

ACRL candidates for president share plans for ACRL

Vote in the election this spring

by Patricia Ann Wand and Lizabeth (Betsy) Wilson

Ed note: *C&RL News* offered ACRL candidates for vice-president/president-elect, Patricia Ann Wand and Lizabeth (Betsy) Wilson, this opportunity to share their views with the membership. Although many of the issues facing ACRL are discussed informally at meetings, this does not provide a national forum to all members. We hope that providing this forum will assist you in making an informed choice when you receive your ballot this spring.



Patricia Ann Wand



Lizabeth (Betsy) Wilson

PATRICIA ANN WAND

My membership in ACRL dates to 1973, a 25-year span of the most dramatic and revolutionary changes imaginable in libraries. When I began in this profession librarianship was not considered a fast-track career. Few people then envisioned ubiquitous computers and the consequence of their impact on the creation, storage, and delivery of information. Now we take for granted this and many other aspects of the information age that were virtually unknown in 1973.

Part of a changing culture

Libraries were early users of computers, introducing digital technology in the 1970s to alleviate many routine operations. Shared cataloging through OCLC and Library of Congress and circulation systems are examples of early implementation. But most of this was unknown

outside the profession until the early 1990s when online catalogs became available to readers.

For 20 years librarians worked quietly, behind the scenes, implementing state-of-the-art technology to improve access to information. We can no longer afford to work quietly nor to remain figuratively behind the scenes. In the new age we must change our approach.

Outreach, outreach, outreach. Outreach shall become the mantra of academic librarians as we move into the 21st century. We cannot be passive in our presence on campus; too much is at stake. We must reach out, locally and nationally, to actualize the values of librarianship and to increase the visibility of libraries' vital role in society. The values of librarianship, so closely allied to the values of democracy, must be promoted at every level and by every librarian. As the Internet shrinks

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the world, promoting freedom of access to information is essential both in the United States and globally.

Members initiate successful programs

How does a professional association, such as ACRL, support its members and remain viable through fundamental changes of this nature? ACRL both reflects the changing environment and initiates additional changes to meet member needs. Only through active participation of its members, and the direction they give to its staff, can an association lead the profession.

ACRL builds annually on its strengths. Recent major developments serve as examples:

- defining the values of librarianship;
- establishing the Council of Liaisons;
- founding the National Institute for Information Literacy;
- training academic librarians in advocacy skills;
- heightening awareness of legislative issues;
- participating in international librarianship; and
- helping to develop and promote standards.

These are all programs that reflect member concerns and commitments. If elected ACRL President, I shall work for progress in all the programs, relying on member input and contributions. I have personal experience in many of these initiatives.

Three areas in which I have contributed throughout my career include bibliographic instruction, international librarianship, advocacy, and legislative initiatives. I relate briefly my experience in each, which will explain in part my commitment to these initiatives.

Instruction is an essential component

My experience as a secondary and higher education teacher brought me into librarianship. After teaching in a health education program as a Peace Corps volunteer in Colombia, I knew

I wanted to pursue teaching as a career. I earned a master's in teaching, taught for several years, and, after moving to a new community, took a temporary position as support staff in a university library.

While working in the library, I was astounded at the complexity of information storage and retrieval mechanisms—this was even true *before* digital access—and I realized that I had already earned a bachelor's and master's but had learned few effective strategies for using libraries. I became convinced that instruction for using the library should be a basic segment of every college student's education; a toolkit that would prepare the student for life-long learning.

Completing the MLS in 1972, I entered the profession at a time when a number of us were pushing to establish instruction as a major component of library service.

I presented a paper and helped to organize a landmark preconference, held at Southern Methodist University in 1979, from which ACRL's Bibliographic Instruction Section eventually was founded.

International librarianship comes home

At the same time I was contributing to the Community and Junior College Libraries Section, and I was active in helping to restructure the Anthropology and Sociology Section. My interest in anthropology stemmed from my cross-cultural experience in Colombia and I had pursued graduate course work in anthropology. Field work and the collection of data overlapped logically with the need to structure recorded data to make it easily retrievable. Again I found a direct and logical link between my interests: the content of the discipline of anthropology and the architecture of its data storage mechanisms.

Today my continued interests in anthropology are reflected in writing and consultancy in international librarianship as well as in leadership in ACRL's International Relations Committee and participation in the International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA).

Library legislative issues and advocacy efforts increase

In 1989 I was appointed chair of the ACRL White House Conference Task Force and represented ACRL on the ALA White House Con-

ference. I edited the position paper on academic libraries for the conference, participated in the conference in 1991, and continue to monitor follow-up of the resolutions that were passed at the conference. This activity on the national level grew naturally from my contributions to state library legislative efforts while working in Oregon.

Testifying on behalf of five library associations in February 1998 before the U.S. House Appropriations subcommittee in support of budgets for the Superintendent of Documents and Library of Congress was the ultimate experience for a library advocate! I was proud to represent the voice of so many librarians and library users as Congress pondered the allocation of limited federal dollars.

Being a member and chairing the ALA Committee on Legislation and the ACRL Government Relations Committee have given me a front row seat and allowed ample opportunity to study the variety of legislative issues that effect libraries. There is more to federal library concerns than funding!

In recent years I have written about intellectual property and fair use issues in the online environment and have served on the ALA Intellectual Property Subcommittee. I continue to work to improve the federal library depository program and to improve citizen access to government information. I follow closely library issues in the Higher Education Act and the implementation of universal service discounts to schools and libraries.

Understanding issues of professional associations

My participation in these segments of ACRL and ALA, focused on personal interests and

commitment, introduced me to various issues that professional associations face. I saw them firsthand; whether the issue was membership recruitment, retention and dues, the operation and governance of the association itself, or the delicate balance of limited resources and demand for program development.

Initially I understood issues from the perspective of my own self-interest. But as I explored the issues and talked to other members and to staff, I came to see issues in broader contexts.

Understanding the broad context is essential to the health and well-being of an association that must meet the needs of widely diverse members.

My membership on ACRL's Board of Directors, while I chaired the Budget and Finance Committee, thoroughly exposed me to the issues. I was impressed then, and continue to be impressed, with the commitment and creativity of ACRL leadership. Both elected officers and staff help steer this large organization toward commonly held goals based on the mission and values of the members themselves. Individual members make a tremendous difference through their direct and indirect contributions of time and expertise.

Conclusion

We face challenging times. By working together, by acknowledging our interdependence, by continuing to pay dues (in money and time) to a strong organization, we will meet the challenges. We must do these things and more.

This is a fast-track career. We are in the midst of a culture change. While minding our basic operations and values, we must remember the outreach mantra: Outreach, outreach, outreach.

LIZABETH (BETSY) WILSON

I wish to thank the ACRL Nominations Committee for inviting me to stand for vice-president/president elect of an association that has given me so much for nearly two decades. I have received more from ACRL than I can ever give in return. I have depended upon ACRL to keep me connected with colleagues and energized with new ideas; to provide me grounding on issues and challenges in higher education; to inspire me with quality publications; and to offer me a chance to learn in a sustained and continuous way.

When I accepted the nomination, I did so with the intent of repaying ACRL, its membership, and its leaders in some small way. I offer my energy, commitment, and ability to bring people together to do "work worth doing."

ACRL is a community

ACRL is more than an organization of libraries as its name might imply. It is a community of individual librarians brought together by common concerns and needs. ACRL's enormous strength rests in the extraordinarily com-

ACRL can help us move outward from our campuses into the interconnected worlds of higher education, K-12, extended communities, global partners, and those who employ our graduates.

mitted individuals who join, who volunteer, who contribute, and who lead. ACRL allows us to step out of our narrow institutional environments and connect with librarians and libraries' staff from the broadest continuum of academic libraries—from the community college to the baccalaureate institution to the comprehensive university to the distance learning provider. I have always believed that our greatest strengths are also our greatest challenges. ACRL's strength rests in inclusiveness and breadth; its challenge rests in finding focus while still letting the many diverse voices of its membership be heard and addressed.

Professional associations like ACRL intrigue me. What motivates thousands of academic librarians to ante up dues, volunteer their weekends and limited spare time, pay their way to conferences, and donate extraordinary effort to the association? It can't be explained by being able to add a line to a resume. It can't be explained by getting another membership card. It can't be explained by having to dig deeper into our pockets to fund our travel.

What motivates thousands to give their discretionary effort and time to ACRL? I believe learning motivates us. Connections motivate us. Making an impact motivates us. But most of all, service and "work worth doing" motivates us. These motivations are all inherent in ACRL membership.

An idol becomes a colleague

It seems like yesterday that I attended my first ACRL event. It was the first-ever Instruction Section (formerly Bibliographic Instruction Section) dinner. The dinner served to kick off a Midwinter conference held in San Antonio. Now, I grant you, how can you not have a great first experience in San Antonio? Knowing not a soul at the dinner and being filled with a healthy dose of confer-

ence uncertainty, I sought out a spot at a rather lively table. When I sat down, someone immediately welcomed me to the group and introduced herself as Sharon Hogan. Sharon Hogan—one of my instruction idols! I had read her writings in library school, never thinking that I would ever meet the person behind the inspiring articles.

Not only did an idol become a colleague that night, but I met many others of equal stature who were genuinely interested in what a beginning librarian, full of newfound enthusiasm for the teaching role of librarians, had to say. I also found a place for myself in the organization. That dinner experience is symbolic to me of what ACRL is and should be about—connections, continuity, and colleagues. I have never forgotten the kindness and support Sharon extended to me that night.

Since then, I have tried to model the same warmth when I attend an ACRL event, meeting, or corridor discussion. We never know when something we say or do, or don't do, will inspire others to invoke their "discretionary effort" on behalf of ACRL.

I hope to further the commitment of ACRL members to affect and influence, to inspire and guide, and to support our individual and collective learning. As each of us nurtures connections and collaborations on our campuses and in our communities, ACRL can support us through its many organizational manifestations and personal networks. ACRL can help us move outward from our campuses into the interconnected worlds of higher education, K-12, extended communities, global partners, and those who employ our graduates. ACRL's unique position as catalytic homebase for integrative efforts such as the Institute for Information Literacy and the Harvard Leadership Institute will allow us to build collaborations necessary for our future success as academic librarians.

Looking to the Strategic Plan

I believe that the best strategic planning manifests itself as strategic thinking. Strategic thinking is the necessary precondition for wise investments throughout ACRL from individual committees, sections, chapters, and discussion groups to the association as a whole. As with our own institutions, ACRL

has finite resources and unlimited needs, demands, and ideas.

By using the ACRL Strategic Plan as a guide but still allowing fringe ideas and initiatives that are worth doing to emerge, we can maintain a responsive and nimble organization that academic librarians will want to join. The strategic directions articulated in the ACRL Strategic Plan are solid, on the money, and reflective of the memberships' needs and concerns. I would continue the learning and leadership foci advanced by President Maureen Sullivan in furthering professional development opportunities; collaboration with other professional organizations of higher education; a prominent role in planning and decision making for influencing information policy; and efficient and effective ACRL operations.

We need to sustain and grow established programs such as the liaison work with other professional associations in higher education and the legislative advocacy effort. We must be articulate as we sit at the various tables where discussions of and decisions about copyright, intellectual property, information access, and information and technology literacy are being made. ACRL's fine work through its Council of Liaisons efforts, legislative initiatives, high profile work with accrediting agencies, and outcomes assessment should be sustained and expanded.

At the same time, we need to create an environment that catalyzes new and needed efforts that can be grown in collaboration with other groups and organizations. We need not go this alone. The Institute for Information Literacy (IIL), seeded by ACRL, is off to a running start with its first Immersion Program scheduled for July 1999. I have had the privilege of serving on the IIL steering group for

the past two years and have seen how transformational initiatives can flourish when inspired leadership from someone like Cerise Oberman is coupled with the operational and fiscal support of ACRL. We need to allow for more such innovative and high profile efforts to move quickly and deftly through the organization. ACRL has enormous potential to serve as a catalyst, which connects good ideas with real problems.

Creating a seamless environment

Most recently, I have experiences that underscore that we can no longer (if we ever could) feel comfortable or complacent about the artificial boundaries among academic, school, special, and public libraries. Information technology, consortial purchases of electronic resources, the growing digital library presence, and the reality of lifelong learning have worked to soften and dissolve these divisions. We must look for ways to not only connect with our colleagues in other higher education professional organizations, but also within our profession and our communities.

The American Association of School Librarians/ACRL Task Force on the Educational Role of Librarians is evidence that ACRL leadership already understands the importance of creating a seamless library and educational environment for our communities. IIL will focus on community-based initiatives and establishing best practices for all types of institutions through collaborative efforts. Collaboration within and outside ACRL is of critical importance. There is much work to be done, and staying within our narrow institutional and organizational walls will benefit none of us or those we seek to serve. ■



Advance registration through March 12

Register for ACRL's 9th National Conference, "Racing Toward Tomorrow," by March 12, 1999, and save nearly 15% off onsite rates. The conference, April 8-11, 1999, in Detroit, will allow you to keep pace and provide leadership for the future direction of academic libraries. More than 200 programs will explore issues such as scholarly communication, infor-

mation literacy, distance learning, electronic publishing, alternate funding sources, etc.

Join ACRL, network with your colleagues, and sharpen your skills at the premiere event for academic librarians.

Registration materials are on the Web at <http://www.ala.org/acrl/preindex.html>. Or call (800) 545-2433 x2514 to request registration materials.