

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 managements 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