

*Kathryn
Luther Henderson*

*A tribute in honor of her service,
teaching and friendship*

October 24-25, 2008

Tributes to Kathryn Luther Henderson

In recognition of Kathryn Luther Henderson's role as a founding member of Beta Phi Mu, alumni, students, and colleagues were invited to share reminiscences. Selected excerpts from letters received are included here, together with a brief biographical profile (excerpted from *Technical Services Management, 1965-1990: A Quarter Century of Change and a Look to the Future: Festschrift for Kathryn Luther Henderson*, edited by Linda C. Smith and Ruth C. Carter, Haworth Press, 1996, pp. 7-10)

Biographical Profile

Kathryn Luther Henderson began teaching cataloging full-time at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign in 1965, but her association with the community and university actually began several years earlier. She grew up on a farm in rural Champaign and earned all her degrees at the University of Illinois: an AB in history and English in 1944, a BS in library science in 1948, and an MS in library science in 1951. A founding member and first national secretary of Beta Phi Mu, the international honor society in library science, she held positions in the University of Illinois Library, first as a clerical assistant from 1944-1946 and then as a serial cataloger from 1950-1953. Following her marriage to William T Henderson in 1953, she moved to Chicago where she held positions as circulation librarian (1953-1956) and head cataloger (1956-1965) at McCormick Theological Seminary.

As a faculty member at Illinois, Kathryn Henderson has been involved in teaching a variety of courses. She is most closely associated with four courses: Cataloging and Classification I and II, Technical Services Functions, and Preserving Information Resources [the latter two taught jointly with William T Henderson]. Kathryn Henderson

“redevelops” her courses each time they are offered to reflect current trends and to incorporate the newest readings from the literature. Her lengthy course syllabi integrate descriptions of topics, structured in a logical progression. Students find the syllabi of much value during and after the courses. Instruction in each course employs a variety of teaching methods—lecture, student presentations, discussion, small group work, guest speakers, demonstrations. Mrs. Henderson developed computer-assisted instruction lessons for cataloging using PLATO as early as 1971. Regularly receiving outstanding ratings from students on course evaluations, in 1991 she was recognized at the campus level for her significant contributions as a teacher with the Urbana-Champaign Award for Excellence in Graduate and Professional Teaching. In 1993 she received the Distinguished Alumnus Award from the Library School Alumni Association, the Constituent alumni association of the Graduate School of Library and Information Science at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, in recognition of her many contributions as an educator. In addition she was recognized at the 1993 American Library Association conference as the winner of the 1993 Beta Phi Mu Award citing her “distinguished record of teaching and service that has defined an uncommon level of excellence and has challenged and inspired a generation of librarians and library educators.” In 1995 the Association for Library and Information Science Education recognized her with the ALISE Award for Teaching Excellence in the Field of Library and Information Science Education.

Tributes

In 1987 Kathryn Luther Henderson published the article “Some Persistent Issues in the Education of Catalogers and Classifiers” in *Cataloging & Classification Quarterly* in which she observed: “In the final analysis, teaching and learning are very personal endeavors that occur between two persons both of whom should always be learners. The other aspects will not get across as well if teachers fail at this level.” As the numerous letters submitted by current and former students demonstrate, Kathryn Luther Henderson has sustained this commitment to her students over more than 40 years of teaching. From among the many tributes to her roles as teacher, advisor, mentor, and friend, a few excerpts are reprinted here.

Arlene Taylor ('66)

Under Kathie’s guidance my love for cataloging grew into a fierce devotion to the field that has become my life. Cataloging is one of the most difficult areas of library science to teach well. It requires a deep knowledge of the history and theoretical concepts of the discipline and the ability to develop and grade practical exercises that present and clarify the concepts. Kathie was an absolute master at all of this!

Marion Reid ('68)

I remain honored to be a member of Beta Phi Mu. I know that my career has been a richer one due to my active service for this unique honor society. Most of all, I delight in knowing you as so much more than my meticulous, demanding cataloging professor. I value your support and our friendship. I salute you as a charter member of *the* library honor society, an amazing librarian, and as an incredible teacher dedicated to her students and their work.

Eloise Vondruska ('73)

As noted on the Beta Phi Mu web site, its motto, ***Aliis inserviando consumo***, meaning “Consumed in the service of others” was selected by the founders based on the concept of dedication of librarians and other information professionals to the service of others. This phrase is so Kathie—in the words you have spoken, and in the way you have led your life—consumed in the service of others. Your career as a librarian/teacher is inextricably woven in every aspect of your daily life.

Susan Dingle ('75)

Mrs. Henderson has always set a high standard for teaching and a high standard for her students' performance in her classes. Students who have taken Kathie's cataloging classes say, when they are employed in a library or library system as a cataloger, they are cataloging for Mrs. Henderson. What they mean is that Kathie's standards and her methods are memorable, and they are convinced of the value of cataloging to a standard that reaches the best principles of bibliographic control and access.

Lori Osmus Kappmeyer ('78)

I am impressed that Kathie is still teaching, and learning. The syllabi that I have seen for her Technical Services classes are always up-to-date with the latest topics and articles for her students to read. The questions that she poses for them to explore with their mentors are timeless, and I also learn something every year as I respond and think about the philosophies and rationale behind my daily work.

Yishu Jiang ('88)

There has not been a single moment that I have forgotten how Professor Henderson had gone extra miles to help me get established in this country, and how much she has influenced me in my personal and professional growth. It is she who has demonstrated to me: Be understanding, kind to and patient with others; Be thoughtful and helpful to others whenever you can; Be professional in whatever you do; Stick to the principles.

Linda Ewbank ('93)

Your vision of librarianship as a unified whole and your emphasis on technical services as user services have been crucial to my professional development, and I really liked the way you conveyed a love of the mental processes of cataloging for their own sake—a sense of the fun of solving the intellectual problems of cataloging.

Ann Kempke ('95)

Since graduating in 1995, I have participated in the Technical Services Functions class as a mentor. Every winter I anticipate the arrival of the assignment in the mail. I read through it and ILL a few new readings for myself, then eagerly await the arrival of my mentee's first message. It is a refreshing project for me—not only does it give me the opportunity to learn from one of tomorrow's librarians, but to be a satellite member of Kathie's class again.

Loring Prest ('97)

Her commitment to continual research and keeping up to date exemplified in her syllabus represented her total approach to academics. Kathie's commitment did not stop at the classroom, however. I think every student she ever had considers her a friend. I spent many hours in her office talking about both personal and professional topics. Current and former students were invited to her home for a party at the end of the semester. And to this day, I remain in contact with Kathie and Bill.

Sandra Roe ('97)

Not only have you been my mentor but you have introduced me to a multitude of others—both professionals and students—each of whom continues to challenge and stretch me professionally. I cannot imagine what these past eleven years would have been like had I not had the privilege of becoming one of your students. Thank you for allowing me access to your course back in 1997, and for all the ways that you have continued to encourage, assist, and challenge me every year since then.

Dawn Cassady ('01)

Your Technical Services class stands out as my favorite of the entire GSLIS program. The comprehensive syllabus and challenging assignments made it clear from the beginning your amazing knowledge of the subject, and how much you cared for us as students. The Think Piece was one of the hardest papers—and the most enjoyable—that I ever wrote.

Julie Derden ('06)

The number of budding LIS professionals who have benefitted from your tutelage and generosity are so dear to you, and each of us has felt special and unique in our own right in your eyes. That is just one of your many wonderful attributes—the ability to treat each and every student in each and every class as individually unique.

Laurie Chipps ('07)

Thank you for being an inspiration to me. Your passion for the field of librarianship has inspired me to seek out knowledge in all aspects of the field and your extensive syllabuses remind me there is never a chance to stop learning.