SLA Yesterday, Today And Tomorrow

The pages of this history have described the “Yesterdays” of Special Libraries Association, 50 years of growth and development of which all members may be proud. This growth is the result of a very real belief by special librarians over the years in the importance of supplying information to management.

This same belief in the value of knowledge and in putting this knowledge to work is still important today. Because special librarians believe this and believe that to provide information efficiently library training is a necessary prerequisite, the membership voted during its 50th year to accept certain standards in the form of membership requirements. It is hoped that this first step to establish professional standards will have two eventual results: first, to convince management that a company should employ a trained librarian to provide good library service; second, to raise the professional standing of librarians within industry.

Turning to the Special Libraries Association of tomorrow—what is its future? An organization of five thousand members who believe in their profession and in their ability to provide service to their employer cannot but continue to grow in importance in this fast-moving world.

To help librarians keep abreast of developments, SLA must and will develop work standards for professional staff members, some sort of yardstick by which performance may be measured. These standards will have the added value of assisting librarians to improve their relations with management.

A present and future necessity is the development of faster and better retrieval systems for special libraries. The speed with which printed information is accumulating and most certainly will continue to increase is a very real problem and one on which much time has already been spent. The solution to this problem is in the future, but continued research will surely find the answers that will provide librarians with valuable bibliographic and information retrieval tools. Cooperation with library associations in the United States and throughout the world can avoid duplication of effort and facilitate the exchange and dissemination of information in all fields of knowledge.

Fifty years from now Special Libraries Association should be even more widely recognized as a professional organization if we, its members, honestly believe in the profession of special librarianship. Both our value to and respect by the management of business and industry will also greatly increase. The strength of SLA lies entirely in the integrity and beliefs of its members together with the knowledge that good library service contributes concrete results to research and industry. This was true in 1909, is true in 1959 and will still be true in 2009.

MARGARET H. FULLER, President, 1958-1959

Association Presidents

1909-1911  John Cotton Dana
Free Public Library, Newark

1911-1912  Robert H. Whitten
New York State Public Service Commission, Albany

1912-1914  Daniel N. Handy
Insurance Library Association, Boston

1914-1915  Richard H. Johnston
Bureau of Railway Economics, Washington

1915-1916  A. L. Bostwick
Municipal Reference Library, St. Louis

1916  F. N. Morton
United Gas Improvement Company, Philadelphia
(Resigned because of illness)

1916-1918  Charles C. Williamson
Municipal Reference Library, New York

1918-1919  Guy E. Marion
Business Library Organizer, Boston

1919-1920  Maude A. Carabin
Detroit Edison Company, Detroit

1920-1922  Dorsey W. Hyde, Jr.
Packard Motor Car Company, Detroit

1922-1923  Rebecca B. Rankin
Municipal Reference Library, New York

1923-1924  Edward H. Redstone, State Librarian
State House, Boston

1924-1926  Daniel N. Handy
Insurance Library Association, Boston

1926-1929  Francis E. Cady
General Electric Company, Nela Park, Cleveland

1929-1930  William Alesott
The Boston Globe, Boston

1930-1931  Margaret Reynolds
First Wisconsin National Bank, Milwaukee

1931-1932  Alta B. Clafin
Federal Reserve Bank, Cleveland

1932-1934  Mary Louise Alexander
Batten, Barton, Durstine and Osborn, Inc., New York

1934-1934  Ruth Savord
Council on Foreign Relations, New York
1935-1937  Howard L. Stebbins  
Social Law Library, Boston  
1937-1938  William F. Jacob  
General Electric Company, Schenectady  
1938-1940  Alma C. Mitchell  
Public Service Corporation of New Jersey, Newark  
1940-1942  Laura A. Woodward  
Maryland Casualty Company, Baltimore  
1942-1944  Eleanor S. Cavanaugh  
1944-1945  Walter Hausdorfer  
School of Business, Columbia University, New York  
1945-1946  Herman H. Henkle  
Processing Department, Library of Congress, Washington  
1946-1947  Betty Joy Cole  
Calco Chemical Division, American Cyanamid Company, Bound Brook, N.J.  
1947-1948  Mrs. Irene M. Strieby  
Eli Lilly and Company, Indianapolis  
1948-1949  Rose L. Vormelker  
Business Information Bureau, Cleveland Public Library, Cleveland  
1949-1950  Mrs. Ruth H. Hooker  
Naval Research Laboratory, Washington  
1950-1951  Mrs. Elizabeth W. Owens  
Mercantile-Commerce Bank and Trust Company, St. Louis  
1951-1952  Greig Aspnes  
Brown & Bigelow, St. Paul  
1952-1953  Elizabeth Ferguson  
Institute of Life Insurance, New York  
1953-1954  Mrs. Lucile L. Keck  
Joint Reference Library, Chicago  
1954-1955  Gretchen D. Little  
Atlas Powder Company, Wilmington, Del.  
1955-1956  Chester M. Lewis  
1956-1957  Katharine L. Kinder  
Johns-Manville Research Center, Manville, N.J.  
1957-1958  Alberta L. Brown  
The Upjohn Company, Kalamazoo  
1958-1959  Mrs. Margaret H. Fuller  
The American Iron and Steel Institute, New York

SLA Professional Award Winners

At the SLA Annual Convention in Washington, D.C., in 1948, the Executive Board voted that an award would be annually given to an SLA member for notable and outstanding contributions in the field of special librarianship.

The first such award was presented at the 1949 Convention to Edwin T. Coman, Jr., Director of the Library of the Graduate School of Business, Stanford University, for his book, Sources of Business Information.

Anne L. Nicholson, Librarian, Pennsalt Chemicals Corporation, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, was the recipient of the 1950 award for editing and compiling Numerical Index to the Bibliography of Scientific Reports, volumes 1-10, 1946-1950.

Subsequent awards have been given for accomplishments within the library profession, rather than for any special publication or activity:

Alma Clarvce Mitchell  
Public Service Electric and Gas Company  
Newark, New Jersey  
1951  
Dr. Mortimer Taube  
President, Documentation, Inc., Washington, D.C.  
1952  
Rose L. Vormelker  
Business Information Bureau  
Cleveland Public Library, Cleveland, Ohio  
1953  
Eleanor S. Cavanaugh  
Standard and Poor’s Corporation, New York  
1954  
Ruth Savord  
Council on Foreign Relations, New York  
1955  
Dr. Johan M. Fertig  
Westinghouse Research Laboratories  
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania  
1956  
Mrs. Irene M. Strieby  
Eli Lilly and Company, Indianapolis, Indiana  
1957  
Mrs. Elizabeth W. Owens  
Union Electric Company, St. Louis, Missouri  
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Marion E. Wells  
National Bank of Chicago, Chicago, Illinois  
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