

Lois Sewell

Associate Librarian and Unit Supervisor of IO Catalog Management

Following a career of over 43 years, Lois Sewell retired in May 2007 from the Indiana University Libraries. For Lois, professional satisfaction as well as a meaningful contribution to the mission of the IU Libraries would always come from within the area of technical services, specifically the discipline of cataloging.

Lois graduated magna cum laude from Wilmington College of Ohio, where she completed a double major in art and English. Though she was certified to teach both subjects at the high school level in Ohio, Lois immediately pursued graduate studies at Indiana University where she completed an M.A. in library science in 1964.

With her newly minted degree in hand, Lois accepted her first appointment at the IU Libraries in the position of cataloger in the Cataloging Department. Lois cataloged monographs in support of the degree programs in French and Italian, English, optometry, home economics, theater, and radio and television. In a few years she expanded her repertoire of expertise to include the fields of geology, geography, biology, all Romance languages and literatures, and African studies. With an exceptional aptitude for detail-oriented work and a capacity to catalog large amounts of difficult material, Lois was promoted to the position of cataloging consultant, where she served as an outstanding resource person on all aspects of bibliographic description, subject analysis, and classification. Lois joined the management group of her department and was a frequent correspondent with the Library of Congress, the Indiana Cooperative Library Service Authority (InCOLSA) and OCLC, an international bibliographic utility of shared cataloging records.

Lois also enjoyed success in the field of management in libraries, with numerous appointments at IU. She began as acting head of the Automated Processing Department, which was immediately followed by the position of supervisor of the Contributed Copy Cataloging Section. Whenever reorganization occurred, Lois would emerge with a managerial position, though always with the opportunity to catalog. She also held the title of assistant head of Monographic Processing Services and most recently was supervisor of the Monographic Original Cataloging Unit.

From the beginning of her career it was evident that Lois had not only the cataloging expertise but the personal characteristics to be an effective and skilled trainer. There was rarely a new initiative or project in which Lois was not involved in training cataloging staff throughout her career. Lois' training work, coupled with her numerous years as manager, gave many of us in the profession the opportunity to learn from one of the best. Across this country there are many librarian catalogers and library managers who learned the art of cataloging from Lois Sewell!

Lois' first love always was cataloging. Long before the term "metadata" existed, Lois was preparing expert metadata for the patrons of the IU Libraries. No matter the position she held, Lois always found time to catalog. It is a reasonable estimate that during the course of her career, Lois cataloged circa 47,000 books. That feat would be praiseworthy for one whose resume is devoted solely to cataloging. For Lois to have contributed that effort while consulting, managing, and/or training is truly exceptional.

Lois was a frequent choice for committee appointments and she chaired several committees as well. Throughout her career Lois was an active participant in the American Library Association and the Ohio Valley Group of Technical Services Librarians. She drew upon her degree in English as an editor of two books on Minnesota history and as primary issue editor for the *Technical Services Quarterly*. Lois is also an illustrator, cartoonist, and satirist, with these talents appearing variously in "Focus on Indiana Libraries" and the "Indiana University Library Newsletter."

Every fall, her colleagues benefited from Lois' ability to coax huge, colorful blooms from the many amaryllis plants that adorned her work area. Now we suspect that her flower garden is the benefactor of her attention, care, and expertise. While we miss her greatly, no one can deny this was a retirement well earned!

Sylvia Turchyn