

Foreword

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On September 9, 2004 librarianship lost a true champion. Anne Grodzins Lipow was unique – of all the testimonials I’ve read about her that is one undeniable truth. We each knew a different set of Anne’s qualities, or engaged with her in a different way, but in the end it all came down to the fact that Anne was someone we could all say was “larger than life”.

The days after her passing were filled with personal testimonials that were mostly lodged as comments on the Infopeople blog. It was an odd experience for me to read these messages and realize that as much as I felt that I knew her, I barely knew her at all. I was like the proverbial blind man with his hands wrapped around one part of the elephant, while others had a firm grip on other body parts and would describe a very different animal. My reality, as deeply felt as it was, was only a pale shadow of the whole.

But for all that, it was a long, long shadow. As a newly-minted librarian at UC Berkeley in the second half of the 1980s, I knew Anne as the person who led the outreach and instructional efforts of the library. Before long, she saw in me the potential to be a good teacher, despite my fear of public speaking, so she pulled me into her program and began teaching me everything she knew about speaking, putting on workshops, making handouts, etc. Under her tutelage, I taught classes such as dialup access to the library catalog, when 300bps modems were still common.

As the Internet began making inroads into universities, Anne was there with newly developed workshops on how to use it. She was convinced very early on, as was I, that the Internet would be an essential technology for libraries. This led to her approaching my colleague John Ober (then on faculty at the library school at Berkeley) and I about doing a full-day Internet workshop scheduled to coincide with the 1992 ALA Annual Conference in San Francisco. Using a metaphor of John's, we called it “Crossing the Internet Threshold”.

In preparing for the workshop, we created so many handouts that we needed to put them into a binder that began to look increasingly like a book in the making. With typical Anne flair, she arranged for the gifted librarian cartoonist Gary Handman (also our colleague at Berkeley) to create a

snazzy cover for the binder, that she also used to create T-shirts (which many of us have to this day).



Anne knew enough about workshops to do a "trial run" before the big day, so we did one for UC Berkeley library staff a couple weeks before, which gave us feedback essential to making an excellent workshop. In the end, the workshop was such a hit that Anne ran with it. She took the binder of handouts we had created and made a book out of it — the first book of her newly-created business called Library Solutions Institute and Press. Her decision to publish the book herself rather than seek out a

publisher was so typical of Anne. And *how* she did it will tell you a lot about her.

Despite the higher cost, Anne insisted on using domestic union printing shops for printing. While other publishers were publishing books overseas for a fraction of the cost, publishing for Anne was a political and social activity, through which she could do good for those around her. It was very important to her to treat people with respect and kindness, and she did it so well. That was the kind of person Anne was.

While every publisher I have since worked with after Anne has insisted they are incapable of paying royalties any more frequently than twice a year, Anne paid her authors **monthly**. And whereas other publishers wait months to pay you for royalties earned long before, Anne would pay immediately. This meant that when books were returned, as they sometimes were, she took the loss for having paid the author royalties on books that had not been sold. That was the kind of person Anne was.

Anne continued to blaze new trails after libraries began climbing on the Internet bandwagon, due in no small measure to her books and workshops on the topic. Anne became a well-known and coveted

consultant on a number of topics, but in particular on reference services. Her "Rethinking Reference" institutes and book were widely acclaimed, and her book *The Virtual Reference Librarian's Handbook* (2003) demonstrated that Anne was always at the cutting edge of librarianship. That was the kind of person Anne was.

I visited her after her cancer was diagnosed and after her treatment had failed. We all knew there was no hope, that she had only a matter of weeks to live. Despite the obvious ravages of the illness, Anne's outlook remained bright and welcoming. She was happy to have her friends and family around her, and we talked of many things except the dark shadow that hung over us all. Even then, she was happy to see whoever came by, and to talk with them with a smile and good wishes. That was the kind of person Anne was.

A piece of all my major professional accomplishments I owe to Anne, and her great and good influence on me. She would deny this, despite it's truth, wanting all the credit to accrue to me alone. That was the kind of person Anne was.

Each one of us who have contributed to this volume have been touched by Anne in our own, quite personal ways. Some of us have known of her work mostly by reputation and reading, while others were blessed with more direct and personal contact. But the fact remains that Anne cast a long professional shadow that will affect many librarians yet to come.

For those of us who created a monument of words to someone we love and respect, Anne had one final gift to give. As anyone who has ever created a present for someone they love knows, in so doing you think about the person for whom you are making the gift. Therefore, the authors of this volume have all spent more time with Anne, and as always it was time well spent. We know our readers will count it so too.

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