

The First but not the Only: Vivian Davidson Hewitt's Legacy in Special Librarianship

Tara Murray Grove, MLIS
Librarian for Germanic and Slavic Languages and Literatures, Penn State

Abstract

Vivian Davidson Hewitt titled her autobiography *The One and Only*, reflecting the many times she found herself as the only woman of color in her professional life. Hewitt had a long and distinguished career in specialized libraries and was the first Black person to serve as president of the Special Libraries Association (SLA) in 1978–1979. In addition to her roles at the Rockefeller Foundation, the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, and the Council on Foreign Relations, Hewitt contributed to librarianship through her involvement in professional associations, scholarship, and teaching. She led SLA through a period of turbulence and was instrumental in making SLA the international association it is today. She was drawn to mentor other librarians and she promoted Black culture and accomplishments. Hewitt, by her own admission, had many advantages and was part of a social and cultural elite. However, she also faced very real discrimination and challenges in her career. This paper examines her leadership roles in SLA as well as how she influenced diversity and internationalism in specialized libraries. To do this, I draw on Hewitt's autobiography and her publications, SLA publications, and scholarship by and about other pioneering library leaders.

Introduction

Reflecting on her 1978–1979 term as the first Black president of the Special Libraries Association (SLA), Vivian Davidson Hewitt recalled that she “had a reign that was like no other president before or since.” (Hewitt 2014, 115) Hewitt lived to see herself succeeded by three other Black women presidents in SLA: Vivian J. Arterbery (1984–1985), Emily R. Mobley (1987–1988), and Sylvia A. Piggott from Canada (1996–1997). (Hewitt 2000) A fifth woman of color, Seema Rampersad from the UK, is president-elect in 2022 and set to take office as president in 2023. Even given these successors, Hewitt's assessment of uniqueness is still true in many respects. In addition to serving as a trailblazer for other women of color in special librarianship, she also led the association through a politically and professionally turbulent time, oversaw the transition from one executive director to the next, and was instrumental in establishing SLA as an international association.

Hewitt's autobiography, *The One and Only*, is based on a series of oral history interviews conducted by Ann Rothstein-Segal in 1990, just before Hewitt's 90th birthday. Hewitt chose the title to reflect the many times she found herself the “one and only” woman of color throughout her career, from her college studies through her professional life. She experienced racism and

discrimination in her life, but she also readily acknowledged the privilege she had and used it to help others. In the dedication to *The One and Only*, she wrote:

I am a member of a segment of black society W.E.B. Dubois called the “Talented Tenth.” We are the top ten percent of African Americans who are college-educated and who come from good families. It’s a closed circuit. You are or you aren’t. We were expected to do good works and contribute to the community, to do unto others. (Hewitt 2014, Dedication)

Hewitt strove to live up to this expectation, perhaps most notably through her participation in library associations and mentoring activities and through the African American art collection she and her husband, John Hewitt, built together.

Like her friend and colleague E. J. Josey, the first Black man to serve as president of the American Library Association (ALA), Hewitt grew up during the period of the Harlem Renaissance, a revival of African American culture centered in the Harlem neighborhood of Manhattan in New York City. She would go on to count prominent Harlem Renaissance figures such as Langston Hughes and W.E.B. DuBois as friends. (Hewitt 2014, 61)

Hewitt was born February 17, 1920 in New Castle, Pennsylvania, a small industrial city near Pittsburgh. She attended Geneva College, graduating with a degree in French in 1943. Later that year, she enrolled in library school at the Carnegie Institute of Technology¹ in Pittsburgh, where she found herself one of only four Black students on campus. She was only the second Black student to apply to the library school. The first, Virginia Proctor Powell, graduated with her degree in 1923, but never worked as a librarian in the city of Pittsburgh. As a student, Hewitt worked part-time for the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh at the Wylie Avenue Library in Pittsburgh’s Hill District, a historically Black neighborhood. The library school required students to complete a practicum at another library. Because the Carnegie Institute of Technology would not send her to “any of the other libraries in white neighborhoods,” Hewitt went to New York to do her practicum at the 135th Street branch of the New York Public Library in Harlem. (Hewitt 2014, 32) At the 135th Street branch, now the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, Hewitt encountered her first Black librarian role models, Dorothy Homer and Augusta Braxton Baker. (Hewitt 2014, 34) When Hewitt interviewed with the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh, it was made clear to her that she would be the token Black librarian. The library director, Ralph Munn, said in her interview, “We’ve been waiting for someone like you to come along for a long time. I am only sorry that you don’t look more like a Negro than you do so that when people come into the library they would know who and what you are.” (Hewitt 2014, 28) Hewitt was hired as an assistant librarian at the Wylie Avenue Library upon her graduation.

While Hewitt enjoyed working with her supervisor and colleagues at Wylie Avenue, she found the city of Pittsburgh in the 1940s to be “vilely racist.” (“An Interview with Vivian Hewitt,” n.d.) Moreover, she found her role as the city’s only Black librarian exhausting. “I was

¹ The Carnegie Institute of Technology’s library school later became affiliated with Carnegie Mellon University and then with the University of Pittsburgh, where it is now part of the School of Computing and Information.

paraded about at every opportunity and I felt a lot of pressure. I appeared calm on the outside but I was churning on the inside,” she recalled in her autobiography. (Hewitt 2014, 47) When it became apparent that the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh was not ready to promote a Black woman to branch head, and that she would continue to be transferred horizontally, first to the Homewood branch and then to East Liberty, Hewitt took a job as an instructor and librarian at Atlanta University (now Clark Atlanta University) in 1949. Shortly after arriving in Atlanta, she met her husband, John Hewitt, Jr., and when the couple had their son, John Hewitt III, in 1952, they relocated to his hometown of New York City. It was during this time that the Hewitts, despite their modest means, began collecting African American art, eventually amassing a collection that is now a cornerstone of the permanent collection at the Harvey B. Gantt Center for African-American Arts + Culture in North Carolina, and befriended prominent Black intellectual and artistic figures in Harlem. A year after her son’s birth, Hewitt grew tired of being a “park bench mother,” and returned to the workforce, this time in special libraries. (Hewitt 2014, 62) She secured a position as a researcher with Crowell-Collier and began attending local SLA meetings.

Two years later, with the assistance of SLA’s job service, Hewitt got a job as a librarian at the Rockefeller Foundation, where she was promoted to chief librarian in 1956. She found herself, once again, the “one and only” Black professional on the library staff. In her autobiography, she shares positive memories of her time at Rockefeller, including making connections with other special librarians in New York City and her first opportunity to do international work, spending three months at the Foundation’s experimental agriculture station in Mexico City. An incident of racism in the office in 1962, when she was denied a raise and assigned a supervisor who was not a librarian, prompted her to seek other opportunities, and in 1963 she started work at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. (Hewitt 2014, 68) Once again, SLA and her network of special librarians helped her secure the position. (Hewitt 2014, 69) Hewitt was chief librarian for the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace until the Endowment closed its New York office in 1983. She chose to retire rather than leave New York. In her retirement, she remained active, taking part-time and short-term jobs at the Katherine Gibbs School, the University of Texas, and the Council of Foreign Relations, then turning her energies to volunteer work and her art collection.

Pioneering Librarians

Hewitt was acutely aware of the roles she and her contemporaries played as pioneers in librarianship. While she found being a lone Black librarian in Pittsburgh exhausting, she accepted that in order for more Blacks to succeed in the profession someone had to pave the way and she was willing to do her part. In the introduction to an article profiling four other Black special librarians, she wrote, “so long as the terms *first*, *black*, and *only*, either singly or in combination are pre-fixed to our title ‘Librarian,’ each of us is and will continue to be a *pioneer* for a long time to come.” (Hewitt 1980, 234)

Women have held leadership positions since the inception of SLA, beginning with Anna Sears, who became the association’s first secretary-treasurer at its founding meeting in Bretton Woods, New Hampshire in 1909. SLA elected its first female president, Maude A. Carabin Mann, a decade later in 1919, one year before women gained the right to vote in the United

States. The American Library Association (ALA), which was founded in 1876 and facilitated the formation of SLA, elected its first female president, Theresa West Elmendorf, in 1911. Since then, many other women have led both associations.

While women had established themselves in library leadership in the first half of the twentieth century, it was not until the 1970s that Black librarians first ascended to top leadership positions in American library associations. Robert Wedgeworth became the first Black executive director of ALA in 1972, and Clara Stanton Jones served as the first Black president of ALA in 1976–1977. Hewitt became the first Black president of SLA a year later in 1978. E.J. Josey, the first Black male president of ALA, served in 1984–1985. The Association of American Library Schools, now known as the Association for Library and Information Science Education (ALISE), elected its first Black president, Virginia Lacy Jones, even earlier, in 1967.

The 1970s were transformative for Black librarians. In 1970, E.J. Josey published *The Black Librarian in America*, which “launched the modern period of Black librarianship.” (Chancellor 2022, 84) Like Hewitt, Josey acknowledged both the challenges and the opportunities faced by Black librarians. In his introduction, Josey notes that the contributed essays “give unassailable evidence that discrimination in employment and promotional opportunities has been rampant and blatant” (1970, x) but that they “also reflect joy, fulfillment and accomplishment in spite of the oppressive burden of racism that must be shouldered by black librarians” (1970, xi). The three essays in the special libraries section were contributed by Mary Lee Tsuffis, Manager, Technical Information Center, Xerox Corporation; Magdalene O’Rourke, Reference Librarian, Law Center Library, University of Southern California; and Hewitt, who was then a librarian at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. These three essays reflect a general satisfaction with special librarianship and express encouragement for young Black librarians to join this part of the profession, but they also include stories of blatant and subtle racism throughout the personal and professional lives of the contributors.

Not all library associations were ready to welcome Black librarians. Virginia Lacy Jones, the second Black American to earn a Ph.D. in library service, after Eliza Atkins Gleason, succeeded Gleason as dean of the Atlanta University School of Library Service in 1945. She was a founding member of the Georgia Chapter of SLA but was denied membership because of her race in the Georgia Library Association, a chapter of ALA, and the Metropolitan Atlanta Library Association. (Jordan 1994) The Georgia Library Association finally admitted its first African American member, E.J. Josey, in 1965. Josey had first applied in 1952, and, like Jones, was rejected because of his race.

When Hewitt returned to the workforce following her move to New York City and the birth of her son, she was determined to find a position in a special library. She craved a balance between work and life that she had not found in public libraries. (Hewitt 2014, 62) While the more predictable schedule of special libraries may have been the first motivating factor in her career change, she also found that special libraries were more accepting of a Black woman than public libraries had been, and SLA was more welcoming than ALA.

Multiple factors contribute to the inclusion or exclusion of Black librarians in special librarianship: the environment of the special library’s parent organization, relationships with other librarians, and the actions and policies of professional associations and library schools.

Hewitt felt her chosen profession was welcoming to minorities: “There is a general feeling that race is not a handicap to acceptance or involvement in special library circles. The field is wide open, especially to the young black.” (Hewitt 1970, 253)

Hewitt found SLA to have effective policies against discrimination. “The Special Libraries Association was always ‘straight on race,’ as I say, as opposed to ALA,” she noted in a talk for the Pittsburgh Chapter of SLA in 2009. (“An Afternoon with Vivian Davidson Hewitt” 2009) Unlike ALA, which faced backlash after Black members were subjected to segregated facilities at the 1936 conference in Richmond, Virginia, SLA never held a conference in a segregated city and its local chapters did not bar African Americans from joining as the library associations affiliated with ALA in Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, and Mississippi did.

While SLA itself may have been relatively welcoming to Black professionals, minority special librarians still faced racism and discrimination in their work. In 1970, Mary Lee Tsuffis, manager of the Technical Information Center at the Xerox Corporation, noted that she “had to work twice as hard, do twice as well and, with lip-biting silence, put up with twice as much ignorance and stupidity as my white associates in order to be recognized,” but that the profession was becoming more welcoming and she became “convinced that discrimination in librarianship is dying out and we are no longer invisible or considered as outsiders by those we work with and for.” (Tsuffis 1970, 245–46) Writing six years later, Hewitt declared that Tsuffis’ words were “as valid today as they were then.” (Hewitt 1980, 245)

Special libraries, as many, including Hewitt, define them, are part of a larger, non-library organization. (Hewitt 1980) Thus, the environment of the larger organization and field in which the special librarian finds themselves determines, in large part, how welcoming special librarianship is. In *The Black Librarian in America*, Magdalene O’Rourke, a reference librarian at the University of Southern California’s Law Center Library, noted that “Law librarians serve the legal profession. . . . The legal profession has a long and distinguished history of racial discrimination.” (O’Rourke 1970, 250) Ina A. Brown found in the 1990s that the Black information specialist faced the same challenges as other minorities in corporate environments. In particular, “tokenism,” or the hiring of a Black candidate to demonstrate commitment to diversity and affirmative action, promoted competition among Black professionals and acted as a barrier to cooperation. (Brown 1994)

Barriers to cooperation among librarians from underrepresented identities are important because many of the pioneering leaders in librarianship have acknowledged the importance of mentoring and representation in their careers. Emily Mobley credited mentoring from her predecessors, including the only other two Black women to have served as president of SLA before her, Hewitt and Vivian Arterbery, not only with her success within SLA, but also in her career and personal life. (Mobley 2012)

Hewitt in SLA

Hewitt began attending meetings of the Publishing Group of the SLA New York Chapter in 1952, when she started working at Crowell-Collier. She recalled that “[h]igh visibility was a given, because I was usually the only person of color there.” (Hewitt 1994, 207) She developed

relationships with other special librarians in New York City and with staff at SLA's headquarters office in New York.

The international focus of her work at the Rockefeller Foundation and the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace led Hewitt to become involved in international initiatives in SLA. She began attending SLA national conferences in 1958, and in 1964, she was appointed as a non-governmental organization representative of SLA to the United Nations, a position she held until 1970. In 1965, she represented SLA at the United Nations *Pacem In Terris* Convocation and at the White House Conference on International Cooperation. She served on the SLA International Relations Committee and chaired the committee from 1965–1969. In 1970, she was the SLA representative to the International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA), now known as the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions. Hewitt was also active in the SLA New York Chapter, serving as chair of the Hospitality committee and as Program Chair, and in 1970 she was elected chapter president.

Hewitt credited support from her employer, as well as leadership skills developed in social organizations like Alpha Kappa Alpha, Aurora Book Club (of Pittsburgh), and Jack and Jill of America, with her ability to take on leadership roles in SLA. Tom Hughes, president of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace starting in 1971, supported Hewitt's leadership roles in SLA by allowing time away from the office and paying for conference attendance and membership dues, as a means to raise the profile of the Endowment. (Hewitt 2014, 115)

Hewitt had a close working relationship with SLA executive director Frank McKenna, and traveled with him to several IFLA conferences beginning in 1972. Hewitt recalled that SLA was not active in IFLA at the time, but she and McKenna worked together to broaden its influence. (Hewitt 2014, 117) While on a presidential visit to the SLA Georgia Chapter visit in Atlanta in November 1978, she learned of his sudden death. She contacted the rest of the SLA board by phone and then headed to the SLA offices in New York. (Hewitt 2014, 115) McKenna, an accomplished chemist who entered the field of librarianship when he was tasked with organizing information services and the library for his employer, the Air Reduction Company, served as president of SLA in 1966 before joining the association staff, first as manager of the publications department and then as executive director, beginning in 1970. Hewitt delivered the eulogy at his funeral in St. Joseph's Church in New York, stating: "His passing is a tragic loss to the library community, special libraries and librarianship nationally and internationally." (Matarazzo 1983, 363)

Following McKenna's death, Hewitt took on additional leadership responsibilities until a new executive director could be appointed (St. Clair 2009, 115), including the planning of SLA's first international conference to be held in 1979. Adding to the turbulence of this time was the hiring of SLA Past-President Shirley Echelman as the executive director of the Medical Library Association (MLA), which could be considered both a partner and a competitor of SLA. In a letter on the occasion of Hewitt's retirement from the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, fellow SLA member Tena Crenshaw wrote, "you carried out your duties as President well, without the support of an SLA Executive Director. In addition, you had the added responsibility of helping select a replacement to fill the position of Executive Director." (Crenshaw 1984) Hewitt arranged for the SLA board to meet the candidate for executive director, David Bender, at the June 1979 SLA conference in Honolulu, and he was appointed as

the association's executive director in August 1979. Bender relied heavily on Hewitt in his transition to the executive director role. In an interview he recalled, "without Vivian's guidance and leadership I would have been lost." (Bender 2009, 11)

Diversity and Social Justice in SLA

Unlike ALA, SLA never held conferences in segregated cities or denied membership in its Southern chapters to Black librarians. Hewitt maintained that SLA had a clear policy against bias and discrimination and had treated its Black members fairly. At the same time, she lamented that Black librarians were not better represented in the association and the profession. In 1972, while acknowledging that progress had been made, she was disappointed to not see more Blacks in the profession:

It's hard to miss the "first" black face and often "only" in areas which used to be all-white ... I still cringe, after all these years, as I did so long ago, each time I read or hear the phrase, "The First Black," still used in this presumably enlightened decade of the 20th Century. (Hewitt 1972, 272)

Not one to despair without taking action, Hewitt led efforts to bring Black members together and to encourage young people to enter the profession. Since the 1950s, Black members of SLA had held informal gatherings during the conference, starting with a small group of five or six and growing to forty by the 1970s. (Hewitt 1994, 209) At the 1979 conference, Hewitt hosted a reception for Black attendees in her presidential hotel suite, where thirty-two individuals signed the guest book. ("Vivian Hewitt Papers," box 40, folder 7)

In 1973, SLA established a Positive Action Program for Minority Groups. This program became the Affirmative Action Committee in 1989. The program went through several more changes in name and charge over the years until the current Diversity Inclusion Community Equity Community (DICE) was formed in 2017. One of the actions of the Positive Action Program was to ask members to return an optional questionnaire to identify members of minority groups who might be appointed to SLA committees. ("Actions of the Board of Directors October 14-16, 1976" 1977) The role of library associations in providing opportunities for librarians of color to serve on committees and in leadership roles is key to racial representation and equality in library leadership. (Holliday and Fenton 2022) Therefore, this action was a significant step, building on the informal network-building and mentoring that occurred at the informal conference gatherings.

The late 1960s and 1970s were a turbulent period in American and world history. SLA also took a stand on issues external to the association that affected its members. In 1973, SLA passed a resolution opposing censorship. (St. Clair 2009, 113) In 1978, the membership voted to approve a motion that SLA would not hold meetings in states that had not ratified the Equal Rights Amendment or passed their own equal rights legislation, joining associations such as ALA, the Medical Library Association, and the American Association of Law Libraries. (Berger et al. 1978; St. Clair 2009, 114)

SLA's newly established international status meant that international issues and not just national issues affected the association. In 1968, the association protested the Soviet occupation of the National Library of Czechoslovakia. (St. Clair 2009, 113) An article about special libraries in the Philippines that was published in the January 1977 issue of *Special Libraries* prompted a response about conditions under the Marcos regime in the January 1978 issue. (Milo 1978) Because of its international nature and because so many of its members worked for government and military institutions, directly or indirectly supporting war efforts through scientific and technical research, SLA could not take a stand on the Vietnam War. (St. Clair 2009, 90) Indeed, discussions of social and political issues in SLA have been, and continue to be, infused with questions about the role of a professional association, especially an international one encompassing many perspectives and experiences.

Hewitt was particularly involved in protesting the involvement of representatives of apartheid South Africa in international library associations. In 1973, SLA had suspended its membership in the International Federation of Documentation (FID) over the inclusion of a South African national representative. In 1978, during her presidency of SLA, Hewitt supported censuring IFLA for inviting South African librarians to attend the conference during apartheid. In her autobiography, she recalled being shocked when a fellow SLA board member who had just returned from South Africa encouraged her to visit. She responded, "I do not need to visit South Africa at this time because I live apartheid-USA every day of my life." (Hewitt 2014, 118) Hewitt's presidential term in the late 1970s challenged her to consider the struggles of Black librarians within the profession alongside national and international issues affecting SLA members.

SLA as an International Association

SLA was founded in 1909 at an ALA meeting in New Hampshire to provide a means for cooperation between librarians in specialized settings. While it started as a national association with a concentration of members in the northeastern United States, it soon began to expand. The Montreal Chapter was established as the first chapter outside of the United States in 1932. While SLA had never limited itself to regional or national membership, the establishment of the Montreal Chapter, now part of SLA Canada, "marked the organization as an international library association." (Spaulding 1990, 3) In 1947, SLA joined IFLA, and the European Chapter was formed in 1972 as SLA's first chapter outside of North America. Today, SLA also has active chapters in Asia and Australia and New Zealand.

The 1970s saw Black librarians make significant inroads into national library leadership in the United States, and they also ushered in a new emphasis on internationalism in librarianship. Hewitt attended the 1976 IFLA convention in Switzerland and was SLA's voting member at the General Council Meeting where the association adopted new statutes allowing library and library school members a vote and appended "and Institutions" to its name. Hewitt recognized this as a turning point for IFLA: "Anyone who has ever suffered through the pain and pangs of the reorganization, retrenchment, and redirection of any organization, must agree that IFLA, large, complex, multinational and multilingual, has now been given, through the adoption of these Statutes, the go-ahead signal for the beginning of a new era of international librarianship." (Hewitt 1977, 48-49)

During this same trip, Hewitt spoke at a meeting of the fledgling SLA European Chapter as part of an effort to “determine the status and viability of the Chapter.” (Hewitt 1977, 49) The chapter, now known as SLA Europe, has gone on to see several of its members rise to the presidency of the association, including Seema Rampersad, who is set to be installed as the fifth person of color to serve as SLA President in 2023.

In 1978, SLA published an in-depth study of international special libraries, with recommendations for the association to develop an international policy and support special librarians in sharing information. (van Halm 1978) Although SLA by this time had chapters in two countries outside of the United States, its international status was still somewhat aspirational. An advertisement in the January 1978 issue of *Special Libraries* for a new SLA membership directory noted that “[m]ost of the organizations listed in the Directory are in the United States and Canada, although a few listings of organizations in other countries also appear.”

David Bender recalled that when he was hired as SLA’s executive director during Hewitt’s presidency in 1979, the association “was just on the verge of being ready to grow and to change and to look for some new direction and some new procedures.” (Bender 2009, 5) This growth during Bender’s tenure came to include membership increases, incorporating new technologies into both librarianship and association management, moving the association headquarters from New York to Washington, D.C., and a new focus on policy issues. It also included international growth. In his history of SLA, Guy St. Clair wrote that Bender’s recognition of SLA’s leadership potential in the international community was a defining characteristic of his tenure. (St. Clair 2009, 116) By 1990, in the introduction to an issue of *Special Libraries* focusing on international cooperation, Donna Scheeder could confidently state, “The Special Libraries Association is truly an international organization. With members around the world, SLA is ready to meet the challenges of the age of global information exchange and cooperation.” (Scheeder 1990, 1)

SLA’s 70th annual conference, the one Hewitt presided over as president in 1979, was held in Honolulu and designated the First Worldwide Conference on Special Libraries, in cooperation with the Special Libraries Association of Japan (Sentokyo) and the Special Libraries Division of IFLA. The Medical Library Association had met in Hawaii just prior to the SLA conference, and the *IFLA Journal* report noted the difference in character between the two conferences, with the MLA conference having “a mainly national character” and the SLA conference attracting participants from 18 countries. (“Special Librarians Meet in Honolulu” 1979)

In a letter honoring Hewitt’s retirement, David Bender summarized her role in establishing SLA as a truly international organization:

As president of SLA you guided the Association through a difficult transitional period. Your leadership at this crucial time brought the Association into a new era of prominence and prosperity. Further, your representation of the Association at the meetings, symposia, workshops, and conferences of the International Association of Library Associations and Institutions and other national and

international organizations has enhanced SLA's image as the world's leading organization of special librarians. (Bender and Griffin 1984)

International relations were important to Hewitt in every aspect of her life, from studying French as an undergraduate to professional and personal travels around the world, and collecting Haitian art. She brought this enthusiasm for international work to her SLA leadership at a time when the association was ready to establish itself beyond the borders of the United States.

Conclusion

At the same time that Hewitt was working to establish SLA as a truly international association, her friend and colleague E.J. Josey was entering into the international work of ALA, and discovered that "racism is still alive and well in the international arena as it is in the domestic arena of our country." (Josey 1999) The United Nations had proclaimed 1972 "International Book Year," and Josey discovered that ALA had omitted Africa from its programming. Josey urged the Black Caucus of ALA to take action, which resulted in a resolution and the creation of a Task Force on Africa. Hewitt served together with Josey and Mohammed Aman on a sub-committee to write a funding proposal for an exchange program. Josey noted that the resulting pilot "heightened the awareness of Afro-American librarians of the importance of participation in international librarianship." (Josey 1977, 75) This episode demonstrates the intersection of social justice and internationalism that marked Hewitt's leadership in SLA.

The feelings of success and accomplishment contradicted by the stress and exhaustion of working in racist societies and institutions voiced by Josey in 1970 in *The Black Librarian in America* are echoed by Black librarians today. The editors of a book published to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the formation of BCALA and the publication of Josey's book wrote in their introduction, "Despite notable professional gains, as witnessed through the inclusion of Blacks/African Americans in the highest echelons of library leadership, these milestones remain the exceptions rather than the norm among Black librarians not for want of professional capacity or dynamism but on account of bureaucratic or systemic icing out." (Burns-Simpson et al. 2022, 1)

Hewitt displayed similar sentiments in her publications and in interviews. She saw increasing numbers of Black librarians in the profession, but recognized that they remained grossly underrepresented. She experienced subtle and overt racism and discrimination throughout her career and she worked within institutions to improve the situation. She celebrated the achievements of Black librarians, recognized the mentors who helped her succeed, and devoted herself to mentoring and providing opportunities for others.

In recognition of her many accomplishments and long service to the association, she was inducted into the SLA Hall of Fame at the 1984 SLA Annual Conference in New York, which marked SLA's 75th anniversary. When she died in 2022 at the age of 102, her life was celebrated in the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* and the *New York Times*. SLA members also shared memories of her leadership, including attendance at SLA events well into her retirement.

Works Cited

- “Actions of the Board of Directors October 14-16, 1976.” 1977. *Special Libraries* 68 (1): 41–42.
- “An Afternoon with Vivian Davidson Hewitt.” 2009. Special Libraries Association (SLA) Pittsburgh Chapter. YouTube, 1:02:01. <https://youtu.be/4DIGBviWL4I>.
- “An Interview with Vivian Hewitt.” n.d. Carnegie Mellon University Oral History Program. YouTube, 8:40. <https://youtu.be/r4WLuhaCJIc>.
- Bender, David. 2009. David Bender Interview by Lyle Minter. Voices of SLA: An International Oral History. <http://www.sla.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/Bender2009.pdf>.
- Bender, David, and Richard Griffin. 1984. “Letter to Vivian D. Hewitt,” March 2, 1984. Box 50, folder 7. Vivian Hewitt Papers. Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, New York Public Library.
- Berger, Patricia W., Annette Corth, Ann K. Gottlieb, and Daniel W. Lester. 1978. “SLA Faces the Equal Rights Amendment.” *Special Libraries* 69 (5/6): 223–24.
- Brown, Ina A. 1994. “The Black Information Specialist in the R&D Environment.” In *The Black Librarian in America Revisited*, edited by E. J. Josey, 195–206. Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press.
- Burns-Simpson, Shauntee, Nichelle M. Hayes, Ana Ndumu, and Shaundra Walker, eds. 2022. *The Black Librarian in America: Reflections, Resistance, and Reawakening*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Chancellor, Renate. 2022. “Clara Stanton Jones: Stirring the Waters in the Detroit Public Library.” *Libraries: Culture, History, and Society* 6 (1): 81–101. <https://doi.org/10.5325/libraries.6.1.0081>.
- Crenshaw, Tena. 1984. “Letter to Vivian D. Hewitt,” February 20, 1984. Box 50, folder 7. Vivian Hewitt Papers. Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, New York Public Library.
- Halm, Johan van. 1978. *The Development of Special Libraries as an International Phenomenon*. New York: Special Libraries Association.
- Hewitt, Vivian Davidson. 1970. “Special Librarian by Design.” In *The Black Librarian in America*, edited by E. J. Josey, 253–71. Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press.
- . 1972. “Special Libraries, Librarians and the Continuing Education of Black People.” In *What Black Librarians Are Saying*, edited by E. J. Josey, 268–74. Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press.
- . 1977. “IFLA: International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions.” *Special Libraries* 68 (1): 48–50.

- . 1980. “Profiles of Four Pioneer Black Southeastern Librarians.” In *The Black Librarian in the Southeast*, edited by Annette L. Phinazee, 231–45. Durham, NC: North Carolina Central University.
- . 1994. “A Special Librarian by Design: Twenty Years Later.” In *The Black Librarian in America Revisited*, edited by E. J. Josey, 207–15. Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press.
- . 2000. “African Americans in Special Libraries.” In *Handbook of Black Librarianship*, edited by E. J. Josey and Marva L. DeLoach, 2nd ed., 605–10. Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press.
- . 2014. *The One and Only: Vivian Ann Davidson Hewitt*. Edited by Ann Rothstein-Segan. Lexington, KY.
- Holliday, Deloice, and Michele Fenton. 2022. “Leading While Black: Are We Up for the Challenge?” In *The Black Librarian in America: Reflections, Resistance, and Reawakening*, edited by Shauntee Burns-Simpson, Nichelle M. Hayes, Ana Ndumu, and Shaundra Walker, 197–207. Princeton, NJ: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Jordan, Casper LeRoy. 1994. “The Multifaceted Career of Virginia Lacy Jones.” In *The Black Librarian in America Revisited*, edited by E. J. Josey, 75–83. Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press.
- Josey, E. J., ed. 1970. *The Black Librarian in America*. Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press.
- . 1977. “Black Caucus of the American Library Association.” In *Handbook of Black Librarianship*, edited by E. J. Josey and Ann Allen Shockley, 66–77. Littleton, CO: Libraries Unlimited.
- . 1999. “Remarks on Racism, International Relations and Librarianship.” *Progressive Librarian*, no. 15 (January): 62.
- Matarazzo, James M. 1983. “McKenna, F. E.” In *Encyclopedia of Library and Information Science*, edited by Allen Kent, 36:361–63. New York: Marcel Dekker.
- Milo, Albert J. 1978. “Progress in the Philippines?” *Special Libraries* 69 (1): 7A.
- Mobley, Emily. 2012. Voices of SLA: Emily Mobley Interview by Janice Anderson. Voices of SLA: An International Oral History. http://www.sla.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/Voices_of_SLA-Emily_Mobley-Final.pdf.
- O’Rourke, Magdalene. 1970. “Hiring Practices in Law Libraries.” In *The Black Librarian in America*, edited by E. J. Josey, 247–52. Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press.
- Scheeder, Donna. 1990. “Special Libraries—The International Scene.” *Special Libraries* 81 (1): 1–2.

Spaulding, Frank H. 1990. "Internationalism of SLA and IFLA 1989." *Special Libraries* 81 (1): 3–9.

"Special Librarians Meet in Honolulu." 1979. *IFLA Journal* 5 (4): 335–36.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/034003527900500407>.

St. Clair, Guy. 2009. *SLA at 100: From "Putting Knowledge to Work" to Building the Knowledge Culture*. Alexandria, VA: Special Libraries Association.

Tsuffis, Mary Lee (Toomes). 1970. "The Alternative to Invisibility." In *The Black Librarian in America*, edited by E. J. Josey, 237–52. Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press.

"Vivian Hewitt Papers." Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, New York Public Library.