

**MEMORIAL RESOLUTION OF THE FACULTY  
OF THE UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON**

**ON THE DEATH OF PROFESSOR EMERITA VIRGINIA HOLTZ**

*... [Virginia] was a leader in every sense of the word . . . All of us who knew her benefited from her wisdom and learned from her 'best practices.'* –Lucretia McClure in the tribute written by Dorothy Kanter in the Journal of the Medical Library Association, Jan. 2007

Virginia Holtz, professor emerita and retired director of the Middleton Health Sciences Library, died April 3, 2006 at Tanglewood, her beloved homestead in Middleton, Wisconsin. Virginia was born on July 6, 1932, in Milwaukee, to Lester and Helene Holtz. She grew up loving books and animals, one biographer suggesting that she would become a veterinarian or a librarian. UW was fortunate that she chose librarianship. She received her bachelor's degree in 1954 from the Wisconsin State Teachers College-Milwaukee and continued at UW-Madison where she earned her master's degree in library science in 1956. She began her life-long career at the University Health Sciences Library, beginning as a student worker under the tutelage of the director, Miss Helen Crawford. Virginia began her career in the Medical Library Service, the library's outreach reference service, providing medical information to physicians in the state of Wisconsin. Although still a student, Virginia soon became responsible for the administration of the service. As the library staff grew, Virginia became associate librarian. Following challenges such as the changeover from the Library of Congress classification to the National Library of Medicine (NLM), Virginia became director of the Middleton Health Sciences Library (opened in 1967) in 1971, having also been on the Center for Health Sciences' Construction Planning Committee. Years of innovation, committee work, professional association involvement, and adroit management followed.

Throughout her career, Virginia applied business concepts to library management. She used flow charts to determine the best staff workflow between departments. She had her staff collect journal use statistics in the early 1980s—long before budget shortfalls appeared on the library scene. She also used library statistics to justify staff increases to the university administration. In Virginia's words, quoting from her oral history:

*"Probably the best thing I did was to find some of the most remarkable people that I know to be on my staff."*

She developed her staff's management skills by introducing participatory management concepts into library organization. As director of a major campus professional library, Virginia served on the University Library Coordinating Council. She was appointed to the Medial Informatics Advisory Committee, which was responsible for developing a medical informatics program at the Medical School. She was awarded the title of full professor at the university and was on the university Faculty Senate.

While there were no formal mentoring programs in the 1970s or 1980s, many of whom she touched consider Virginia his or her mentor. She instilled her philosophy of the importance of service to the library user to her staff, many of her staff members going on to be directors or heads of departments of other libraries.

*She was a gem! Virginia was one of the very best public services librarians I knew in some forty years of practice and teaching. I learned a great deal from her, and I considered her an important mentor throughout my career on campus. . . . I always tried to have Virginia interact with my [SLIS reference] students, because she was such a good role model of what a reference librarian should be and because she was so adroit at sharing her wide knowledge and sound experience with the students. Later, when Virginia and I were both in administrative roles, I continued to learn from her and to be inspired by her common-sense approach to leadership. Beyond all this, she was a generous friend whose warmth and support I treasured.* –Charles Bunge, professor emeritus at the UW School of Library and Information Studies

Virginia was a member or officer of countless local, regional, and national committees. She was president of the Association of Academic Health Sciences Library Directors in 1981-1982, a member of the Medical Library Association Board of Directors from 1976-1979, a member of the NLM Biomedical Library Review Committee in 1982-1985, and she served on several Integrated Advance Information Management Systems (IAIMS) grant review teams. She was also a member of the Association of American Medical Colleges Health Sciences Library Study Advisory Committee. She was selected as the Janet Doe Lecturer by the MLA in 1986, and in 1993 the Wisconsin Health Science Library Association voted her Librarian of the Year.

Virginia retired from the library on June 30, 1997, after forty-one years of service. During retirement she spent more time with her family, friends and of course, her dogs, cats, and horse. Virginia showed and bred AKC champion collies. She was the owner/breeder of one of the top-producing champion rough collies of all time and was instrumental in establishing the smooth collie in the United States. Virginia served on many educational committees of the Collie Club of America. She received her AKC judging license in 1972 and, among her numerous judging assignments, judged the Collie Club of America national specialty three times. Her influence to the collie world was exemplified by the Collie Club of America dedicating their 2008 National Specialty in her memory.

Virginia is survived by a sister, Dolores Nichols of Ripon; a brother, Robert (Barbara) of Las Vegas, Nev.; nephews, Allan (Linda) Nichols, Randy Nichols, Michael (Nancy) Nichols, and Brian Holtz; and niece, Jennifer Barclay. Virginia was succeeded in death by her longtime housemate, Joan Graber. Virginia's dedication to the profession can still be seen in the vibrancy of the current liaison program, the continual attention paid to collections—print, electronic and historical—and to the patrons, who still remain the reason we pursue excellence at the Middleton (now Ebling) Health Sciences Library. We are all diminished by her passing.

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Dorothy Kanter

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