

Mary Wallace Davidson

Mary Wallace Davidson came to IU in 2000, after retiring from the Sibley Music Library at the Eastman School of Music, University of Rochester. Having run a major American music library for 15 years, she spent the last five years of a distinguished career running another major music library – ours, the William and Gayle Cook Music Library.

Mary was born in Louisville, Kentucky, and attended the Louisville Collegiate School. Her mother did doctoral work in English at IU Bloomington and taught writing and literature at IU Southeast for 28 years. A Pendleton Scholarship took Mary to Wellesley College, where she graduated with a B.A. in music history, theory, and composition. She enjoyed the college so much that she stayed on for a year as a research assistant for the *Wellesley Index to Victorian Periodicals*. She then moved on to the music department of the Boston Public Library while attending library school at Simmons College. Her first professional position was in charge of art and music at the Brookline Public Library. Two years later she was hired by Radcliffe College as music librarian. In 1967 Wellesley beckoned again, and Mary returned there as music librarian for 17 years. Eastman followed, at a challenging period in the library's history. Her achievements there were staggering. She restructured the staff; weathered two critical budget cuts; planned and implemented a new building; created a music preservation program; developed new collections and provided online aids to their access; implemented two different online cataloging systems; and took a leading role in a cooperative initiative on a national scale, funded by federal grants, to convert card-catalog records into machine-readable form.

Mary has long been active in the Music Library Association, serving as president from 1983 to 1985, overlapping her transition from Wellesley to Eastman. She was awarded the association's Citation in Recognition of Distinguished Service to Music Librarianship in 1998. She served as a board member for the Sonneck Society, now called the Society for American Music. She has also served as a consultant for libraries on music library buildings, collections, and services; for music publishers on their archives; and for the National Endowment for the Humanities on grants.

Mary has published extensively on music librarianship and bibliography. She wrote the articles on American music libraries in both *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* (1980), the world's major music encyclopedia, as well as *The New Grove Dictionary of American Music* (1986). She was co-author of *Eighteenth-Century American Secular Music Manuscripts: An Inventory* (1980), and of the award-winning *Boston Composers Project: Bibliography of Contemporary Music* (1983). She has published articles on nineteenth-century American music periodicals; the composer David Diamond; music library collections, catalogs, administration, and space planning; music copyright; and music librarianship in the 1990s and in the first decade of the twenty-first century. She has given papers at the International Association of Music Libraries, Archives, and Documentation Centres; the International Musicological Society; and of course, the Music Library Association.

In her five years at Indiana University, Mary was head of the Cook Music Library, coordinated the Music Librarianship Specialization in the School of Library and Information Science, and taught music bibliography and music librarianship with great enthusiasm. She was also one of the principal investigators in both metadata and copyright in IU's Variations2 research project funded by the National Science Foundation, for which she quickly came up to speed on digital-music library issues. Following several acting heads in the Music Library, Mary brought a calm stability to the staff, an ideal of service to all the library's users, and a sense of fair play. For her last semester at IU, Mary moved over to the Lilly Library, where she has been creating a database of their music manuscripts in preparation for cataloging and for contributing to RISM, the international cooperative catalog of early music. She is still working on this project as a volunteer.

Deep down Mary will always be a "Wellesley girl": smart, literate, inquisitive, with the broadest of overviews. Now she has also become an honorary Hoosier. She is truly a "people person" – warm, caring, and friendly, always bubbling over with stories about her many friends and colleagues around the globe. She takes a genuine interest in the welfare of everyone she meets. Typically, her main research of the moment is an oral history project for the Music Publishers Association, in which she gets to interview publishers of the older generation about their experiences. But her "real" retirement project is to practice the piano again, to make music for herself, after a lifetime of helping others to play and to study. We will all miss her.

David Lasocki