

# A Purpose Shaped by History, Renewed for the Future



To change the future, we must first understand the past—only then can we imagine new possibilities. *Gems & Gemology*, like GIA itself, was born during the Great Depression, just as gemology was becoming a practical science. In January 1934, GIA founder Robert M. Shipley declared the journal's purpose was "to increase the gem merchant's knowledge and ability...[to] protect more thoroughly his customers' best interests." By the second issue, Shipley expanded that objective "to keep the student abreast with the latest and the most important advances in the science of gemology." The journal would supplement GIA's gemology courses by providing new information that was not available when they were first written. Shipley's

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statements clearly defined *G&G*'s core audience—the trade and students—which continues as our primary audience today.

During the 1940s and 1950s, many of gemology's pioneers contributed to *G&G*, among them Basil Anderson, Robert Webster, and Edward J. Gübelin, as well as Robert Crowningshield, Richard T. Liddicoat, and Shipley himself. In the Summer 1947 issue, Shipley announced the formation of a "special editorial board" composed of eminent gemologists and academics. Their role was to suggest new authors and topics for publication and to ensure the technical accuracy of submitted articles.

Almost half a century after *G&G*'s founding, Liddicoat, now editor-in-chief, sought guidance from GIA's board of governors on the journal's future direction. After their feedback, the Spring 1981 editorial reaffirmed *G&G*'s purpose to keep gemologists and gem enthusiasts well informed about new developments in gemology. Liddicoat recruited a professional with a background in scientific publishing, Alice Keller, who went on to steer the journal for more than two decades as his successor.

This period brought substantive changes to *G&G*'s presentation. The journal format increased to today's dimensions, with full-color—often specially commissioned—photography that showed the beauty of gem materials, reinforcing the gem trade as a major audience. Liddicoat declared *G&G*'s commitment to become the most comprehensive periodical in the field of gemology. As part of that effort, he revived and expanded the editorial board, which had lapsed in the 1960s, formally listing its members on the masthead, and introduced new manuscript guidelines for prospective authors.

Today, we continue to uphold Shipley's and Liddicoat's vision. Even so, we now face a defining question: In an age shaped by artificial intelligence and instant information, can a printed journal still make sense?

Reader engagement metrics show that a wide range of *G&G* content—from laboratory-grown diamonds to geographic origin studies for colored stones—has strong relevance and sustained value. With this in mind, and following Liddicoat's approach from more than four decades ago, we again surveyed academic and trade members of GIA's board, as well as key contributors, posing fundamental questions about *G&G*'s purpose, goals, and audience, and the most effective ways to serve that audience today.

Our governors reaffirmed that *G&G*'s primary mission is to educate and inspire; to showcase GIA's research; to provide timely and relevant information on gems and related topics; and to serve as the most trusted source for gem and jewelry knowledge. They confirmed our target audiences are practicing gemologists, GIA students and alumni, jewelers, researchers, educators, gem collectors and enthusiasts, and the wider public with an interest in gems.

The governors focused on three priorities: accessibility, timeliness, and reach. They encouraged us to provide summaries of technical material in plain language. They emphasized the importance of a quicker publication cycle, a shift to an online-first model, and the exploration of additional delivery formats. Several suggested adopting a more photo-forward approach, which would include technical information while remaining accessible to educated non-specialists.

At the same time, they recognized the printed journal's value. Each issue is a thoughtfully curated package of visual content designed to engage a broad audience interested in gems and jewelry.

Our governors' message was clear: Preserve what *Gems & Gemology* does best and build on it to make the journal even better.

In 2026, *G&G* will transition to a timelier, online-first publication model. We will also begin exploring new formats and types of content, starting with a new regular column, *From the Field*, focused on field gemology.

To further strengthen confidence in our scientific publishing standards, we have revised our author guidelines for feature articles, placing a greater emphasis on data quality, image integrity, and verifiable provenance. Authors must have sufficiently robust and well-documented gemstone sample sets of known origin to validate any conclusions they present. Manuscripts based on poorly documented or limited samples will no longer be considered for publication.

As we evolve, our commitment remains unchanged. We will continue to cover gem science, deliver practical gemological insights for the trade, and uphold the standards of excellence that have defined the journal since its founding. I am grateful to our readers for their steadfast support as *G&G* enters this new era.



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