

MEDICAL LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

ORAL HISTORY COMMITTEE

INTERVIEW

WITH

PHYLLIS S. MIRSKY, AHIP, FMLA

Interview conducted by Joan S. Zenan, AHIP, FMLA

April 24, 2009

Edited by

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January 2011

Published 2011

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CONSENT FORM FOR ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

CONSENT AGREEMENT

This confirms my understanding and agreement with the Medical Library Association (MLA) concerning my participation in an oral history interview as a part of MLA's Oral History Program.

1. I agree to be interviewed by JOAN S. ZENAN on APRIL 24-25, 2009. I understand that my interview will be recorded, and that a transcript and edited version of my interview will later be created. I understand that I will be given an opportunity to review and edit the edited transcript before its release.

2. I hereby grant and assign all rights, title and interest to any and all recordings and transcripts of my interview including copyright [and all rights subsumed thereunder] to the MLA. I will be given a copy of the edited transcript for my personal use. I understand that the transfer of these rights to MLA confers no obligations on MLA to promote, market, or otherwise make publicly available copies of the interview.

3. One or more edited and/or condensed versions of the interview, approved by me, may be disseminated by MLA as it deems appropriate.

4. I understand that the original, unedited recording of my interview and the original unedited transcript will be maintained in the MLA Archives at the National Library of Medicine, or at such other place as MLA may reasonably designate, and may be made available to researchers who have demonstrated that they have appropriate qualifications.

I further understand that the original unedited recording and/or the original unedited transcript will be made available with the following restrictions (Check one):

☒ No restrictions

☐ The following specified portions of the interview will not be made available to anyone until _____.

Phyllis Mirsky

Name of Interviewee

Phyllis Mirsky

Signature of Interviewee

4/24/09

Date

Joan Zenan

Name of Interviewer

Joan Zenan

Signature of Interviewer

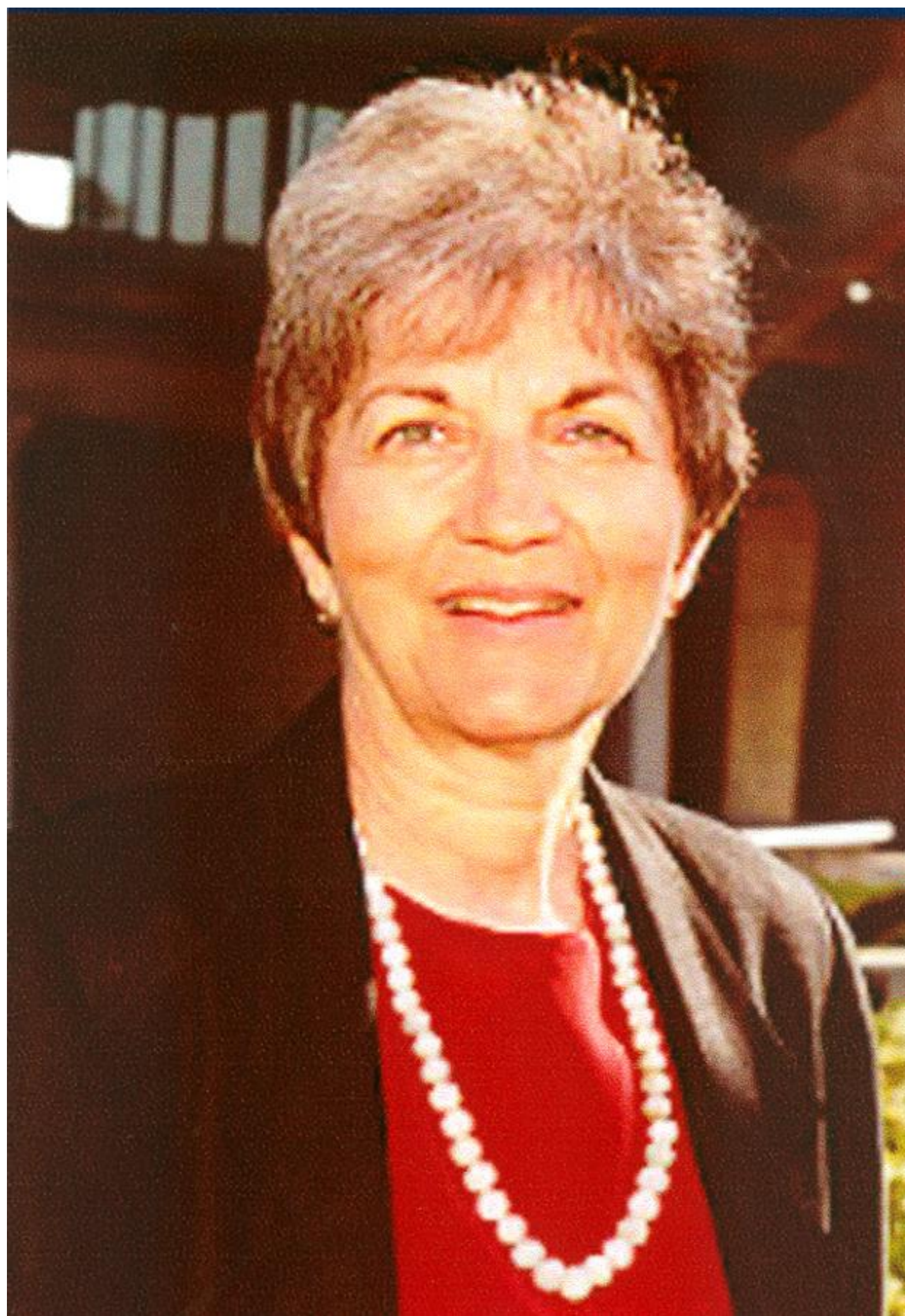
4/24/09

Date

Accepted by:

Carla Frank
MLA Executive Director

7/7/10



Biographical Statement

Phyllis S. Mirsky, AMLS, AHIP, FMLA, graduated from the library school of the University of Michigan in 1965 after a brief period working in social welfare and public libraries. Her interest in people was a cornerstone throughout her career and helped to determine many of the issues she pursued in her work settings and as a leader within the Medical Library Association.

Mirsky held several positions at the UCLA Biomedical Library during 1965-1979, including associate director of the Pacific Southwest Regional Medical Library. She was head of the Reference Section at the National Library of Medicine from 1979-1981. She occupied various positions within the University of California, San Diego Libraries from 1981 until her retirement in 2005, including deputy university librarian and acting university librarian on three occasions. While employed at these three prestigious institutions, her professional responsibilities focused on consulting for hospital libraries, reference services, collection development, personnel management, education and training, facilities projects, and managing the modification of library services to take best advantage of emerging technologies. She also served as a guest lecturer for three different library schools.

Mirsky was president of the Medical Library Association from 1984-1985 after serving on the Board of Directors from 1977-1980. In addition, she contributed to key MLA committees and task forces, including the Continuing Education Committee, Knowledge and Skills Task Force, and three times as a member of the Nominating Committee. She chaired the Study Group on the MLA's Role in the Educational Process for Health Science Librarians, which resulted in the seminal Mirsky Report in 1981. She also served as president of the Medical Library Group of Southern California and Arizona.

As noted in her interview below, Mirsky's career spanned a remarkable period of innovation and change within the field of librarianship: a time of federal funding, a national role for NLM, technology, and a master plan for the University of California libraries. She played key roles in guiding the thinking behind library facilities and services as librarians responded to automation products, demands for services, a changing health care environment, and opportunities for cooperation and collaboration. She was involved in the professionalism of MLA Headquarters that allowed the association to pursue its mission with much broader participation across the membership. Although she moved from medical to university libraries, she maintained her ties to medical libraries and improved the mutual understanding of librarians across various professional boundaries. And she made repeated contributions to the dialogue about the essential education, knowledge, and skills required for tomorrow's information professionals.

Mirsky's profound recognition of the importance of people led her to invest in those who worked with and for her, both at her home institution and wherever she collaborated with others. Her insightful approach to problem solving and her interpersonal skills facilitated successful accomplishments in partnership with a wide range of individuals, and allowed her to function as a leader whom people were delighted to follow and support.

Medical Library Association Interview with Phyllis S. Mirsky

Joan Zenan: This is tape one, side one, of an interview with Phyllis S. Mirsky for the MLA Oral History Project on Friday, April 24, 2009. The interviewer is Joan Zenan. We welcome Phyllis to this interview, and we are going to begin with the first question, which has to do with what influenced you to go into librarianship.

Phyllis Mirsky: It was my position at the Cleveland Public Library that really was seminal in my going to library school and ultimately becoming a librarian. I had been in graduate school in social work at Columbia, and that wasn't working out, so I needed to regroup. I returned to Cleveland, my home, and tried to figure out what to do. And while you are figuring it out, you need a job. I found a job through a newspaper want ad, and it was with the Cleveland Public Library. Interestingly enough, it was my social work background, because I also have a BS in social welfare, that got me the job at the Cleveland Public Library. I went to work for a unit or a department of the library in the hospital and institutions division, a very forward looking program in the Cleveland Public Library. I'm not sure it was started by the head of the department, Clara Lucioli, but she was certainly a name. In fact, when I ultimately went to UCLA, Louise Darling knew Clara Lucioli, which was interesting. Small world. The hospital and institutions division of the Cleveland Public Library provided public library services to patients in community hospitals, long-term care facilities, mental hospitals, and interestingly enough, shut-ins as well where they would actually deliver groups of books to what they used to call shut-ins in those days. It's probably a term young people wouldn't even understand these days. People wouldn't be able to get out of their house, so they were shut in.

Z: Were they like the blind?

M: Yes, the regional library for the blind was also part of this division. I had forgotten that.

Z: While you were there, then, you learned about going to library school?

M: Yes. Clara Lucioli, who was the head of that division, probably two or three months after I started working there, asked me had I ever considered becoming a librarian and I said, "No." In fact, my only experience with a library was working as a page when I was in high school in the local public library and I had gotten fired for not shelving quickly. We parted ways because I wasn't shelving fast enough for a page. I didn't have these wonderful warm fuzzies about working in a library. But, Ms. Lucioli taught part-time at the library school at Western Reserve University; this was before it merged with the Case Institute of Technology to become Case Western Reserve University. It had a library school and she talked about my being able to continue working part-time in the public library while going to school. Since it was a private institution, she would be able to help me with perhaps a scholarship or something like that. I thought, "Well, that's interesting." I went through the process of applying, including having to take the Graduate Record Exam (GRE) or whatever

the equivalent was and I'm not too sure exactly how, but I found out that the University of Michigan had a program in which you could take their one-year program, but do it over two years, because the university library would hire you into a two-year, part-time position as a library assistant while you went to library school.

Z: Get experience while you are working.

M: Well, I was thinking more of money. I was thinking more of how I would support myself doing this and I thought, "If I could be working part-time and going to school part-time it would work out fine." I did get accepted at Western Reserve, but turned them down because I decided I really didn't want to live in Cleveland. I had done that before and I had been away in New York, but it was time to move on. I got into the University of Michigan's library school and that was all in the space of that first year. I only worked in Cleveland for that one year at the Cleveland Public Library and went on to library school.

Z: While you were there, you didn't specifically go to Michigan for medical librarianship?

M: I didn't even know there was such a thing as a medical librarian when I went. In fact, even in library school itself, because at that time Michigan didn't have a health sciences course. It was before Gwen Cruzat got there and it was before their course began. My background was social welfare and my degree was a social sciences degree. I took basic bibliography of the social sciences and reference, and I was just going to get a job working in a library. At that point I wasn't even sure what kind of library, it was just a job because that's what you did.

Z: What were your most memorable courses while you were there, or some memorable instructors?

M: Interestingly enough, the most memorable instructor was Russell Bidlack, the cataloging instructor. He was a very good instructor and he was able to make cataloging fun. In fact, it was so much fun that when I put together my resume for after library school jobs and you were supposed to say what your goal was, and I said I wanted a job either in public services or cataloging. Thank God I didn't get a cataloging job. But that's what I thought. He went on to become the dean of the library school there. This was several years after.

Z: He and his course were really your most memorable experiences?

M: I think so. I think the other ones were good. Introduction to librarianship or whatever it was called was taught by the dean then, Wallace Bonk. We also did book selection and things like that. Also the introduction to the profession, which before taking the class I didn't know about. I liked Russell Bidlack so much. He also taught the course called "History of the Book," which I took because he taught it.

Z: How did you come to work at the UCLA Biomedical Library if you didn't even know what medical librarianship was?

M: Louise Darling.

Z: Ah, dear Louise.

M: I was applying for jobs in the spring of 1965, and I knew I wanted to move to Los Angeles. I didn't want cold, I didn't want the Midwest. My older brother had moved to Los Angeles and was living there. He had gotten married the year before and I had visited on the occasion of his wedding, which was in Los Angeles. My college roommate had settled in Los Angeles and she had gotten married and I had visited her the summer before I started library school. So, I knew I wanted to go to Los Angeles, I knew it was in California, this was 1965, so I was applying to Los Angeles positions. One of the positions that I applied for was a social sciences related position. I think it was the Institute of Industrial Relations or some small unit at UCLA that had a library kind of service, and I had applied for that. Page Ackerman was the associate university librarian at UCLA at the time and Louise was going around to library schools recruiting for the UCLA Biomedical Library training program, the internship program. Page had asked Louise if she would meet with me when she went through Ann Arbor, because she had this application from me, and Louise agreed. It was a really cold day in March in Ann Arbor, which also made it sure I would go to Los Angeles. I had this appointment and I met with Louise Darling and we talked and she told me about UCLA. I can't remember any questions she asked me. She was obviously just checking me out for Page, and she also told me about the UCLA Biomedical Library internship program. She told me I should apply for it. And I said, "I really don't know anything about medical libraries or health sciences and I have never taken a biology class in my life. I took chemistry instead." Then she said, "Apply for it anyway." I said, "Okay."

Z: That's so like Louise.

M: As it turned out, in order to apply for UCLA's program (Joan, you probably don't know because you were already at UCLA), first I had to be accepted by UCLA's library school because it was an educational program and you got credit for it. UCLA required the GRE. Michigan did not.

Z: But you had taken it?

M: No. I am reminded now that I didn't take the GRE then, I had taken something called an "analogies test." No, I had to take the GRE at Michigan just as I was graduating in order to be eligible to apply for the internship program at the UCLA Biomedical Library. As it turned out, I didn't get the internship. She had three other applicants. Louise, at that time, and usually I think for most of her hires, really looked for people in sciences if she could find them. She found three people, including Dottie Eakin, and they were the three interns. So, I didn't get it. But I had,

strictly on paperwork, been offered a job with the County of Los Angeles Public Library system. I knew I could come out to California and at least have that. I had also (because I still had the social sciences in my head) applied for a law library job in Beverly Hills or somewhere. I got to California in mid-May. My graduate school roommate, Barbara, and I got in the car on May 1st, which would have been the day we were graduating from Michigan. We didn't go to graduation. We started driving cross-country and staying at her uncle's and my aunt's, good friends. Two weeks later, in mid-May, we wound up in California with my brother and sister-in-law, and we stayed with them. Barbara got a job with the LA school district and I went to talk to the LA County Public Library people and they were telling me what the options were. When Page Ackerman had told me that I didn't get that industrial relations job because they had hired someone else, she said, "But if you are in Los Angeles, please come to campus, I'd like to show you around." So, I came to UCLA, still weighing these things, and I called Page and she said, "Why don't you come to campus?" And so she brought me to campus and one of the bibliographers took me on a tour of the library, which was nice. Ten to fifteen minutes into the tour, somebody tracked me down to say, "Louise Darling wants to see you." We were at the university Research Library and Biomed was at the other end of campus. We stopped the tour and I trekked down to the other end of campus and I met with Louise and she said, "I had heard you were on campus, I wanted to talk to you." She said, "I may have a job, would you be interested?" And I said, "What would the job be?" "A reference job, and we are going to have a new school of public health." Because public health was moving from upper campus into the health sciences center at UCLA. The collection also was coming down and she needed a bibliographer for public health and she thought I might be able to do that. I thought I might be able to do that. We talked a little, but she said, "I don't know yet. I don't know if I am going to have it." So, I went home to my brother's and it was fine. Then I went back to the LA County Public Library and they set up an appointment. You had to have a physical exam before you started working there then, which was interesting. I made an appointment for a physical. Louise still said, "I don't know if I have a job or not." Then the day before I was supposed to have my physical, I get a call from Louise, "I think I have a job." I said, "I told the public library that I would go work for them." "Have you signed anything?" she asked. And I said, "No, I have my physical tomorrow." She said, "Come and talk to me."

Z: That was the beginning of the end, or the beginning of the beginning.

M: I went back to campus and Louise told me about this job, and it turned out to be Bob Braude's job. UCLA had gotten the MEDLARS [Medical Literature Analysis and Retrieval System] contract, which is obviously what she was waiting to find out. Bob was going to go to Washington to be the head of the MEDLARS unit and he had had a reference position, and so this reference position was now available and did I want it. I said, "I don't know. I have this other job opportunity." Oh, the job at UCLA paid 20% less than the public library. I would have gotten \$6,000 a year at the public library and only \$5,000 a year at UCLA. And I thought to myself, "That's a big difference for someone just coming out of school." She had me go out for

coffee with Pat Walter and Marianne Scherbinin so I would meet some people. Anyway, they were really trying to get me to say yes. I said, "Let me think about it." One of my friends suggested, "It's not how much money do you want to make, but what setting do you want to be in?" And I said, "In universities."

Z: There's something special...

M: ...about a university setting. I called the LA County Public Library and said, "I am sorry, but I am not going to take the job." Then I called Louise and said, "Yes, I'll take your job." This was toward the end of May. My roommate and I got ourselves an apartment and I flew back to Cleveland, Ohio, to be in my cousin's wedding and then returned to LA to start work on July 1st. I overlapped with Bob Braude for like two or three days, and then he left to go to DC and I was on my own to be a reference librarian at the UCLA Biomedical Library under those circumstances.

Z: Do you remember who was the department head?

M: Gloria Werner was the head of the department and Bob Lewis was head of public services. The department consisted then of Gloria, Annelie Rosenberg (now Annelie Sober), and myself. I later learned, but didn't realize it at the time, Gloria and I were the same age, which at the point in the summer of 1965 was twenty-four years of age, and Annelie was a year younger at twenty-three. That was the reference department of the UCLA Biomedical Library.

Z: That's amazing. So that was your beginning position. What other positions did you have before the running the RML [Regional Medical Library] Program?

M: My third year there, Gloria Werner went to England. Her husband got a Fulbright award and she went to work at the Wellcome Institute part-time. And Annelie was promoted temporarily into head of reference. Annelie had been doing ILL, so I took over interlibrary loan and someone else [Michael Berger] was hired temporarily for the position that was vacant. And Julie Kuenzel (now Julie Kuenzel Kwan) came in with a full-time job. Julie is still there today.

Z: That's amazing, the history of all of these folks who we still know today.

M: I did that for the one year and I didn't want to go back to just doing reference. I really enjoyed interlibrary loan and there was an opening for part-time acquisitions, part-time reference, and since I was starting to do the public health collection development, I had started to have interactions with acquisitions. So, I did that for a year. That went up until 1969 and the start of the Regional Medical Library Program. I think this is probably a good time to talk about what it was like at UCLA between 1965 and probably the early 1970s. There was, as I said, the Biomedical Library training program, which when I started had three interns a year for one year and then the money from the National Library of Medicine augmented it and it became four. Every year in the fall there were four new, brand new, usually straight-

out-of-library-school, interns. Earlier I mentioned the MEDLARS search unit at UCLA, the very first decentralized MEDLARS search unit. In the days of mainframe computers you did the computer searches and you created punch cards that you submitted and the computer ran them. That unit had Bob Braude, Lois Ann Colaanni, and I am not remembering who else...

Z: Was it Betsey Beamish?

M: Yes, Betsey Beamish. Thank you very much. The unit also had Betsey Beamish. Those were the three and then they added Sandra Colville-Stewart as the fourth staffer. Before the MEDLARS unit, the Brain Information Service (another federally funded program headquartered at the Biomedical Library to supply research services to the Brain Research Institute at UCLA) was headed by Pat Walter. It had Nancy Gross (who became Nancy Blase), Dottie Eakin, Eleanor Goodchild (later, after she had gone through the training program), Anthony Aguirre, Sherrilynne Fuller, and I am probably forgetting some others...oh, Jo Anne Boorkman and Michael Homan, who were in the MEDLARS unit.

Z: Folks we have known for forty years.

M: Yes, Michael was in MEDLARS because they needed MEDLINE training in that unit.

Z: Was the RMP program [Regional Medical Programs] what Lois Ann did at that time?

M: The RMP predated the RML. The RMP was probably 1968 because Lois Ann did MEDLARS for at least two or three years and then she was looking for something more part-time and more independent because she had a family and she was raising three kids. She started, I think, in 1968, and, in 1969, my first job with the RML was as head of consulting and training. And that was linked with Lois Ann's work with the RMP, which was four counties in southern California: Kern County, Ventura, Fresno, and Santa Barbara. There was a major hospital in each and she provided really the precursor to what a lot of RMLs [Regional Medical Libraries] were able to do on a much broader scale. But hers, because it was a smaller region, was much more personalized. When I came in (and I had four states that I was providing services for), she and I naturally complemented each other for the area that she served. I started doing training in the other areas and with her in her areas and that resulted in a publication, a handbook for libraries in small hospitals. We are talking not about librarians really, it was for staff in small hospitals who were given the responsibility for providing library services. Usually it was a medical records person or the CME person, someone who was related to the doctor's side of the operation. We actually gave them a mini-class, a one-day workshop, and there were booklets to take home.

Z: And you went to them or they came to you?

M: We went to them. We would have groups of them because there would be more than one hospital. We would teach them how to provide the services, how to organize a small library. The backup was the RML, because in addition to the consulting services that we gave, the RML had a reference service. Linda Grix was hired in 1969, straight out of her Wayne State University program, to be the reference person so that the folks in the hospitals, which were quite dispersed, would have someone to call for help.

Z: Now, did you do this in all four states?

M: Yes.

Z: What were the four states?

M: California, Arizona, Hawaii, and Nevada.

Z: It still trips off the tongue, doesn't it?

M: I ran the RML for ten years.

Z: That was a lot of wonderful service. Anything else you want to tell us about your time in the RML?

M: UCLA's RML was not one of the first ones. We were somehow in the middle. I think the first ones were in New England and Chicago. UCLA's was like two years later. There were already some programs in place that we could use as a model. Nelson Gilman, who had been the assistant head of the Biomedical Library, became the associate director for the RML program. The RML directors would meet and their counterparts would meet, so I got to know people who were doing the consulting and training and we would share information. It was a very, very amazing program, ahead of its time. I know even then I was very interested in doing outreach to public libraries, or doing what is now outreach, and NLM at that time was not interested in that. They were focused predominantly on the physicians, plus a little bit on the ancillary staff. The idea was that no matter where a physician was, if he had a problem, we would be able to get them the information. I thought at that time that the public library, and what later became known as consumer health information, was also important, but that was not part of our mandate then. Still, we did have public librarians come to some of our workshops because we taught about basic reference sources.

Z: Do I remember correctly that the RML out of UCLA was sort of different than the ones from the East Coast in terms of how it gave its services or how the people worked together or more of a regional approach? I'm not sure how best to ask this.

M: I think we were different from certainly those that were centered in urban areas like New York or Washington or Boston where the city geographic areas were so much

smaller. I think we were probably more like the MidContinental or the Pacific Northwest, where you were serving this broader area. I think also because we had MEDLARS in addition to the RML, and MEDLARS then became incorporated into the RML because MEDLARS had been an NLM contract. It was a separate contract. The first phase of the RMLs were grants, and then they moved to contracts. When they moved to contracts, they incorporated the MEDLARS contract and the RML contract together, so our staffs were bigger. At UCLA we would go to Hawaii, and I could go and we also had a MEDLARS person go and we had Linda [Grix] go. As a result, we could do coordinated training much more easily and give them the broad view of all of the RML services that were available.

Z: We know it's still going strong. That's wonderful.

M: I think another difference may have been the role of the UC [University of California] San Francisco Library in the Regional Medical Library service. Originally, UCLA, within the framework of the local chapter (the Medical Library Group of Southern California and Arizona), thought that the region would be southern California and Arizona because that made sense. UCLA was the large library in the region. NLM decided that region was too small. It needed to be bigger. But there was always a large amount of competition between the UCLA Biomedical Library and the UC San Francisco Library, which is a health sciences library on a health sciences campus. UCLA was the young upstart. UCLA's Biomedical Library was originally a smaller library, but it had, under Louise's leadership, become much larger because it served not only the health sciences, but it served a large on-campus biological sciences research entity. Hence, there was competition to deal with. I don't think UC San Francisco was interested in serving as the RML for four states, but it also didn't want UCLA to do it. What they wound up doing was dividing interlibrary loans between UCLA and UC San Francisco. UCSF did the interlibrary loan for northern California and northern Nevada and UCLA did the interlibrary loan for southern California, Las Vegas, and Arizona.

Z: In northern Nevada there is really only Reno.

M: Which was the only medical school, so it made for an interesting relationship.

Z: The medical school in Reno didn't start until 1972.

M: Right. UCLA had a subcontract to give money to UCSF because at that time interlibrary loan was subsidized by the National Library of Medicine, so that there were no charges, either for the photocopies of articles or for the lending of original books.

Z: Interesting. It takes us back a ways. Well, let's move on now because you moved on.

M: Oh, I have one more tidbit.

Z: Good, good.

M: At the time that the RML was starting up, Louise asked Helen Yast, who was the head of the library at the American Hospital Association, to come out as a consultant. I don't really recall what it was that she was consulting about. I think it was her first trip to the UCLA Biomedical Library, maybe even to California. She came and she was introduced around. I don't know if I remember this or if I was told this, but supposedly she asked Louise after she met all the staff, "Where are the elder staff?" Because they were all young because all of these federally funded programs (that were all between 1964 and 1969) and the internship program resulted in lots and lots of new hires. All the time new hires, many of them straight out of library school. Consequently, the average age of the staff had to have been probably in the late twenties.

Z: How did you come to move to NLM?

M: After a couple of years as head of consulting and training for the RML, I moved into the position of associate director of the RML after Nelson Gilman left for the Norris Library at USC [University of Southern California]. That position particularly brought me in direct contact with the National Library of Medicine, because now I attended meetings of the RML associate directors and directors and I had contact when we did the contract and the writing of the reports and things like that. I got to know people at NLM quite well, particularly Joe Leiter, under whose aegis the contract program was being run. In late 1978 Joe asked me if I wanted to come work at NLM. I had been at UCLA for thirteen years, and Louise, I knew, was going to retire, and it was tempting. He wanted me to be head of MEDLARS, and I said, "I don't know anything about doing that." He said, "We also have head of reference." I said, "I could do that, I used to be a reference librarian." He didn't know that. So, I simultaneously applied to be the head at the Biomedical Library at UCLA in a pool that included Gloria Werner, and I applied to the National Library of Medicine to be head of reference, which seemed to be almost a pro forma kind of application at the National Library of Medicine. I wasn't sure what was going to happen, but it's nice to have a couple of options. As it turned out, I didn't get the UCLA job—Gloria Werner rightfully got it. In applying at NLM, I was used to a university application process. I wanted to go to NLM, I wanted to meet the people, I wanted to actually make a decision based on some input. Accordingly, they had to put together an interview schedule for me, but not just for me, but for other finalists in the pool, others who qualified on paper. Government jobs—I didn't know government jobs were different from university jobs. I even met with the director, Marty Cummings. I later found out after I got to NLM that I had created quite a stir by saying I wanted to come, I wanted to interview, and I wanted to talk to these people. That's how we wound up moving to Washington in the spring of 1979 and I became the head of the Reference Section.

Z: When you got there in 1979, what was the library like?

M: NLM had always been the leader in technology, you know, starting with MEDLARS way back in the mid-1960s, and by now they were beginning to work on MEDLINE and CATLINE and SERLINE. They were automating everything, developing AVLINE too. NLM had gotten very big into audiovisuals because they were the next big thing in supporting medical education. It was a very exciting time to be there. The National Library of Medicine turned out to be very different from what I had expected.

Z: We won't say if that was good or bad.

M: It was different. It is a federal agency and there are some problems in dealing with personnel issues in a federal agency, which I ran into.

Z: Did politics come into play at all?

M: Only at the very highest levels they do. I recall C. Everett Koop showing up one time. I also remember that a local congressman got involved in a personnel issue because one of my staff wrote to her congressman about it, and I can't even remember what the issue was at this point. You always had to hop to when something came over from a congressional office, but it really didn't affect the operation or the service. When I got to NLM, NLM was basically serving the health sciences establishment in the greater DC area. There were the private medical schools (George Washington, Georgetown, Howard). The medical school across the street, which was the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences, didn't have a library. At NLM there was an on-site reference desk, a collection in the reading room. Most of the collection was in closed stacks, so there was a large paging operation that went on. People would come in, they would get things paged. But it wasn't serving as a national library. It didn't have a sense of all of the health sciences fields that I called constituents, all of the health sciences librarians who could have used the resources in the National Library of Medicine if it were geared to help them to provide reference services for the health sciences libraries of the country, not just to the medical students of the greater DC area.

Z: And the RML program also was going on? That was geared toward doctors.

M: That was geared toward doctors. Even the RML and folks who had reference service, they needed to be able to get to the NLM. One of the things I did, since CATLINE had been introduced, was to create and publicize a phone reference service separate from the walk-in reference service. Librarians could call, and the reference staff had both a ready reference collection and the old-fashion print and also access to the CATLINE and AVLINE (and whatever other LINES there were) so that they could provide reference services. Some of it really was bibliographic reference service, i.e., "Do you have...? Do you own...?" Items with strange citations. We were just trying to figure out what there was.

Z: You came in as head of reference?

M: I came in as head of reference, and had a desk in this great big bullpen like everybody else. I said, "I think the head of the department needs an office," and they turned something that I think had been a conference room into an office for me.

Z: You did head of reference and then what did you do there?

M: I was head of reference, and in addition to that, NLM has its own training program or internship program [Associate Fellowship Program]. I took over this training program. It had been run by Maxine Hanke and I took it over. NLM's program was much larger than UCLA's. In fact, my first year there we had something like seven interns. They rotated through the various departments and we tried to provide an educational component for them as well. Many of them stayed on at NLM because it really was a good way of recruiting, and many of the people who went on to positions of responsibility had gone through the training program. So, I did both of those jobs together.

Z: When you were there, was Lois Ann Colaianni also there?

M: Lois Ann came just before I left. When I first came, James W. Barry was the deputy [associate] director for library operations. But he was sick and had just left and (I am not too sure I am going to get all of this right) Erika Love was in that position. I think I overlapped with Jim briefly and Erika was in that position for a couple of years before she left to go to New Mexico. Joe Leiter was searching for a deputy and he got to Lois Ann because I think she was president of MLA around then. I suggested to him that he ask Lois Ann if she wanted to do it.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Audio quality deteriorated in the next segment (tape one, side two; transcript pages 12-19). Some nonessential conversation has been deleted, some reconstructed to retain the context, and some sections left incomplete with the designation 'inaudible.'

Z: This is the continuation of an interview of Phyllis Mirsky, conducted by Joan Zenan [tape one, side two]. We were talking about Lois Ann going to NLM and that you told Joe Leiter about her and that she was now going to be available because her husband was about to retire.

M: She had been at Cedars-Sinai for a decent amount of time and was, I think, looking for a challenge. She arrived at NLM in January perhaps of 1981.

Z: A nice time to come.

M: Right, she stayed with us for about a month until she got herself her own place and her husband was able to move out and take care of all those things that take time.

Z: You and your husband had that lovely big house. In holding these two positions of head of training and head of reference, how, if any, did that approach to librarianship allow you to become an academic librarian as well as a leader of MLA?

M: The position as head of reference brought me into contact on the national scene with my counterparts at the Library of Congress and the National Agricultural Library. I participated in a program at the Lister Hill National Center for Biomedical Communications to develop an online catalog under Chuck Goldstein's leadership, and I represented NLM at one of the very first conferences on developing online catalogs for public use. And so I had a much broader perspective from my NLM vantage than I would have in the health sciences vantage in the UCLA Biomedical Library. On the other hand, I am not too sure the training program influenced me in any way. I think both the UCLA program and the NLM program just reinforced my own sense of the importance of doing staff development, nurturing and mentoring, and those kinds of things.

Z: Do you think that experience influenced your leadership approach?

M: I'm not sure whether or not it did. I think if it did, it did it in a subtle way, not in any obvious way.

Z: Certainly the fact that you were at one large institution and then you went to an even larger one where you may have had contact with more of your colleagues—maybe that pointed out differences that are going on around the country.

M: I think I had a lot of exposure to that through the RML program in which there was, as I said, a lot of cooperation, a lot of interchange among the libraries.

Z: Thinking about your time at NLM, what were your most memorable accomplishments?

M: First, I think my ability to refocus the department on less service to walk-in users and more service to the health sciences libraries of the nation. And the other one was the professionalization of the staff. They had not had a lot of exposure to the medical library community, real participation in it, and therefore really didn't have a lot of sense of what some of their colleagues across the nation were dealing with. I encouraged and prodded and assisted the NLM librarians in getting on MLA committees, in getting involved in the profession.

Z: Any other contributions that you would like to tell us about?

M: I was at NLM at the time when a lot of the technology changes were happening, which is interesting now that I look back on it. There was a remodeling project in which the main lobby area of the National Library of Medicine now became the online catalog area where users could directly access the online database. I also was able to decrease the amount of reference and other kinds of materials [inaudible].

Z: Anything else?

M: One interesting thing happened about halfway through my last year, again as part of the remodeling and part of rethinking and (if I recall correctly) it had to do with government documents and other federal stuff. And there was an attempt to reassign staff. The decision was made at the highest level of the organization, by Martin Cummings, the director. He decided that a couple of staff in the reference section should be reassigned to some other section. This reassignment affected not only reference staff but the circulation staff. At that time I was head of reference and Duane Arenales was head of circulation. We were both fairly new at NLM. Both had come from the outside and we thought this was not a good fit for the staff, so we made an appointment to see Dr. Cummings. We didn't know if this had ever been done before, so we went and talked to him, we made our cases to him about why we thought this was not a good fit and what we thought would be a better fit. And, lo and behold, he listened to what we had to say. But the twittering, in the old-fashion sense of that word, that went on at NLM when everyone knew that Phyllis and Duane had gone up the ladder!

Z: You became famous or infamous.

M: Or infamous. After I had been at NLM for a couple of years, I was beginning to feel that my loyalties were divided and that the hierarchy and the bureaucracies were difficult. So, there were other opportunities I started to explore in the Washington, DC, area and I applied for several jobs. I started off with the government jobs and I applied for Public Health or whatever it's called at Parklawn [U. S. Department of Health and Human Services Parklawn Health Library], which I wasn't offered. Then I applied for the position at George Washington University that Nina Matheson left

when she went to Baltimore to Johns Hopkins. I was offered that job as well, but I didn't have a sense that the administration was supportive of the library staff. I was able to negotiate a starting salary, but I was unable to improve the staff salary, which was much too low. I would have felt uncomfortable coming and making so much more than the staff, but the university administrators were not willing to fix that, so I turned that one down. Then I tried for the NIH [National Institutes of Health] Library, and at the same time I became aware of the job at the University of California, San Diego. As it turned out, I was offered the NIH position at about the same time I was offered the UC San Diego position.

Z: What a decision.

M: Well, it turned out not to be too difficult. I ended up at the University of California and it became a family decision as well—my family wanted to return to California, and we took the UCSD job.

Z: You stayed at UC San Diego for more than twenty years. What was the library like when you arrived?

M: I arrived in the fall of 1981. One of the things that appealed to me was how very different it was from UCLA. I spent almost fourteen years at UCLA, so I thought I knew the University of California, but I really only knew UCLA. Each campus really does have its own personality. UCSD at that point was not quite twenty years old. At the time, it had maybe 14,000 students, and when I left UCLA there were close to 30,000 students, so UCSD was half the size. It also had its own very different culture. UCSD had been started on the framework of the Scripps Institution of Oceanography which had been the marine stations for the University of California. Scripps started in 1903 in La Jolla. The director of the Scripps Institution of Oceanography, Roger Revelle, was the leader of the campaign to try to get a general campus started in San Diego. Campuses were started in San Diego, Santa Cruz, and Irvine at a time in which California was growing rapidly. Jerry Brown was the governor of California, and the state of California had introduced a master plan for higher education with three segments. UC San Diego started off as a science campus and because of its relationship with Scripps offered the first Ph.D. before it offered its first bachelor's degree.

Z: Wow, that's almost backwards.

M: It's backwards, but it made its name in the sciences immediately and did have three very strong, very large science libraries and the Biomedical Library serving a relatively new school of medicine and a very, very large biological sciences program. I took that job at a time that was very interesting.

Z: Let's talk a little about the evolution of your responsibilities in the various positions in the university library system.

M: I started in 1981, retired in 2005.

Z: Tell us a little bit about how your positions evolved.

M: I started off as assistant university librarian for sciences, and I did that for several years. Several of my responsibilities were not just director of science libraries, but, in addition to that, (because of my health sciences background) I was responsible for the data searching. Online searching was just being developed for the entire library system, not just the science libraries—a much broader scope. And coordinator of online search services across all the libraries because I brought with me the experience through the RML and online searching, NLM and MEDLARS searching.

Z: Wonderful opportunities.

M: And another assignment (at the time almost a throw-away assignment) was the physical planning of the library. There wasn't construction going on there. There weren't any building projects on the horizon, but I was the lead person for renovations, about which I knew a little. In 1985, Penny Abell, who had lured me, left UCSD to become the university librarian at Yale. I had been at UCSD for three-and-a-half years, and I became acting university librarian, which was my first introduction to general university library administration. And so I served in that role for about eight months until Dorothy Gregor came to UCLA after a short term at the Library of Congress. She came and as part of her settling into the role she did her own strategic plan. Bob Lewis retired about eight months into my tenure. I served as acting head of the Biomedical Library for about six to eight months and I recruited Mary Horres to be the director. We were reorganizing. We decided that Mary would become the head of the Biomedical Library and the assistant university librarian for sciences. She did that and I became the assistant university librarian for public services and administration.

Z: Very broad responsibilities.

M: Very broad responsibilities, but it was the first time that I actually had day-to-day responsibilities for university library services.

Z: That had to be an interesting transition.

M: Some things were new to me and challenging, especially circulation. Dealing with professors, overdues, interlibrary loans. And that was the way the organization was until Jerry Lowell came in 1993. Dorothy left to go to Berkeley. When Jerry Lowell came, he did some more reorganization and I became the deputy while still retaining responsibility for administration. My responsibility included collection development for the entire library. It was an evolution.

Z: So it didn't feel like things were dumped on you?

M: No, no, it was all part of a progression. The deputy university librarian job is very interesting because when I was it, I really had no direct reports at this point, which is a luxury. But I served as the alter ego as well as representing the university librarian locally. I think I neglected to mention that in between Dorothy's departure and Jerry Lowell's arrival, I served yet again as acting university librarian.

Z: Wow. Tell us more about your work with facilities.

M: My very first building project involved the graduate School of International Relations and Pacific Studies in early 1986. It was and may still be the only international relations school with a unique geographic focus because most of the international relations programs that came before had their focus on Europe. UCSD's school looked at Latin America and Mexico as well. This was a pet project of Governor Deukmajian. The University of California was able to start a brand new school with this focus that was important to the State of California. It was located at UCSD rather than placing it at Berkeley or UCLA, which probably could have done it because they already supported research in these areas. This was to be de novo. We were able to get not only a new school, but a new building for the school and a library within the building. I was involved in the building of a 10,000 assignable square foot library. I worked with the architects. We hired a consultant to help us, and I learned, in a very small way with a little library, the entire process of how a library is built in the University of California system.

Z: That was your initial little but big experience?

M: Concurrently, we were also working through the University of California to make the case as to why the UCSD main library, the Central Library, needed more space. It had been built for a time when there would have been 10,000 students and 750,000 volumes, and it was now approaching 15,000 or 20,000 students and a million-and-a-half volumes, more and more of which needed to be stored off-site because there wasn't enough space. So we went through the process. Bad times came and we lost ground, and the good times came again and we were able to build the new building, in addition to renovating the existing library. The existing library was designed by William Pereira, the architect. There was a lot of discussion on campus as to how you add on to an iconic building with its own unique shape that has been likened to a spaceship or something. And you didn't want to impinge on the existing iconic building. So we got an architect who was successful in doing underground additions, Gunnar Birkerts. He did an underground addition for the Ann Arbor, University of Michigan law school. He was hired and he came up with a couple of designs, one of which was really controversial because it would have touched the iconic building more, would have incorporated it into the addition. We settled on a successful U-shaped, two-level, underground addition.

Z: And you can hardly tell.

M: True, you can't tell. So this was a process in which the working drawings took about eighteen months, the construction of the addition took a number of years, and the renovation took a number of years. It involved moving all the books, all the people, out of there into a temporary space once the addition was built, and then we moved it all back. I learned a lot about the physical process of buildings.

Z: It is fascinating.

M: But I also learned a lot about the process of design. Good architects will take into account what the client is saying and what the client wants, and staff issues that staff has during construction. We put together a staff committee that was responsible for the addition. We met with the staff and they knew what was going to happen.

Z: I'm assuming building a stellar staff is one of your contributions of which you are proud.

M: Yes. One of the things that I am proud of is the staff. In my career, I think I have been very successful in identifying, recruiting, mentoring, and nurturing good staff. Good staff is essential.

Z: Okay, the next topic is to compare some of the differences in institutions and organizational cultures, the differences in working in various kinds of libraries and various settings including government and state.

M: I think that state and special libraries, whether they be medical or whether they be science libraries, tend to view the world through their own prism. I have had the most exposure to health sciences libraries, and I continued growing and participating in MLA even as my responsibilities became broader. When working in broader roles, I was able to convince my bosses that health sciences libraries, in terms of services, are always a step ahead in incorporating technology, in dealing with clientele, in knowing how to do outreach, so that I felt that it was not unreasonable for me to remain part of the health sciences community and the Medical Library Association. In addition, having served in many MLA leadership positions, I didn't see what I would be gaining by moving into the American Library Association and going through a committee structure and becoming head of a committee or an officer or the president of a division or something. I thought I had provided that leadership already, and I didn't see what I would gain or what the organization would gain from me being able to do that again within ALA. One of the most interesting observations I had with regard to health sciences librarianship was after I moved into general university librarianship. There were always differing perspectives, especially in discussions with Mary Horres. One of us would say, "Johns Hopkins University." She would think of the health sciences library and I would think of the university library.

Z: Isn't that interesting.

M: So each of us had her own perspective, focused on either the health sciences or looking at the broader environment. Within MLA, people would know the ranking of the school and which was a good school, based on who was the head of the medical library and how active they were in MLA and what you knew about the health campus, as opposed to what the whole university was like and whether or not the university was ranked near the top. These are very, very different perspectives. One small example is the ARL [Association of Research Libraries] statistics, which predated the AAHSL [Association of Academic Health Sciences Libraries] statistics. They reflect a different perspective. And again, the flip of that is in conversations with university librarians who can view the health sciences librarian as standoffish.

Z: I can see how that would happen.

M: My only experience has been with medical school health sciences libraries that are part of the university library system. And certainly at UCSD, and even at UCLA (but I think Louise had a harder time accepting that), there was an effort to include everyone in the library system. There weren't barriers between them. Certainly the health sciences librarians at UCSD served in the governance, and committees are integrally involved with the whole campus. UCSD librarians served on committees and they served as officers of the library associations. They were integrally involved with the development of programs and things like that. And I think that helps not only the general university librarians, but also the health sciences librarians, in knowing what each does. They all differ (and I'm not trying to say they aren't different because their clientele is different), but what we are trying to accomplish has been the same thing.

Z: You served on a number of academic committees both at UCLA and at UCSD. Would you like to comment on the importance of the role academic or institutional service provides?

M: I think this is a good time to talk about the University of California, which is a unique institution. Very hard to explain to people from any other state that has a state university system. It is truly one university run by one board of regents, one set of admission requirements for the entire university so you indicate as part of that admission as an undergraduate your campus of choice. But the same requirements, the same classes you have to take, are minimum requirements everywhere. And I think that part of it is hard to understand. Starting in the 1970s, the University of California provided a master plan for development of libraries. The state legislature, at that point, had decided that libraries were a black hole that you continue to pour money into. Consequently, if libraries could come up with a master plan as to how monies are going to be spent, you could save money. The university hired Steve Salmon to develop a plan, and it was called the Salmon Plan—and interestingly enough the color of the cover of the document was salmon. This plan talked about collection development, interlibrary loans, facilities, services, collection development, and technologies. Not everything in the plan was put into place, but many of the things were. In the area of collection development, there were things

that needed to be on a campus, things that could be in a regional storage facility, and things that you could depend on from national libraries with national collections to serve you. Consequently, there is a storage facility in the north, in Richmond near the Berkeley campus, and there is a storage facility in the south, which was on the UCLA campus which had land, which serves as the regional storage facility effectively for the southern campuses. There was development of document delivery or support of what was interlibrary loans among the campuses, so that if something is anywhere in the system, there was no charge in order to get it. Each campus could develop its own collections to serve its own clientele, knowing that it didn't have to be everything for everybody. Even UCLA and Berkeley could depend on somebody else, even though they were much larger and older collections. In the area of technology in the 1970s, the libraries would all use OCLC to do their cataloging. The development of an online catalog called MELVYL served as the online catalog for the collections of all the libraries. This led to development of space guidelines. Once you said to the state legislature there are certain things we can rely on regionally and certain things nationally, then you can come up with whatever the standards are for what size buildings you need. You were allowed so much space for collections, so much space for users, so much space for staff, with specific guidelines for space allowance. And this is when I became really involved with planning, especially with the big libraries, but working within that framework of the University of California.

- Z: This is the continuation of an interview with Phyllis Mirsky by Joan Zenan [tape 2, side A]. We were talking about the role of academic or institutional service for librarians, and let's go on from there.
- M: We were talking about the Salmon Plan and collection development for the University of California libraries. One of the things that that plan did was introduce the concept of "one university, one library," which, over the past thirty years, has evolved into more and more one university, one library, one collection owned by the Regents of the University of California as the governing body.
- Z: So, it's a statewide resource no matter where it is.
- M: It's a statewide resource no matter where it is. We talked about developing MELVYL, the online catalog, which was one of the very first online catalogs to be developed by anybody and used by their clientele. It allowed you to see what was in all of the University of California libraries.
- Z: Was that spearheaded by the central folks in Berkeley or did it come from one of the campuses?
- M: It was done by the Division of Library Automation, which was in the office of the president, which is in Oakland. It has its own operations in Oakland.
- Z: How about things about librarians serving on system committees?
- M: Because of this framework and the need for all of the campuses to work together, there have been continuing statewide committees with representation from each of the campuses as you develop services, as you come up with standards, as you do whatever you do. One of the things I am most proud of has been my service on the University of California system-wide committees, including the very first one that developed something called the California Digital Library, which was under the leadership of Richard Lucier, who at that time was the university librarian, the head of the library, at UC San Francisco. It was a committee of several of us, including faculty, trying to determine what the digital world would mean for libraries. We are talking now mid-1990s. We used scenarios to try to help us understand what it would mean for an undergraduate in the year 2005 to have to try to write a paper. We had to imagine that everything would have been digitized, but what would the role of books be and things like that. This took at least a year, if not longer, meeting quite frequently up in Berkeley, San Francisco, or Oakland, which is where more of the folks were rather than down south. This became the pet project of the president of the university at that time, Richard Atkinson, who had been chancellor at UC San Diego, so I knew him. It is always great when an administrator thinks it's their idea. Richard Atkinson really felt that California and the University of California could make a name for itself by providing leadership and the development of collections and services surrounding digitization and digital resources.

Z: Having that plan championed really, really helped.

M: Being in a good economic climate at that particular point helped as well.

Z: Yes, that's always a critical thing.

M: It also created the California Digital Library, which incorporated what had been the Division of Library Automation, which was managing MELVYL. Richard Lucier left his position at UC San Francisco and moved to the office of president to be the university librarian and executive director of the California Digital Library. He hired some really good people, including Beverlee French, who had been head of the Science and Engineering Library at UCSD when I was there and had reported to me. It provided a framework for doing collection development in the digital age, and the beginning of what people now call consortial licensing. To the University of California it wasn't a consortium, it was one entity, so you sign one check and you have one bill.

Z: One contract.

M: One contract.

Z: It must have been challenging talking with publishers.

M: It was very challenging with publishers, especially trying to have them understand the University of California. "No, we are not a consortium. We are one entity."

Z: We have different campuses.

M: Right. But it was the framework for what turned out to be consortial licensing and the big packages with Elsevier, Springer, and Blackwell. Circling back to health sciences libraries, they benefit greatly from the University of California licenses. The structure now is that each of the discipline areas has a group that actually works together, so the health sciences librarians have their own group which works together on licensing issues, problems, resources, which ones should we get, and now as you get to times where they have had to cut back, which ones do we cancel. You have to do it collectively.

Z: Sure, because you are serving the entire state.

M: Because you are serving the entire university, exactly.

Z: Before we move on to activities in the professional organizations, are there any other things you want to discuss about your academic or national library career at this time?

M: I think one of the most important things to comment on would be the timing of my career. Joining the profession in 1965, it was just at the beginning of change. In health sciences libraries, it was the heyday of federal funding from the National Institutes of Health, including AHECs, Regional Medical Programs and Regional Medical Library Programs, the Brain Information Service, and MEDLARS and technology and outreach to physicians, all of which provided a lot of churning. New people were joining the profession. I developed a very close relationship with people that I started work with in the '60s and maintained those relationships over the years. As my career progressed, I went to the National Library of Medicine at a time in which it was developing its national role. The Lister Hill National Center for Biomedical Communications was developing an online catalog there, just as I was leaving UCLA, which was developing the MELVYL catalog through the University of California. And NLM at that time also was working more closely with the Library of Congress and the National Agricultural Library. So, there was coordination and cooperation. Then I moved back to California and the University of California, San Diego, after the development of the master plan, which now was in full force, which had started just before I left UCLA. There is something about being in libraries at this particular time, for the forty years that I was, and how it permitted me to work at only three institutions in those forty years (and most of the time at two of them) to not have the same job, even if I had the same title for part of that time. The job just evolved. What you did was different, and how you did it was different. I think that is what made the career such a fascinating career for me, and I wonder whether or not it's anywhere near as exciting now.

Z: I don't know, technology seems to be changing every ten minutes.

M: I'm not too sure it's all technology, though. I think there was a paradigm shift in libraries, and I don't mean just the ones that we are familiar with, but in public libraries, in a sense of service beyond community and national, there just was more. I think technology permitted it. I think the ability to communicate more easily in the sequence of things was important, as we did in the University of California where you used to have to meet and meet face-to-face. We still do that a bit, but conference calls replaced that and webcams and webinars and workshops and things like that allow you to feel more connected. I would tend to think that has helped. Back to my early career, libraries and small hospitals in rural areas had people who felt quite isolated. Joan, you have probably seen that more than I because you more recently worked with hospitals in rural settings. But no matter what kind of institution, the technology allowed you to rethink what you are doing. Yes, there is more technology that allows you to do some stuff, it's cute, but I don't think that was the paradigm shift. I think the paradigm shift was the communication, using the technology to communicate, facilitate. At the University of California, the MELVYL catalog is now in its third generation, and it has a request function whereby you can be anywhere and you can request anything. If you talk to faculty, some of them understand and say, "I love the library, it gets me everything I need, I don't have to go into it anymore." And that's meant as a compliment, as opposed to those folks who say, "I don't need libraries, I get everything off the web," not

realizing that some of the stuff they are getting off the web, they are getting only because libraries make it possible for them.

Z: That's a challenge for people who are running libraries, to let others know where it's all coming from. Okay, shall we move on to your involvement in MLA for more than thirty-three years.

M: I joined MLA in 1966. I joined UCLA in 1965 and joined MLA the very first year after that. I did it because it was important, because Louise Darling said it was important and you had to be part of the profession and that was it.

Z: What was the first meeting you attended? Do you remember what your impressions were?

M: The first meeting I attended was not until 1969, because that was the year in which I went to work for the RML, and the RML paid for travel while UCLA did not. Having taken the job for only \$5,000 instead of \$6,000, I had less money. The meeting was in Louisville, Kentucky, in the fall of 1969. It was in the fall because there had been an international meeting in May or June in Washington. Hence, the meeting was shifted to the fall, and it was a small meeting, maybe 700 or 800 people. My husband had just gotten out of the military, and we went to Ohio where my family lived, borrowed a car and drove to Louisville, and spent the week there. I didn't know very much about MLA. We went to all of the functions. You had banquets every night and you dressed up. That's when I met two Nancys because we sat at the same table—Nancy Woelfl and Nancy Lorenzi, who also were just straight out of library school and just starting the profession. It's amazing what one remembers.

Z: The two Nancys, that's really amazing.

M: I don't remember the meeting at all.

Z: You are not alone.

M: Fred Roper was in Indiana getting his Ph.D. He had been with me at UCLA, and he came to the meeting, and I remember tasting mint juleps for the first time. That I remember as well.

Z: That's wonderful. How did you first become involved in the organization, not just attending meetings, but actually working with MLA?

M: It wasn't too much after that, in 1970, that I was appointed to the Health Sciences Library Technicians Committee. Bob Braude was the chair, and I served as a committee member and wound up being chair. Again, how did I become involved in that? I'm sure Louise had something to do with that.

Z: Louise had a lot to do with a lot of things.

M: I don't recall the committee appointment structure, if Bob Braude would have had something to do with it or not because he was gone already from UCLA at that point.

Z: Well, usually the president makes the assignments, but...

M: We are talking 1970, and there wasn't the wonderful process that we have now in which people apply. Way back then, who you knew was important in that they knew you before they appointed you. So this was pre-equal opportunity, in which everyone has the same chance to apply. It reminds me of an anecdote. Around this time, MLA was going through some strategic planning process, and they appointed a committee, and I remember Louise Darling being very upset because the only person appointed west of the Mississippi was Estelle Brodman, who was in St. Louis, which sits on the Mississippi. Because Louise complained, the president decided to appoint Nancy Zinn, who had just moved from Philadelphia to UC San Francisco. So, Louise in those days fought a real battle about getting respect for the West Coast, because MLA was really East Coast.

Z: We know that you were on the Board of Directors from 1977 to 1980, so do you remember who else was on the board then?

M: No, but I am going to talk about something else first if that's okay.

Z: That's okay.

M: I got on the board because I was on the Continuing Education Committee, which gave me the visibility that you needed to be elected. Again, I don't recall how that came about. This may have been already when there was an application process in place, but I know Lois Ann Colaanni was active on the committee and probably chair at one point too. And this was about the time that I actually started teaching. And what do you think I taught?

Z: Public services?

M: No, human skills.

Z: Well, you were very well qualified.

M: It was the only personnel-related class that MLA had, and it had to do with how you work with people, what are listening skills, how to do role playing. We did role playing. Because library schools then and now can't teach you everything, and they don't know what kind of position you are going to be in, or doing management other than at the very highest level, but what role you may have initially with day-to-day supervision. What happens in health sciences libraries, which are small, and any small libraries, you find yourself straight out of library school supervising somebody.

Z: With no skills or ability or knowledge about how to do it.

M: You may have skills, but you don't know that at first. You don't know that you have skills, and you certainly don't have the knowledge to know how to deal with people. Depending on your organization as to whether or not it has a human resources department and it has training that can help you. You are on your own and those skills that were useful to you going through school or being a student or being a parent or being a sibling are not the same skills that help you in a work setting. So, I started teaching that class and I developed a syllabus, a manual for the class. When you are a CE instructor, you get to know a lot of members because they take your class. That then, I think, is how when I ran for the board, I was elected. I was known because I had taught CE. That and also all the training I had been doing through the region, so at least the four-state region folks knew me as well. I think that made a difference.

Z: Then because of that you were more versed in what the association was and what it was trying to do. Going back a few years now, do you remember some of the important issues that were confronting MLA while you were on the board?

M: When I was on the board, MLA was in the process of moving from a small mom-and-pop organization into a professional organization with professional management. They'd had a secretary in Chicago whose name I don't remember [Helen Brown Schmidt], but she managed what she could. But back in the early '70, there was huge growth in health science libraries as a result of NLM's programs, RML outreach, training, and hospitals becoming more aware of the need to have some professionalization of their library. MLA was growing and it couldn't be managed anymore by a handful of staff. So, MLA hired someone named John LoSasso to be the executive director, a professional director. So, all of this was happening...

Z: ...while you were on the board.

M: Yes, around that time we were shifting. You asked who else was on the board and I can't really tell you. I think Charlie Sargent was, but I'm not sure. The thing I remember about being on the board (when I first was on the board as opposed to the board later when I was president) was the alcohol.

Z: The alcohol?

M: These were mostly ladies and they could put it away.

Z: You must have had interesting meetings.

M: I know it resulted in changes in policy on what MLA would pay for as these things evolved.

Z: Interesting. Well, besides the association evolving and getting an executive director, were there other issues you can remember that you may have dealt with being on the board?

M: I really don't, which makes me wonder what it was that we were dealing with when I was on the board other than the professionalization.

Z: Oh, that was a big issue.

M: It was. It also meant addressing the ability to broaden the number of people who could serve the association, because participating members had to have organization support and money. Once you had the professionalization, the ability to have things done by what was the central office—the headquarters—more people could contribute because there wouldn't be as much of a burden on them or on their institution. MLA took on the payment of people to attend committee meetings—you were reimbursed for your expenses. Then at one point when it was difficult to find people to run for president, MLA added the ability to provide support for local secretarial efforts. There was a budget given to the president that would permit the president to actually hire staff to support the association work. You didn't have to be someone without family obligations or a large institution that could underwrite you. It really permitted our hospital librarians, for the first time, to participate. Academic institutions understand the value of professional contributions and are more likely to support it. Hospitals, even then, had to watch the bottom line and had a hard time supporting professional service unless there was a foundation or a nonprofit entity that could assist in that process. I think the professionalization of the association resulted not only in there being staff to handle budget and membership and the annual meeting and all that, but it also permitted members to be able to participate in greater numbers at higher levels.

Z: Any more memorable aspects of being on the board?

M: Other than it was a wonderful way to get to know people, because you'd be together in Chicago. I remember one time we actually met in Albuquerque, New Mexico, because Erika Love was president at the time (that's who else was on the board). We met in Albuquerque, and you had the opportunity to get to know people as opposed to a remote person with a title or something like that. And that, I thought, was very helpful.

Z: I feel the same way.

M: I think at that time we shifted to a new executive director, Shirley Echelman [1979-1981], and she brought even more professionalization because she came from the Association of Research Libraries and had a framework that she was trying to put in place. We hired a full-time head of continuing education so that the Continuing Education Committee and its chair didn't have to do all the work, all the CE classes that took place at every meeting. Being on the CE Committee was a lot of work

because you had to do all of that—make sure the rooms were there, the equipment was there, the handouts were there, the instructors were there. That was the evolution of the association. And because Shirley Echelman came from the profession of executive directors, which is a profession which has its own professional organization and its own meeting, that information comes back to the organization and results in a framework of support to the association as a whole. With Shirley being the first librarian to hold that position, she could become a spokesperson as well and provide continuity for the association so that as each president comes, you don't have the ups and downs of changing the voice, there is a continuity there.

Z: That's an important thing. Anything else you want to say about your time on the Board of Directors?

M: I'm trying to remember when Ray Palmer came in, but I don't [1982-1991]. I don't remember if that was then or if that was when I was president. I know he was already executive director by the time I was president, but I don't know if he served a term before that or if there was a period of time when I wasn't on the board.

Z: Well, let's move on to your presidency. You were president in 1984-1985. Can you remember any issues that were confronting MLA while you were president?

M: I think the major issues in those early '80s had to do with the dichotomy between hospital libraries and academic libraries and how the association could serve its disparate membership. Fortunately for me, Lois Ann [Colaiaanni] had already served as president of the association so that she had given visibility to hospital libraries and she was followed by several others with high profiles. But there were still many librarians at smaller hospitals who felt disenfranchised because they didn't have the resources to serve and they felt their voices weren't heard. Nancy Lorenzi preceded me as president, I believe [1982/83], and she started to institute strategic planning. I think that was very important, to do it on an ongoing basis, to have strategic planning not be once every five years but every year. It's important to ask, "How does this fit into our plan? Where do we go?" I think one of the things that was incumbent on me and is incumbent on my successors is to make sure that one keeps that structure going. It, too, in addition to having a professional executive director, permits the association to continue to go on a path. In the earlier history, in my earlier times in the association, each president would come in with a kind of mandate they felt they wanted to accomplish. It really makes the association lurch back and forth as each president tries to put their own stamp on what they are doing. One of the things that the planning process was instituted largely to do is keep the association moving in a steady direction. I think one of the things I wanted to do was try to broaden the view of the health sciences libraries (because at this point I was already coming from a university library setting) to their role in the greater organization. I set up liaisons to the American Library Association dealing with selected issues and liaisons to other associations, trying to make sure that we didn't become extinct.

Z: That's a challenge. What do you consider your major achievements as president?

M: I think that I was able to keep the ship of state afloat. I think at this time we went through a continuing education director [director of education] search and brought in somebody else.

Z: M. Kent Mayfield?

M: Yes, it was Kent. It permitted us to provide the leadership on certification and its issues and learn how to create a program that actually provides that kind of stamp that says, "This person has accomplished what they said they were going to." MLA provides the membership as a whole with opportunities to remain current. I think a lot of it has to do with the overall program of the Medical Library Association, keeping it solvent, making sure that the opportunities are there for people, not only through CE, but as you expand the program so people have opportunities other than CE and at their own institutions to continue to grow, and to serve as a model. Because I was active in other things at the time, I was able to see MLA from the outside as well, and many associations kept looking at MLA trying to figure out, "How can you do that?" MLA's CE was a model.

Z: It was a model, absolutely. I think you have already touched a little on the structure of MLA at the time as it really was going through a transition.

M: It was going through a transition. It was the process that resulted in Chapter Council and Section Council—how to have people feel as if they were contributing to the association and how to make sure that our previous structure (which was [regional groups and special] interest groups) had a framework in which people would provide the input, provide service, and gain from the organization. Sometimes the most important things you can do are structure and process. They are not always visionary. There are times for visionaries and times to recruit people.

Z: If your structure isn't sound, no vision is going to help. Moving on to MLA committees, you chaired or were a member of many of them. Which of these committee appointments do you consider to have been the most significant?

M: There are two of them and they are related. First, the CE Committee, which I didn't realize at the time was going to be as seminal as it was, both for my role in MLA and for my own professional development and things I did outside of MLA. Second, as a result of the CE Committee and then my presidency, the Study Group [on the MLA's Role in the Educational Process for Health Science Librarians].

Z: Right, that is significant.

M: Leading to the 1981 Mirsky Report.

Z: The Mirsky Report, yes.

M: It was an attempt to figure out the role of education—what should be the role of education, what is certification, and how do you put together a certification program? MLA had the beginnings of one but it wasn't sustainable as it was.

Z: It was very shaky underpinnings.

M: It permitted you to be certified if you had taken a health sciences class or been in an internship program, of which I had done neither. I wound up teaching the health sciences libraries class, but I couldn't become certified until we changed the program. Then I could, on the basis of examination, become certified, and I did.

Z: It just shows the evolution. In what ways were some of your committee and task force assignments significant to you or MLA?

M: I think of the significance to MLA from things like the CE Committee or the Task Force on Knowledge and Skills, which I did much later. How do we help the library schools know what it is that we want from their graduates if we can't tell them what we want? What are the knowledge and skills that we want? I also was on a legislative task force, as you recall. That was after I had been at NLM and seen the influence of lobbyists from the inside. I was able to understand the role of lobbyists, which is very hard for people to understand—how they can get the ear of legislative staff, how important legislative staff are to the process—and the flip of that, how important local contacts are in the legislative process, especially if you come from a rural or small state where they will pay a lot of attention to you, as opposed to Los Angeles where they really don't care that much.

Z: That was a good experience because you had a broad background, so you already had seen it from a different perspective.

M: Exactly, and because I was also working at that time on technology issues at the University of California and I could help explain this Internet thing, the Information Highway. I think I helped MLA most via education-related programs, contributions to MLA having to do with CE or knowledge and skills or MLA's role in the education for health sciences librarians. And to take the flip of your question, my involvement benefited me personally because I made friends for life.

Z: Friends for life.

M: It is amazing when you are serving on these committees, especially task forces, because it's more like retreats. You go off and spend a day or two together, including all of your meals, and you are working through flip charts and everything else. You get to know people and you get to know people well, and they do become friends for life.

Z: Let's move on and talk about some of the more memorable MLA meetings or events.

M: What's interesting is how they all blur together. I am trying to think why, and I think part of it is because I was always in a position of recruiting people for my library. In terms of what I was doing, when I was on the board, I was going to official meetings at MLA but also was in the placement center and trying to see who the applicants were and trying to meet people. When I was at the RML, I also was meeting people. And even when I got to UCSD, there were always attempts to try and see what new people there were and who was coming up in the ranks. But are we talking about what incidents as opposed to what took place at the meeting itself?

Z: The most memorable things.

M: Well, because Louise and I had the same schedule for MLA annual meetings in that I was the associate director of the RML and she was the director, we had to come early for some RML meetings and sometimes stay later, so we wound up sharing a room. Whenever you share a room with Louise, it's always a fascinating experience. From her I learned that you go look at the room and if you don't like it, you tell them that you want another one. That happened in Cleveland, Ohio. We got to San Antonio and for some reason we couldn't go into the hotel. We had to be in a motel somewhere for a couple of days. It was the first San Antonio meeting. You remember things like the San Diego meeting in 1971 [1972], in which Bob Lewis and the local arrangement folks ran out of food. There had been a mix-up with the catering. This is what central offices' expanded services were established to prevent, where you have professionals handling it instead of local arrangements volunteers. I remember the Hawaii meeting, not only because it was beautiful, but because I was on the Nominating Committee then. I was either on the board or the Nominating Committee, because the board and the Nominating Committee had a late-night, joint meeting because the Nominating Committee was unable to find someone to run for president.

Z: That was Hawaii. You were on the board then.

M: Okay, I was on the board and the committee came to us. And I think that helped us see that if we were going to get people to serve in the association, we had to provide them with a lot more support. And, of course, I remember the New York meeting at the Hilton. There was a strike toward the end of our meeting. The staff went on strike, and that was the year I was president and had a gorgeous suite. I remember things like that.

Z: Every meeting has something, but remembering them all, as you say, they start to blur together. You are a Distinguished AHIP [Academy of Health Information Professionals] member as well as a Fellow of MLA. Are there any comments you would like to make about these honors?

M: Certainly becoming a Fellow was an honor. I was glad that MLA changed its criteria for Fellows and didn't make them all post-retirement, so that as a Fellow, I could

continue to contribute to the association while still an active member of the association, while still actively going to meetings.

Z: Yes, because if you are named as a Fellow just as you retire, it's like, "Thank you for the honor, but I'm no longer here."

M: So I'm glad that they made that change.

Z: You were a Senior Fellow with UCLA/CLR [Council on Library Resources] program. How do you think that opportunity affected your career?

M: I think it provided me with some wonderful opportunities. The program itself was...[recording ends]

Z: This is tape 2, side B, of an interview with Phyllis Mirsky conducted by Joan Zenan on April 25, 2009. We were talking about you being a Senior Fellow at the UCLA/CLR program and the opportunities it afforded you.

M: It provided me with a one-month residency program at UCLA, which has to be one of the most wonderful things one can do, completely supported and funded by the organization. It consisted of both coursework, including something called "Management Accounting," and time with Bob Hayes, who was dean of the school at the time and a wonderful, wonderful person. I had not been exposed to him that much because I hadn't gone to UCLA library school. And in addition, you had a project or something you wanted to do. This was in 1987, and I knew that I wanted to learn more about capital planning and projects, because I knew that the big library projects were coming up. So I used the opportunity to do readings and to do writing about what it was that I wanted to happen in the project, using UCLA's wonderful library resources that were there.

Z: And who else was with you at that program that year?

M: There were fifteen of us, and I was the only health sciences librarian, and in fact, it wasn't until I recommended Alison Bunting and Rachael Anderson and Mary Horres that they actually had someone who was a sitting health sciences librarian as opposed to myself, who was an associate university librarian at that point with health sciences background. The folks were varied from across the country, and one of the things that this program was trying to do, similar to the one-year internships they used to have for the health sciences that you, Joan, participated in, is to identify and groom people for management positions. So all of us were already in management positions, but we weren't directors. (Is that true? I think none of us were directors. One of them may have been director of a small institution.) And they wanted to groom people to be directors for ARL libraries. So a lot of them talked about what does it mean and do I want to do this. Several of them did, in fact, go on to be directors of ARL libraries and I decided I wasn't going to be a director of an ARL library.

Z: Well, considering the size of the library you were at, it was equivalent to the size of a lot of other libraries. But it afforded you a wonderful opportunity to sort of jumpstart some of your plans.

M: Exactly.

Z: Before we wind up the interview, is there anything else you want to talk about that we haven't covered on your career or your activities with MLA?

M: One of the things I was able to do has to do with the ability to teach in library school at UCLA. Before I left, there was the health sciences course, the library management course, and I served as a guest lecturer at UCLA, and at USC, while a library school program was still there. And then when I went to DC, at Catholic University I did that. And when I came back, I did another guest lectureship at the UCLA graduate school, so I think I had a unique opportunity. But one of the things that I was fortunate enough to do, the Association of Research Libraries had a consultant training program in which they would train people to go out and be consultants in research libraries. It was a two-week program. It took place at the 4-H headquarters in Maryland, not far from NLM, and we did a week of coursework. Again, some of the stuff I had already done (e.g., facilitation, listening skills, organization). We then did a project for a local institution. We were a team of five, and we went to the Library of Congress and did an analysis of whatever their issue was and talked to people, wrote a report, and presented it to the administrator who had asked for it, so it was a real project. But then it also allowed me to become a consultant and facilitator later on with facilitation skills for large groups, which I was able to use as well and do teaching and do consulting, and we then did some space consulting.

Z: That's a very important thing. If you don't have any other comments that you would like to make, at the end of every oral history interview we like to have some general reflections on a few topics. These are broad questions, and they can include both librarianship and other areas of your life. The first one is who are the people you feel most influenced your life and career, and who are the people that you feel you most influenced?

M: I think the most important influence in my career was certainly Louise Darling, who got me into the profession of health sciences librarianship, pushed me out when I needed to be pushed out, made the contacts for me, made sure I knew what I needed. There is nothing better than a role model, how one should comport oneself, and she did that. I think the other person is Penny Abell, the person who recruited me to UC San Diego, even though she was only there four years before she left for Yale. She was my model for university research librarian. She guided me away from being insular to health sciences to really being associate university librarian for the libraries as a whole, how important that was, important relationships with faculty. When I was in health sciences, I didn't have those opportunities. With the RML, I didn't have any contact with faculty, and before that I had been a reference librarian

and had not had the opportunities. So my management was really not in the university setting until I got to UCSD. The relationships I was able to develop with faculty and administrators and other administrative types on campus were very important. Penny had gotten herself onto the chancellor's advisory committee because she knew how important that was. And so in the three times in which I served as acting university librarian, I served in that role and got to see the university and how it functioned as a whole. So I think it's probably those two people who most influenced me.

Z: And how about people you feel you most influenced?

M: I saw that question when you gave it to me and to tell you the truth, I don't know the answer to that. When Frieda Weise was president of MLA and she did her presidential address, she said I had been very influential. I didn't know that, so I appreciated that. I mean there have been an awful lot of people in my career that I have tried to serve as a good role model for and tried to nurture and give advice to and I am sure I have influenced them, but I don't know who.

Z: Nobody other than Frieda, who said so. And I think in all of your teaching career probably a lot of those people were influenced, and they are probably out there working today. And if we asked, they would probably say, "Oh yeah, that class by Phyllis Mirsky was very helpful." That's good. Overall, how would you like to be remembered by the library community, and what do you consider your most important contributions?

M: I would like to be remembered as a leader, someone who tried to provide for the profession and for my colleagues a vision of where we could go and what we could do.

Z: And your most important contributions?

M: I hope it's the people that I mentored and guided and advised who are now spread across the country and some in happy retirement. But basically I have always considered myself a people person. I think my social work background comes through. I think what I found was a way to use whatever it was that was leading me towards social work and a way to help people without mental health issues. Well, at least not obvious mental health issues, though sometimes I have found that those do come up, but I consider myself a people person, I do try to put people first.

Z: You have succeeded very well. Where do you see librarianship and especially medical librarianship headed in the future?

M: I think we have real struggles ahead of us. I think that right now it's the economy, but even if it wasn't the economy, how do we remain relevant when, for some of us, what we thought we were about no longer seems to be important? We used to do collection development, and for some people whose lives were tied up in making

sure they had the right collection, it isn't done the same way anymore. The collection now has morphed into how do we provide people the resources they need when they need it? Just in time instead of considering just in case. I think that you need to remain close to your primary clientele. They are the ones you are serving, so it doesn't matter what setting you are in. Who are you trying to serve, what are you trying to do for them, and what's the best way to do it? Involve them as partners in it. I had a conversation with a faculty member at UCLA in which she was talking about humanities and technology and how the humanities have been slower in accepting technology because they haven't figured out how to make it work for them, but that is shifting. There is still a gap between what librarians and technologists put together and say, "Here, here are your resources." Unlike what the humanists need, the gap isn't as wide in the sciences or the health sciences between what there is and what people want, but there's still a gap. I think we have to remain ever aware of how our users want the information so that we can provide it, and so they know that we are the ones that are doing it, because we are not the ones who are going to make the case for why libraries are important. That's self-serving. Users are the ones who are going to make the case, and they are only going to make it if we show them and work with them so they realize how important we are. And if they don't, then we are not going to succeed.

Z: What advice would you give to people in the field today beyond what you just said, either new librarians or those who are far along in their careers?

M: Don't lose sight of what you are trying to accomplish. Don't get caught up in the latest/next thing and feel you have to do that because it is the latest/next thing. Don't lose sight of who you are trying to serve—it's not yourself. Know your users.

Z: Anything else that we might have forgotten to mention?

M: I think we have done enough.

Z: Then the very last question, who else do you think should be interviewed for the Oral History Project and who would be good interviewers?

M: We have to get Lois Ann Colaianni. I don't know how to do that, but do do that. We have to get Nelson Gilman because of the RML; he was there at its early history and also because of the things he was able to accomplish at USC, which was very different from what UCLA was doing. Different institutions. And another person on your list you need to get Betsy Humphreys.

Z: Oh, absolutely, yes.

M: Betsy is the deputy director of NLM, second in command and the first librarian in that role. Betsy, when I was in NLM was assistant head of serials. If NLM has an oral history, they may have already done it, I don't know.

Z: Don't know, but we will have to look at it.

M: If they do, then you will just have to make links to it.

Z: Right, we will check into that. I think there are probably other people who have retired from NLM that we haven't even thought of getting that we should. That's all part of our history too. Well, I thank you very much for your time, and we will send this on and get it transcribed.

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RESUME

Phyllis S. Mirsky
Deputy University Librarian, Emerita
UCSD Libraries

PROFESSIONAL POSITIONS

University of California, San Diego

Deputy University Librarian, 1995-2006
Interim University Librarian, November 1998-September 1999
Associate University Librarian, Social Sciences and Humanities, 1995-97
Associate University Librarian, 1993-94
Acting University Librarian January 1992- March 1993
Associate/Assistant University Librarian, Administrative & Public Services, 1987-92
Acting University Librarian, January-August 1985
Acting Head, Biomedical Library, 1982
Assistant University Librarian, Sciences, 1981-86

National Library of Medicine, Bethesda, Maryland

Head, Reference Section, 1979-81
Coordinator, Library Associate Program, 1979-81

UCLA Biomedical Library, Los Angeles, California

Associate Director, Pacific Southwest Regional Medical Library Service, 1973-79
Faculty Coordinator, Biomedical Library Program, Central San Joaquin Valley Area
Health Education Center, Fresno, California, 1973-77
Assistant Director, Pacific Southwest Regional Medical Library Service, 1971-73
Head, Consulting and Continuing Education, Pacific Southwest Regional Medical
Library Service, 1969-71
Reference/Acquisitions Librarian, 1968-69
Reference Librarian, 1965-68

Cleveland Public Library, Cleveland, Ohio

Hospital Librarian, Hospital and Institutions Division, 1963-64

Children's Aid Society, New York, New York

Caseworker (Field Placement), 1962-63

EDUCATION

A.M.L.S., The University of Michigan, 1965
Columbia University School of Social Work, 1962-63
B.S. in Social Welfare, The Ohio State University, 1962

PROFESSIONAL CONTRIBUTIONS

Elsevier Science North American Library Advisory Board, Member, 1999-

Library of Congress, Medical Library Association Representative to Network Advisory Committee, 1994-97; Chair, NAC Steering Committee 1995-7

Coalition for Networked Information, UCSD Representative, 1992-

OCLC Online Computer Library Center, Inc., Member, Users Council, 1991-94

Documentation Abstracts, Inc.

Member, Board of Directors, 1985-90

Vice Chair, Board of Directors, 1988-90

Medical Library Association

Offices Held:

President, 1984-85 (Vice-President, 1983-84; Past-President, 1985-86)
Board of Directors, 1977-80

Committee Appointments:

Task Force on Knowledge and Skills, 1989-93
Ad Hoc Legislative Agenda Task Force, 1985-88
Nominating Committee, 1974, 1982, 1987
Co-Chair, 1982 National Program Committee, 1979-82
Chair, Study Group on MLA's Role in the Education Process for Health Sciences Librarianship, 1980-81
Chair, Ad Hoc Committee to Evaluate the *Bulletin*, 1978-1979
Ad Hoc Committee on the White House Conference for Libraries and Information Services, 1978-79
1978 National Program Committee, 1976-78
Chair, Continuing Education Committee, 1976-77
Chair, Health Sciences Library Technician Committee, 1973

Other Contributions:

Consulting Editor *MLA Bulletin*, 1974-77
Instructor, Continuing Education Course (CE5: Human Factors in Medical Library Administration), 1971-77

American Library Association, Member, 1981-

Library Administration & Management Association, Member, 1990-92
Committee on Accreditation, Site Visitors Panel, 1990-92
Library and Information Technology Association, Member, 1983-93
Association of College & Research Libraries, Member, 1981-

American Society for Information Science, Member, 1981-1989

Medical Library Group of Southern California and Arizona, Member, 1966-

President, 1972-73 (Vice-President, 1971-72; Past-President, 1973-74)
Secretary, 1970-71

NCLIS/SLA Task Force on the Role of the Special Library in Nationwide Network and Cooperative Programs, 1981-83

UCLA Association of Academic Women

Member-at-Large, Executive Council, 1977-79
Hospitality Chairman, 1976-77
Membership Chairman, 1973-75

University of Michigan School of Library Science

Alumni Society, Life Member

UNIVERSITY SERVICE**UCSD****Emeriti Association**

Executive Committee, Member-at-Large, 2009-10

Secretary/Treasurer, 20010-13

Mentor, Chancellor's Scholars

Search Committee, Director of Physical Plant Services, 2001

Electronic Information Task Force, Chair, 1998-99

Ad Hoc Faculty Committee on Library Collections, Member, 1998

Task Force on Instructional Technology, Member, 1997-98

Multimedia Development Center

Planning Committee 1995

MDC Advisory Board, 1995-97

Capital Outlay and Space Advisory Committee, 1994-

Task Force on Library Services to Undergraduates, 1994

Media Central, Advisory Committee, 1994-95

Chancellor's Committee on Information Infrastructure, 1993-4

Academic Senate, Committee on Computing, 1992-93; Co-Chair, Library
Subcommittee, 1983-85

Search Committee for UCSD Assistant Vice Chancellor for Academic
Personnel, 1991

Building Advisory Committee Biomedical Library, 2000-2004

Building Advisory Committee, Galbraith Hall Renovation 1992-00

Building Advisory Committee, Graduate School of International Relations
& Pacific Studies, 1985-90

Building Advisory Committee, Central University Library, 1985-93

University of California

California Digital Library and Systemwide Library Planning

Systemwide Operations and Planning Group, Chair, 1998-2000, Member, 1998-
2005

Library Planning and Action Initiative, Liaison Group, Member, 1997-98

UC Digital Library

Ad Hoc Task Force-Member, 1994-95

Executive Working Group, 1995-6

Collection Development Committee--Member 1994-2006

Heads of Public Services, Chair, 1993-95; Member, 1986-97

Librarians Association

Nominating Committee, Chair, 1978

Statewide Assembly, Delegate: 1978, 1975

UCLA

Librarians Association/Los Angeles Division

President, 1973 (Vice-President, 1972; Past-President, 1974)

Committee on Peer Review, 1977-78

Committee on Appointments, Promotions, Tenure and Salary, 1975

Academic Affirmative Action Compliance Committee, 1976-78

UC Merced

Search Committee for University Librarian, 2000-01

COMMUNITY SERVICE

Women's Empowerment, Member, Fund Raising Committee, 2010-

City of Del Mar

Facilities Advisory Committee, Member, 2001, 2009
Water and Sewer Rate Task Force, Member 1998-99
Finance Committee, Chair, 1997-98; Member, 1995-98

Del Mar Community Connections, Volunteer, 2001-02

San Diego Mayor's Committee on Library of the Future, Subcommittee on Law and Regulation
1993-94

San Diego/Baja Communications Council, Member, 1993-96

TEACHING

Instructor, Association of Research Libraries, Office of Management Studies, Management
Institute, 1987

Guest Lecturer, UCLA Graduate School of Library and Information Science, 1984

Guest Lecturer, Catholic University, Graduate School of Library Science, 1980

Guest Lecturer, Library Schools of UCLA and the University of Southern California, 1967-78.
(Lectures on various aspects of health science librarianship)

CONSULTING

Consultant, UCSD Libraries, 2007

Facilitator, UCLA Library Collections Workshop, October 29, 1996

Consultant, Salk Institute, La Jolla, CA, 1995

Library Space and Interiors Consultant, San Diego Museum of Contemporary Art Library,
La Jolla, CA, 1993-94

Grant Reviewer, College Library Technology and Cooperation Grant Program (Title IID of the
Higher Education Act), US Department of Education, 1988-

Consultant, National Library of Medicine, NLM/MLA Planning Meeting for Resource Grants and
Medical Librarianship Education and Training, Bethesda, MD, (June 20-21, 1988)

Facilitator, AASLD/MLA Guidelines Scenario Writing Session, Los Angeles, California, 1984

Consulting Training Program, Office of Management Studies, Association of Research Libraries,
1983-

Consultant, Area Health Education Center Program, University of California, San Francisco,
1983-84

Consultant, Area Health Education Center Program, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, NC,
1978

Consultant, American Hospital Association, Institute on the Role of the Health Science Librarian,
San Francisco, CA, 1973

HONORS AND AWARDS

Listed in Who's Who in America, 1996-

Fellow, Medical Library Association, 1995

Senior Fellow, UCLA/Council on Library Resources, 1987

Member, Academy of Health Information Professionals, Distinguished Level, Medical
Library Association, 1978-

Fellow, National Institute of Mental Health, Columbia University, 1962-63

PUBLICATIONS

"The Economics and Management of Digital Resources in a Multi-Campus, Multi-Library University" by Cecily Johns, Beverlee French and Phyllis S. Mirsky. Center for Research Libraries Conference on "The New Dynamics & Economics of Cooperative Collection Development", Aberdeen Woods, GA November 8-10, 2002

"The Pacific Rim Digital Library Alliance" by Phyllis S. Mirsky, R. Bruce Miller and Karl Lo. *D-Lib Magazine* (July/August 1999) <http://www.dlib.org/dlib/july99/07clips.html#MIRSKY>

"From Farmington Plan to the Pacific Rim Digital Library Alliance: New Strategies in Developing International Collections." by Phyllis S. Mirsky, R. Bruce Miller and Karl Lo. *Center for Research Libraries Conference: Creating New Strategies for Cooperative Collection Development*. Atlanta, GA. 12-14 November 1999. <http://www.crl.uchicago.edu/info/awccconf/awpapersgenl.htm>

"Anniversary Reflections," *Latitudes*, 8(2):1,3, March/April, 1999

President's Page, Medical Library Association *Bulletin*, October 1984, January 1985, April 1985.

"MLA's role in the Educational Process for Health Science Librarians," Report of the Study Group.

Medical Library Association, October 1981.

"Looking at and beyond the looking glass; a guest editorial." *Bulletin of the Medical Library Association* 67(3): 336, July 1979.

"MLA certification in relation to graduate, postgraduate and continuing education." in *Proceedings of the Allerton Invitational Conference on Education for Health Sciences Librarianship*, April 2-4, 1979. Chicago, Medical Library Association, 1979. pp. 117-21.

Directory of Health Science Libraries: Arizona, California, Hawaii, Nevada, Los Angeles, Biomedical Library, University of California, 1979.

"Pacific Southwest Regional Medical Library Service." *NLM News* 34(6): 4-5, June 1979.

"Evaluation of a library program in a Carnegie-model Area Health Education Center" by Alma Evans, Phyllis S. Mirsky and Marilyn Jensen de Victoria. *Bulletin of the Medical Library Association*, 66(2): 190-9, April 1978.

Manual for Librarians in Small Hospitals. 4th ed. by Lois Ann Colaianne and Phyllis S. Mirsky. Los Angeles, University of California, 1978.

"The Regional Medical Libraries--Region XI", *NLM News*, 31: 3-5, January 1976.

Human Factors in Medical Library Administration (revision). Chicago, Medical Library Association, 1976. (Syllabus for Continuing Education Course, CE5)

Books: How to select, acquire and prepare them for us." by Lois Ann Colaianne and Phyllis S. Mirsky in Bloomquist, H., et al., *Library Practice in Hospitals: a Basic Guide*. Cleveland, Press of Case Western Reserve University, 1972.