

ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

SC/MLA History Committee

The Oral History Interview

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Interview conducted by: Carmen M. Santos Corrada

Interview

1. Please describe how you became interested in librarianship and give a brief overview of your professional career.

I started working in a library as a Library Technician, in 1976 at UPR: Cayey Campus Library, worked there for one year. Later worked for another year at UPR: Rio Piedras Campus Library and at Morris Library in Southern Illinois University as a Graduate Assistant from 1979-1984. Working at Morris Library they gave me a scholarship and sponsored my graduate studies. From 1984-to present I have been working at the UPR: Medical Sciences Campus at the Conrado F. Asenjo Library .Through these experiences I “fell in love” with librarianship and the information world. Specifically the academic and biomedical library, because access and dissemination of health information is so important for the health providers and for all the people in any country.

We were the first ones in our Campus to use CD-ROM technology and databases.

2. Now let’s talk about some of your Southern Chapter activities. Do you remember the first Southern Chapter meeting you attended? What details can you remember about it?

My first experience with the charming and heart-warming people of the Southern Chapter was in 1988. Maritza Garcia (a colleague of mine) and I went to a CONBLS Meeting in Miami in representation of the Library Director, Ana Moscoso. Later in 1990 went to my first Meeting in Atlanta. It was a very pleasant experience to have the opportunity to meet other medical librarians and have and interchange of information, ideas, projects and problems which at that moment was so beneficial for me in my professional development as there were no other medical librarians in the island, and I was “starting” in the field. I was

“like a sponge” absorbing everything from the CE courses, the exhibitors, conferences and even social events. It was an enrichment experience for me.

3. Please recount any funny or interesting stories you might recall about any Southern Chapter meeting you attended.

The two best things I recall was the compilation and publication of The Southern Chapter’s Fifty Year History 1951-2001 by T. Mark Hodges and the compilation and publication of the Southern Chapter Members Recipe Book by Tom Williams both publications I enjoy and cherish a lot.

4. Can you talk about your observations on how the Southern Chapter has evolved through the years?

Over the years it has grown in membership, many of its members have been honored and have received different awards for their professional achievements by the Southern Chapter and by MLA. CONBLS was created and has been an important part of the organization. The chapter’s newsletter Southern Expressions has been maintained and strengthened. It is an important medium for the organization to keep its members informed of the colleagues and libraries activities.

5. In your opinion, what sets the Southern Chapter apart from other professional library associations?

Excellent leadership, warm-hearted and very nice people, members with high professional standards and goals that serve as example to new members and /or as an example to others to follow, good communication, encouragement to its members to participate in the organization.

6. Were you ever a Southern Chapter officer? Which committees did you serve on?

I served as a member of the Communications Committee 1990-1997 and Professional Development Committee 1992-2001

7. Can you tell us anything about the founding of the chapter or any chapter-related event of historical significance?

The creation of CONBLS, the creation of the newsletter Southern Expressions
The compilation of 50 years of Southern Chapter History by T. Mark Hodges

8. How has the Southern Chapter impacted your professional development throughout your career?

Understand and become better acquainted of medical librarianship, keep up to date in new trends and the integration and use of new technologies in the profession, share experiences and projects with colleagues

9. What are the names of the people who contributed to your professional development?

Aura Jiménez, Ana Isabel Moscoso, T. Mark Hodges, Alfred N. Brandon, Lynn Fortney, Janet Fisher, Martha Jane Zachert, Ada Zeltzer, Henry Lemkau, Jr., Anne Robichaux and many more..

10. What do you recall about some of the MLA meetings you attended?

Good CE courses, excellent speakers, interesting conferences, and enjoyable social activities. Also, been proud to belong to the Southern Chapter. Attend to MLA meetings is an experience I would recommend as well as the ones to the Southern Chapter

11. How has the medical library profession changed during your career? Which developments in the field of librarianship had the greatest impact on your professional life?

The integration of computers, automation, Internet and in general the integration and use of communications and electronic technologies in the dissemination and access of biomedical information.

12. What advice would you give to new medical librarians?

Most definitely I would encourage them to become a member of our professional organization and get involved and participate in its activities. It's a way to acquire knowledge and better understand medical librarianship, keep up to date in new trends, new technologies, and new projects in the profession. The exchange of information with other colleagues, the opportunity of taking CE courses, and share activities is also important.

13. Do you have any final comments?

I feel proud of my membership to the Southern Chapter and throughout the years It helped me in the development of my professional career which I love and enjoy. I'm thankful to Prof. Aura Jiménez who introduced me to medical librarianship and to our professional organizations, she was Conrado F. Asenjo's Library director when I was hired in 1984. I'm also thankful to Prof. Ana Isabel Moscoso also Conrado F. Asenjo's Library director for nine years, who gave me the opportunity to assist and participate at the Southern Chapter and MLA meetings as she was very active in both organizations. Both of them were excellent professional role models to follow.

ACCOMPANYING PHOTOGRAPHS

Captions

- Tita #1: Southern Chapter Meeting, Registration and Hospitality Desk, 1995
San Juan, PR
(Nilca in green dress)
- Tita #2: Southern Chapter Meeting, Registration and Hospitality Desk, 1995
San Juan, PR
- Tita #3: MLA Meeting, 1999
Chicago, Il.
(Nilca in red dress)
- Tita #4: MLA Meeting, 1999
Chicago, Il.
- Tita #5: MLA Meeting, 1999
Chicago, Il.
- Tita #6: Southern Chapter Meeting, 2000
Mobile, Alabama
- Tita #7: Southern Chapter Meeting, 2000
Mobile, Alabama
- Tita #8: Southern Chapter Meeting, Hospitality Desk, 2005
San Juan, PR
- Tita #9: CONBLS Meeting, 1988
Miami, Florida

INTERVIEWER:

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