

Betty Jo Kish Irvine

Through a combination of intelligence, determination, and limitless energy, Dr. Betty Jo Kish Irvine has come to personify an entire profession, and to be recognized by her peers as the quintessential art librarian. After a 40-year career at Indiana University distinguished by dozens of notable achievements and awards, it is difficult to imagine the IU Libraries or the Henry R. Hope School of Fine Arts without the indomitable presence of "BJ."

A native of Indianapolis and a graduate of Shortridge High School, BJ enrolled at IU as an undergraduate in fine arts in 1962. After receiving her B.A. with distinction in 1966, she was hired by the IU Libraries and Henry Hope, chair of fine arts, to manage the department's already sizeable slide collection. BJ not only brought organization, order, and consistency to the fine arts slide collection, she also enrolled in the School of Library and Information Science (SLIS). She began to cast a librarian's eye on the topic of slide libraries, and recognized the need for a systematic study of existing practice and a standard reference work for the field. She received a Carnegie travel grant from the Department of Fine Arts in 1968 to undertake a tour of major U.S. slide libraries, and to conduct a survey of slide professionals, their methods, and the history of their collections. The result was the pioneering *Slide Libraries: A Guide for Academic Institutions and Museums*, published in 1974 by Libraries Unlimited.

Having conquered slides, BJ sought new challenges. Completing her M.L.S. in 1969, she became head of the IU Fine Arts Library, with administrative supervision of both the Fine Arts Slide Library and the photoarchives collections. BJ became one of the first members of the Art Libraries Society/North America (ARLIS/NA) and turned her talents and energy toward guaranteeing the success of the fledgling organization, now numbering more than 1,000 members. She was president of the organization in 1993, served on its executive board from 1991 to 1994, and chaired many important committees, task forces, and initiatives. She shepherded to completion major society publications on both professional and facilities standards, and was recognized with the society's highest honor in 2002, the ARLIS/NA Distinguished Service Award.

One has only to visit the beautiful IU Fine Arts Library or conduct research in its collections to appreciate the lasting contribution BJ Irvine has made to Indiana University. It is due entirely to her tenacity and vision that IU has one of the finest art library facilities in the country. Her close relationship with both studio and art history faculty and students, and her close ties and friendships in the Bloomington art community, including service on the Friends of Art and the Bellevue Gallery boards, have helped create one of the best art library collections in the Midwest. For many years she has hosted an annual Friends of Art Dinner in the Fine Arts Library, the proceeds of which go to purchase exceptional books for the collection.

BJ has also been a pivotal force in the IU Libraries, actively involved in obtaining faculty status for IU librarians and in the formation of the Bloomington Library Faculty Council and the Indiana University Librarians Association. Whether chairing important committees, serving as acting personnel librarian, or any other task asked of her, including the provision of sage advice to several deans, BJ has earned the very highest respect of her colleagues, in recognition of which she was honored with the William Evans Jenkins Award in 1992.

BJ has been equally outstanding as a teacher and mentor, and her impact on her students is amply demonstrated by the number of practicing art and image professionals who have studied, interned, or worked with her at IU. In her roles as adjunct associate professor in both the School of Fine Arts (from the 1970s on) and SLIS (from the 1980s on), she has influenced the careers of hundreds of future art historians and librarians. Her development of a specialized course in Art Librarianship, and its evolution into an art

librarianship specialization in SLIS and a dual degree program in art history and library science, have established Indiana University as a center for art and image librarianship, one whose graduates are recognized and sought after.

BJ has always had a special bond with studio faculty and students, through personalized instruction tailored for each area and her passionate acquisition and promotion of artists' books as an art form. Her contribution to the School of Fine Arts was recognized in 2000 with a Teaching Excellence Recognition Award. She established an endowment in 2000 to fund the purchase of outstanding artists' books, and in 2004 she created the Sara R. Irvine Artist's Book Award for the purchase of a book created by a current fine arts student. Many former students, now teachers or practicing artists, credit BJ's inspired presentations of artists' books in their classes with influencing their work and careers.

BJ also pursued a Ph.D. in library and information science, receiving her doctorate in 1982. Focusing her dissertation on women in academic libraries, higher education, and corporate management, her research and subsequent publications gave her national recognition in this field. In 2001 she won the Gros Louis Special Recognition Award from the Office for Women's Affairs for women's contributions to the research and teaching mission of Indiana University.

A class in Chinese ink painting turned BJ's energies in yet another direction in the 1990s, and after intensive Chinese language training, she was appointed a visiting scholar at the Nanjing Art Institute in 1999, visiting Chinese art libraries and making contacts with her counterparts. Her activities also include teaching yoga and Chi-Lel Qigong. As a practicing artist in traditional Chinese ink painting, she curated "The Chinese Brush" show at the Bellevue Gallery in 2003 and continues to exhibit her own work.

Eileen Fry