

Wendy Smith – shaping library preservation

Former colleagues and friends of Wendy Smith were saddened to hear of her death in Mandurah, Western Australia, on 1 August 2006. Wendy contributed much to the improvement of preservation practice in Australian libraries during the 1980s and 1990s. Her career in libraries was not her first. Equipped with a research masters in textile chemistry from the University of New South Wales, she began her working life as a textile scientist before teaching chemistry at the University of Papua New Guinea in the late 1960s. She then worked as a computer programmer in England where her interest in the conservation of cultural materials was kindled.

Back in Australia in the late 1970s she took a masters degree at the University of Canberra, specialising in conservation of paper-based materials. This led to employment at the National Museum of Australia before she joined the National Library of Australia and worked in Preservation Services (of which she became Director) to develop a new approach to the conservation of library materials

– one that extended its focus beyond treatment of individual items to engaging staff throughout the library in responsibility for the long-term care of collections. Wendy's enthusiasm for expanding her own knowledge and her interest in gaining a thorough understanding of the needs and professional motivations of those she worked with led her to complete a Graduate Diploma in Librarianship at the University of Canberra in the 1980s.

Her role in shaping preservation education for librarians during the 1990s ensured that the benefit of her experience in forging this new approach was passed on to emerging professionals. As a lecturer at the University of Canberra she taught paper conservation and library and archives preservation. She also worked with the University of New South Wales' School of Library and Archive Studies to adapt into a new preservation administration course an earlier training course in library preservation she had mapped out with funding from IFLA. Library preservation workshops, delivered with Ross Harvey (then at Monash University's Graduate School of Librarianship) through ALIA APSIG, in Thailand, Vietnam and Fiji deepened her knowledge of the problems faced by Asian and Pacific nations.

Returning to the National Library in 1996, Wendy led the establishment of the pilot Web archiving project that later became the PANDORA archive of Australian online publications, an early response to the challenges of preserving digital information in this country. Retirement for Wendy was dominated by her interest in sharing her deep knowledge and experience of library preservation with those who might benefit from it. Working as a volunteer, and ably assisted by her husband Michael, she spent time at the National Library of Laos and at the Jose Rival Museum at the University of the Southern Philippines and delivered training courses in Samoa and the Cook Islands. Wendy will be remembered for her readiness to take on challenging tasks, to work out a sensible way of tackling them and, most importantly, to finish them. Sadly one task remains unfinished – the doctoral thesis she was very near completing through Charles Sturt University. The onslaught of illness in December last year prevented her from adding this to the research into problems of preserving and ensuring long-term access to digital information, as well as to her many other contributions to our profession.

Rachel Salmond and Ross Harvey

Helen Roberts retires from ANU law library

We are enormously fortunate in the ACT to have librarians whose contribution to their libraries, their sectors and to the Australian Library and Information Association are outstanding. Helen Roberts is one of these. She has now retired from The Australian National University, where, for the past 17 years, she was the Law Librarian.

Helen was a consummate law librarian, taking her career seriously and completing her law degree at The Australian National University in the 1995. She was a very active member of the Australian Law Librarians group, giving many presentations and contributing to discussions on a wide range of issues. She has written extensively, contributing the ACT state news column to the *Australian Law Librarian* for many years.

The epitome of an active professional, Helen will be remembered by most in the

ACT – apart from her contributions as the ANU Law Librarian – as the President of the ALIA ACT University and Research Libraries Group (URLs) and ALIA ACTIVE Group Convenor and executive member. Helen has chaired the ALIA Copyright and Intellectual Property Advisory Group for the past three years, steering it through many complex issues. She is also well known for her presentations on purchasing electronic resources, which she has given in a number of states and the ACT.

She is a true ALIA star. The past couple of years have been ones where Helen's tremendous energy has provided wonderful opportunities professionally and personally. I feel privileged to have worked closely with Helen and hope that she will continue to provide support and advice to ALIA colleagues in the ACT. We also wish her the very best in the future, with a new grandchild and many other interests.

Roxanne Missingham

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