the Russian Arctic to foreign scholars. In 1988 when he began working in the then-Soviet Union, fieldwork for a westerner was anything but straightforward: it involved the opening of intellectual and diplomatic channels. Piers both foresaw and contributed to the upsurge of international interest in the Russian Arctic in the late 1980s and 1990s, and facilitated the path for Western colleagues interested in pursuing fieldwork in the Russian North, many of whom he trained. He almost single-handedly transformed SPRI from a hub for physical scientists and exploration historians into a leading world centre for Arctic social science, by attracting eminent Arctic scholars, Ph.D. students, and Indigenous researchers from around the world. With the most comprehensive library on the Russian North outside of Russia, to which he contributed hundreds of publications, SPRI became the main centre for the study of the Russian North outside Russia.

Piers is a classic anthropologist of a sort rarely found among Arctic researchers. Even in his numerous collaborative projects with natural scientists in both laboratory and fieldwork, he brings a firm humanistic cultural approach from his previous experience in Classics (Ancient Greek Studies) and the anthropology of tropical forest tribes of India. He highlights the importance of understanding the spiritual vision and the emotional and social processes behind topics such as environment, climate change, and modernization by asking: What are the connections between change in the physical

and social environment, between a shift in the ice and the withdrawal of an aviation service or a family subsidy?

This becomes particularly evident in his prize-winning book, *Reindeer People: Living with Animals and Spirits in Siberia* (2005). It remains an exceptionally penetrating and vivid account of the functioning of landscape, spirits, dreams and omens in moulding a sense of self and destiny in an indigenous community in the region. With 50000 copies sold, it is probably the most popular scholarly monograph on Russian Arctic Indigenous people worldwide. Piers is unmatched as a master of packing serious scholarly contributions in the most beautiful stories from the field, where biographies of his friends unfold in the foreground. The book became a significant source of public awareness about the Arctic, alongside the award-winning TV documentaries on the Arctic that Piers organized. His manifold and influential other works in the leading scholarly journals (not only Arctic-focused) contributed to putting the Arctic firmly to the front of international scholarly debates. These include works on space and migration, gender, biography, emotion, landscape, ethics of extractive industries, a new theory of sacrifice, relations between social and natural sciences, their collaboration, and inter-regional comparisons. His early background in the ancient civilisations and Asian studies helped him to see contemporary Arctic research as regionally isolated and intellectually and especially budgetarily subservient to polar natural sciences. He has effectively made this point by the conscious choice of publication venues, but also via initiating numerous conferences at which presentations were about the Arctic but the discussants were specialists in African or Latin American studies. For those willing to learn, the insights produced were revolutionary.

His legacy also lives in the vibrant research community that he created of his students and colleagues. It is hard to find a contemporary Arctic scholar who has supervised such a robust corpus of PhD theses (over 40 so far), many of them later published as important monographs, e.g. on Chukotka, Alaska, Greenland, Canadian NWT, The Russian Arctic, and Sami communities of Lovozero and Karasjok. He has trained students across all Arctic regions and social science disciplines, and he helped giving birth to many ground-breaking discoveries, for which his students became famous: naming and memory (Nuttall); hidden economy of Russian gold and diamonds (Tichotsky); phenomenology of hunting (Willerslev); dysfunctional family courts (Khlinovskaya Rockhill); children's reversal of parents' pessimism (Ulturgasheva); Russian settlers' appropriation of indigenous rhetoric of belonging (Thompson); relations between reindeer herders and oil workers (Habeck); rationales for Baptist conversion (Vallikivi); the meaning of loneliness in Greenlandic sociality (Flora), and others. Many of his former students now occupy leading positions in Arctic social sciences. His assistance in editing his colleagues' articles and monographs constitutes unseen labour that goes way beyond any conventional expressions of acknowledgement. His generosity in designing international research projects, including the editing and even rewriting the grant applications of others, helped bring many millions of dollars, euros and rubles into Arctic social sciences. Some of us have seen how he transforms a text without much consistency into a grant-winning one literally overnight.

His most visible contribution to the international Arctic social science community was his role in designing, chairing, and guiding the monumental research initiative, "Histories from the North – Environments, Movements, Narratives (BOREAS), a multi-year venture that eventually became the largest programme in Arctic humanities and social sciences. It engaged researchers and agencies from nine nations, with a cumulative budget of 6 million euros. Its seven funded research projects created strong multi-national teams, eventually leading to some 800 publications. BOREAS activities took place during the International Polar Year 2007-2008 and together these two initiatives helped transform the ways research is done in the polar regions – by opening it to social sciences, indigenous communities, and the knowledge and participation of Arctic residents.

IASSA AWARDS 2021 (Cont.)

With his ceaseless efforts, Piers also shows strong commitment to well-being of Arctic Indigenous peoples, most recently through scientific coordination of a Norwegian programme on ethical guidelines for extractive industries led by a Saami centre, and his directing of a bilingual English/Russian training and editing programme in Yakutsk that has enabled many indigenous scholars to publish their work for the first time in leading international journals listed in Scopus and Web of Science. Within IASSA, although he never had a leading position, Piers advocated for the creation of the IASSA Extractive Industries Working group. Through his lifetime efforts he has served to, and had tremendous influence on the development of our field and of our Association. We consider him an obvious and unparalleled candidate for the 2020 IASSA award.

Dr. Gabriella Nordin-Sköld IASSA Service Award

In 2020 the IASSA Council has established the Dr. Gabriella Nordin-Sköld IASSA Service Award to commemorate the outstanding contribution of Dr. Gabriella Nordin-Sköld to the development of IASSA as a well-functioning and growing association. Dr. Gabriella Nordin-Sköld served as IASSA Secretary in 2014-2017. The Dr. Gabriella Nordin-Sköld Award will be granted in recognition of outstanding contribution and service to IASSA as an organization, building its institutional capacities, membership, programming and communication capabilities. The Award is presented at the triennial International Congress of Social Scientists. The IASSA Council members will submit nominations and bestow this award.

Alona Yefimenko, Norway

Text by Andrey N. Petrov, USA



IASSA Council is pleased to bestow the inaugural Dr. Gabriella Nordin-Sköld Award to Ms. Alona Yefimenko, a three-term IASSA Councilor and outstanding Indigenous expert and scholar. Ms. Yefimenko joined IASSA Council in 2011 and was twice reelected for a total of 10 years of service as a Council member. In a decade on the Council, Alona worked tirelessly to elevate the voices of the Indigenous Peoples in IASSA. She provided advice and shared her wisdom with the Association to advance the recognition and equity of the Indigenous Knowledge systems in social sciences. Among many recent accomplishments, Alona has guided the Council through the revision of the IASSA Principles of Ethical Research in the Arctic, compiled the archive of IASSA documentation and artefacts, represented IASSA at multiple meetings and, most importantly, maintained IASSA Council's links with Indigenous Peoples' organizations and the Arctic Council. For example, she organized "Traditional Knowledge in the Arctic Science" side event at the ICASS IX (Umeå) and the Permanent Participants panel at ICASS VIII (Prince George).

Alona's contributions to IASSA even more remarkable given that she had to perform her IASSA duties in her off-work time given that her primary job did not provide time for such activities. Alona Yefimenko currently works as an Advisor for the Arctic Council Secretariat, and previously served for 24 years in the Indigenous Peoples' Secretariat (IPS), a support organization for the Arctic Council's Permanent Participants. She is based in Tromsø, Norway.

Features

IASSA AWARDS 2021 (Cont.)

Coming from the Even/Chukchi reindeer herding family in Ayanka, Kamchatka, Russia, Alona received her Master's Degree in Philology from the Herzen State Pedagogical University of Russia and the Far Eastern State University. Alona has had considerable experience as a researcher. In 1988-1996, she worked as the Director of the Koryak Ethnography Museum in Palana, Kamchatka. Her research endeavors included fieldwork and archaeological excavations in the Koryak region of Kamchatka, training and research in Canada and at the Pitt Rivers Museum at Oxford University, Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography, St. Petersburg.

After joining IPS in 1996, Alona's role has been to support stronger voices of the Indigenous Peoples in the Arctic Council by facilitating communication between Arctic states and indigenous peoples as well as different stakeholders within the Arctic Council framework. She also coordinated communications and outreach for the Arctic communities (developed primary school curriculum on the safe methods of collecting, handling, storing and preparation of the traditional food, which represents a significant source of human exposure to PTS has been developed in Russia, seminars and training courses on SD). She has also been involved in the CAFF Sacred Sites Project, the Northern Sea Route Assessment and other Arctic Council Projects (organized two PPs-led workshops on Indigenous knowledge).