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An Interview with Wendy M. Starkweather

An Oral History Conducted by Claytee D. White

The Boyer Early Las Vegas Oral History Project

Oral History Research Center at UNLV
University Libraries
University of Nevada Las Vegas

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The following interview is part of a series of interviews conducted under the auspices of the Boyer Early Las Vegas Oral History Project. Additional transcripts may be found under that series title.

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Preface

Wendy Starkweather recalls her move to Las Vegas on a hot summer day in 1978. Her husband, Peter L. Starkweather had accepted a position to teach biology, but nothing had prepared her for desert weather in July. She was a small town girl, born and raised in rural Ogdensburg, New York. She attended Skidmore College in Saratoga Springs, NY and became a teacher and librarian in New Hampshire

Getting a job at UNLV's library took some time, but finally in 1985, she was offered the position of head of references. From that point on, there was only looking forward for Wendy. She was to be an active member of the library staff until her retirement in 2010.

During her over two decades at UNLV she worked under the leadership of six deans. She was an vigorous voice in the development of services, impacting circulation, interlibrary loans and non-book services that included media and instruction. In addition, she was here during a momentous period as the future Lied Library was being funded and designed. Wendy vividly describes the impressive physical structure of Lied Library and the move into the new facility like a proud parent.



ORAL HISTORY RESEARCH CENTER AT UNLV

Boyer Early Las Vegas Oral History Project



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Name of Narrator: Wendy M. Starkweather

Name of Interviewer: CLAYTEE D. WHITE

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Wendy M. Starkweather 6/16/10
Signature of Narrator Date

Claytee D. White 6/16/2010
Signature of Interviewer Date

This is Claytee White. It is June 16th, 2010. I am with Wendy Starkweather here in the library, third floor in Special Collections.

Wendy, would you please pronounce and spell your last name for me?

Starkweather, S, as in Sam, T-A-R-K-W-E-A-T-H-E-R.

Thank you. Now, just to get started can you tell me something about your early life, where you grew up and what that was like?

I grew up in a small town, actually the only city in the county of St. Lawrence in New York state. It's called Ogdensburg. I lived there until I went to college. So I had 18 years of basically growing up in the same place. I lived on a street near the downtown area. It was a town of about 13,000 people when it was in its heyday, maybe 14,000, and everything was pretty much walkable for the places I wanted to go and be and get to.

Did you have brothers and sisters?

I had two brothers and no sisters. My brothers were actually half-brothers because my mother had divorced and then married my father. I was kind of the spoiled child and also the girl and I was the last one of the family. So that was fun. I don't know whether I learned to be a tomboy from my brothers, but I certainly became one and did all those kinds of things that you do as a tomboy, like learn to play baseball and tried to play basketball. I was the oldest girl on the block. I became a leader of the group. Some people called me bossy. But I prefer to think of it as sort of my leadership tendencies coming out at the very beginning. So it was the typical -- well, I don't know whether there's anything really typical. But it's what's thought of as typical for growing up in small town and in a neighborhood.

When I was 16 we moved to a house outside of the city on the St. Lawrence River. My father and I actually helped design the house. Then it was built to my dad's specifications to such a degree that the contractors used his drawings for the house.

So describe the house to me.

It had a first floor and a second floor -- not loft, but two guestrooms upstairs -- my bedroom was upstairs and then there was a guestroom. And it had a balcony that overlooked the living room. And then the living room had almost floor-to-ceiling windows looking out on the St. Lawrence River.

That was a very nice place to be to finish up my adolescence I guess because it meant there was a lot of time to do swimming in the river and in the wintertime go snowshoeing. It was a delightful place. We lived right beside my aunt and uncle. Ours was a very small family. My father had one sister and my mother didn't have any siblings. We had this property on the river and both my aunt and uncle, my father's sister and her husband, and my mother and father shared this property. We lived next door to each other.

Do you ever go back now?

I used to when my parents were alive. Actually, I have a trip planned. My niece and nephew, my brother's children, and my niece's husband and my brother's wife all get together generally every year in St. Lawrence. We rent a house or a cottage to get together for about a week. That's our family reunion. Basically you can count us all on one hand.

Are those houses still in the family?

No. We had to sell them. I'm kicking myself now. I wish I had been able to keep it so that we wouldn't have to be renting places in the summer. But it would be hard to keep it up living out here.

That's correct. Yes. What kind of work did your parents do?

My father was self-employed. He ran a uniform manufacturing company with my uncle. It was called Mitchell-Mauby. He employed about 14 workers, women workers who sewed the uniforms. And his major contractor was Kodak. So he was making uniforms for the Kodak Company in Rochester so that they could use them in their processing rooms for the film. He worked with nylon instead of cotton cloth because nylon didn't have any of the little pieces that would fly in the air and ruin the film. That's what he did. He also made the gym uniforms for the high school kids. I wore the uniform that my father made for my gym classes.

Oh, that's great. Did your mother work outside the home?

No. She was a homemaker. She actually started to help my father later on when things got sort of tight at the business and he needed a little help in the office. She was trained as an executive secretary, but never filled a position with that.

And you left there and went to school where?

I went to Skidmore College in Saratoga Springs, New York.

How far was that from St. Lawrence?

That was about five hours from St. Lawrence and Ogdensburg. I took the bus to and from when I would come home for vacations and things like that. Between Ogdensburg and Saratoga is the Adirondacks. I often drove through the Adirondacks either to get to school or to come home from school. So it's a special area. My brother actually lives there now.

Oh, okay. The brother that will be there for the reunion?

Yes.

Tell me how and when you arrived in Las Vegas.

In 1978. We came out because my husband, Peter, had gotten an offer for teaching in biology. I had already been teaching -- not teaching. I had been a librarian for six years while he was getting his doctorate.

And this was in which city?

Well, we lived three years in Hanover, New Hampshire -- he was getting his doctorate at Dartmouth College -- then three years in New London, New Hampshire, where the school that I was the librarian at was. That was called New London, New Hampshire. That was about a 35-minute commute depending on which one was doing it. I did it for three years and then Peter did it for three. So we had the occasion of living in a small but cultural city of Hanover. And then we lived outside of New London, New Hampshire, which was also a small town. But we lived in an even smaller town called Elkins, New Hampshire. It had about a hundred people. We moved from Elkins, New Hampshire to Las Vegas in 1978.

A hundred people?

And it had a hundred people. And we moved to what was the biggest city I had ever lived in. And even then it was -- what? -- a quarter of the size of what it is now.

Coming from that background -- in my mind I can just picture the beauty of the areas you lived in and the cold.

It was cold. It was winter. But we learned to cross-country ski. The small town Elkins had a small lake, Lake Pleasant. We swam in it in the summer and you could walk from the apartment to the lake and just shop at the little grocery store. But, of course, everybody knew your business.

Of course.

If you did anything unusual as our landlord said phones will be a buzzing.

I like it. So tell me your first impressions of Las Vegas coming from that area of the country.

Oh, flying in to Las Vegas? And I had not seen it before I was moving here. Well, no. I take that back. We came for a two-week visit after Peter had accepted the job. But we came to do house hunting. We arrived in July. McCarran was much smaller than it is now. I remember on the flight just looking and seeing how brown everything looked. And I thought, oh, my gosh, where are the trees? Oh, there must be some trees. I know there are some trees. Then when we walked out -- I even remember the outfit I had on. It was blue plaid pants and a white jacket and probably a white blouse. But I remember the white jacket. Walked out of McCarran and was hit by what I thought was an oven. It was like I had walked into an oven. I know since I've talked to people since then how much people have experienced such similar responses.

That's correct.

I could not believe it. We stayed with the chair of the biology department at his house. That was Jim Deacon. Jim and Maxine. That was his first wife. We stayed with them. Their son was there at the time, Dave. They gave us parties and it was a delightful time. But I remember two things of import relative to the weather. One was that they let the potato chips sit in a bowl on the counter after the party and into the next day. And I remember that I could eat the potato chips the next day because they were still crispy. You don't have crispy potato chips if you leave them out for five minutes in New Hampshire[.

That's right.

So that was one thing. And the other thing was looking outside and it was absolutely beautiful, glorious outside, bright blue, sunshine. The wind would blow. And you'd look out and you'd think, oh, what a glorious day. And you'd walk out and, bam, it would be a hundred degrees at nine o'clock. So that was our experience initially.

Then we went on a trip to Utah to try and see where -- well, two things again with weather. We went to the Boulder Beach and Lake Mead to cool off, but not realizing that it was ten degrees hotter there.

Did you go to Mount Charleston?

No, not that trip. Not that trip. But we did go to Utah and went to Zion and saw Cedar Breaks.

We just fell in love with the country. Also driving back we went through a place called Snow Canyon outside of St. George. It has sand dunes and we were up on top of the sand dunes and boiling hot. When we drove through the town of St. George, which was much smaller then than it is now, we saw on the bank neon -- not bulletin board, but where they tell you what the time and the temperature is that it was 120. We decided that it was probably 125 on top of the dunes that we had climbed. So that was our initiation into the heat. Of course, we did the Strip view and took pictures and sent pictures back because we rented an apartment and that was the very first --

Where was your apartment located?

That was the Village Apartments and it was right across Maryland from the university. It's on Escondido. I got a job temporarily at the Clark County Law Library. I served as their law librarian for nine months while their librarian went to get her library degree. She had a law degree, but she didn't have her library degree. So I did that.

How did you get back and forth?

There I drove because that was downtown at the courthouse. But when we moved six months later to our very first house in the neighborhood that's closest to Russell and Eastern, right near the runway of McCarran, which is one of the reasons we moved about 11 years later -- but it was a wonderful house to be in to start with. The only rule I had since we couldn't find a clapboard house, white clapboard with green shutters, which is what we were looking for because that was our idea coming from the East, then I had to have a house that had a tree that was taller than the house. So this house had a mulberry tree that was taller than the house.

Okay, good. And that was for shade? Is that what you were thinking?

Yes. It had shade and it had trees in the backyard. So it provided shade. Then the first couple of years that we lived there Peter and I would bike to work because it was just a few miles from UNLV. So I biked to work. My job then was just down the street from the university in a corporate library. I worked there for a year. I biked there until my bike was stolen. Then I stopped biking.

So Las Vegas was beginning to change at that point probably.

Yeah, a little bit.

You could see a little change.

A little bit.

How did you get the job here on campus?

Well, I interviewed three times for work here. The first time I interviewed was for a temporary job -- no. Actually that was for a full-time, but I didn't get it. But there was a temporary job. I worked for about four months as assistant cataloger. I worked for Billie Mae Polson, who was a long-time cataloger. Then I ended up with a job at the county library as a reference librarian and then as the head of their periodicals department. So I was continuing to gain library experience and getting some supervisory experience at the same time.

Eventually there was a head of reference position that came open in 1985 at UNLV. By then I knew some of the people and was interviewed by Mary Dale Deacon, who was the dean then. But I had known the former dean, Hal Erickson, before that. He had interviewed me the first time I had interviewed. I'm just trying to think if there was anything else associated with that. Not much other than what I remember being interviewed.

In the round part of the building in the old building there was a place off the administrative office and ended up getting nicknamed "The Star Chamber." It was mostly red, a red wall, fabric wall and a circular place where people sat. Administrative council sat there. That's where you interviewed everybody. The candidates sat in the middle on one of the little couches and everybody else sat around you asking you the questions. And we put a lot of people through that. And I was one of the people that went through it. I remember answering a question that Bob Ball, who was the collection development person at the time, asked me what I expected to be doing in five years. And I said that I hadn't given it any thought because I had been trying for four years just to get a job at UNLV. So that's where we left it so that I had finally gotten the job at UNLV.

Oh, that's great. Now, why was it called "The Star Chamber?" Was the person in the center the star?

No. I guess it took on that name later because there was a movie called "The Star Chamber." It's where they put people that they were prosecuting and they had them sit in the middle. It was sort of like -- well, I also thought of it like a place in -- I was a Star Trek fan -- a place where you could sit and if you gave the wrong answers you could just sort of be transformed.

You could be beamed away.

You'd be beamed away. Exactly. So it often got humorous attention in that regard.

Yes. So who were some of the early friends that you met, early people when you started here?

Well, there was Myong-ja Kwon. I knew Eva when she was a student worker, Eva Stowers when she was a student worker. That was when I was the assistant cataloger. That was just for the four months. That's when I met Maria White and Kathy Rothermel. They both were in acquisitions at the time. By the time I came in '85 [1985], I think Maria had moved to circulation. I'm not positive. She might not have been at circulation by then. Kay Tuma was working. Sue Kendall, she isn't here now, but she left several years ago.

I don't think that's a name that I've heard.

She was a business librarian. Was she business? I think she was business then. She was working here when I had first worked here in 1980. But by the time I was hired full-time, Shelley Heaton and Nancy Master, they were both in the department that I was coming to oversee, and Elmer Curley. He had been head of the department and then had given up that position to a person named Dean Covington. Dean was head of reference. It was his position that I filled when I was hired as head of reference because he had been named head of public services. So they had created the position of head of public services to oversee government publications, which was a separate department or unit we called them then. And then I was in charge of the reference unit. Jim McPhee was in charge of instruction. Joan Rozzi was in charge of the non-book department or unit. And Kay Tuma was in charge of circulation. So those folks were my peers. We all reported to Dean Covington, who reported to Mary Dale.

Laverna Saunders had started at that time. She was head of tech services. She had started a couple months before I did. Sidney Watson started at the same time I did in August of '85. She was the beginning of the month and I was the end of the month. I think she was hired in circulation. Then she ultimately moved to government publications and then to architecture and CML. So a lot of these folks and I go back quite a ways.

So tell me about your progression through the library. And along the way you can tell me funny stories.

Ah. I don't know about funny stories. I probably have forgotten some of them. I was fairly

active, spoke up quite a bit in the group that reported to Dean. I'm drawing a blank really on what happened when I was head of reference. I think we experimented with services. We had something called catalog assistance. That's when we opened up a service desk just for providing help with the catalog because we had many, many catalogs that one had to consult. We had to do a microform catalog and I think we were just starting online at the time. We had some aspects of online that we shared with the county library. We had a paper index of the journals.

So I supported a new service called catalog assistance. Anybody in the library could volunteer to serve on that desk. So we encouraged catalogers to serve on the desk so that they could explain the rules of the catalog to the people that were trying to use it. So Billie Mae I think served on it and Laverna Saunders, who was head of technical services, served on it. A number of people served on it.

I also introduced the concept of videotaping so that people could see themselves in a scenario and set up different scenarios so we could learn best practices and worst practices. We used our own staff as actors. Sidney and Kay Tuma volunteered to play the roles of people. I saved the tape for the longest time and would play it from time to time just to show people what they used to look like.

So give me an idea of one of the scenarios that was acted out. Do you remember one?

Well, it was sort of how do you show a person who isn't giving any help at all? I think Kay played the student needing some help and Sidney played the role of a librarian who didn't want to do anything for the student. And it was the typical the student comes in and is trying to find their way around the round building and couldn't do so. They didn't know what a card catalog was. Sidney played the role of, well, you just have to go around the corner and down that hallway and then you'll see the catalog and it's arranged author and title and subject. So you've got your author. You just look it up and just go. It was that kind of scenario. And then Kay would make her "Saturday Night Live" face and say, oh, well, thank you very much.

So we played with that so that people could see because we actually did have a few people who were not as open and friendly and smiling as they needed to be. There was often the philosophy that if they didn't know what they wanted then they shouldn't be asking the question. We had to work at what the service environment was going to be. That's why I was hired. It's not

to say that everybody was behaving that way. But there hadn't been as strong a culture of user-centeredness.

I've heard at that time there were more parties and celebrations and breakfasts.

There were. We had a pancake breakfast. That was when Dean Simon came, Matt Simon came. But even before that there were lots of parties in the back office area. We celebrated birthdays and some were just the reference group or the group that made up public services. It was potlucks. At the time Dean Covington used to always bring wine. Of course, you weren't supposed to have wine. But we did wine tasting and everybody had wine. So that was fun. We used to ask that question about food when we interviewed people, which wasn't very sophisticated. We would ask people if they knew how to cook, what was their favorite potluck and things like that. It was part of our interview. So we had to grow up a little bit.

At any rate, we had good times. I think there was a sense of family for sure. It was a smaller organization certainly than it is now. I think there were only about 18 faculty members and now there are over 30, upwards of 37 I think. And we didn't have professional staff at that time. We had classified staff and faculty. We relied a lot on student workers, which we still do now. I can't remember a whole lot of funny stories, though.

That's nice. Where did you move from the reference position? What was your next position?

Well, in 1990 we were looking for a new head of public services because Dean Covington had taken another job. So we did a national search. Didn't find a candidate that met -- I guess we offered a position to someone, but he turned it down. And the other people just hadn't met the standards that people had for them. So they decided to open it again a few months later. I actually applied for that one, as did some other people not locally. But there were other people nationally who had applied. But turned out that no one at that time was thought to have had the skills or the abilities or knowledge that I would be able to bring to the job. So I actually had to do a full-fledged interview for the position. But there wasn't any other --

In "The Star Chamber?"

In "The Star Chamber," yes. And I remember doing my introductory talk. It was sort of a thing that came back to haunt me actually because it was Laverna and I who had determined a few years

before, like a couple of years before that really we ought to have candidates come and do more than tell us what they could cook for their job interviews. Before that they had simply met a lot of people and didn't ever have to tell us much other than what we asked them. They didn't have to make any presentation. So we created the requirement that people gave presentations.

So you had to give one?

So I had to give one, yes. And I gave it on something called the service imperative, basically suggesting that the real purpose for a library was to provide service; that we had undergone many imperatives in the past and the collection imperative was the strongest one. There must have been some others because I remember two or three, but I don't really remember what they were. But what I focused on, of course, was the service side. That's what I talked about and talked about that it was more than just technology because technology at that time was starting to become more prevalent. We were actually getting online catalogs for heaven's sakes because it was the 90s. But technology was in the service of service as far as I was concerned. I made that point during my presentation.

Wonderful. So now, who was the dean at that point?

The dean was Mary Dale Deacon. I think Myong-ja Kwon had become the chief budget officer and systems person as I recall. So she was part of the hiring team. There was a cabinet. Bob Ball, who was in charge of collections, and Laverna Saunders, in charge of tech services. Then they were filling the public services head. Then the systems person and budget person, who I think was Myong-ja at that time. That was what was called the dean's cabinet. So I interviewed with them and also interviewed with what we called administrative council, which was all the department heads. We don't have something like that. I guess what the dean has now called a cabinet is similar but not quite the same.

At that time the position was for an assistant university librarian, an AUL, which was a term that was heavily used in the profession and was thought to attract more people by virtue of using that term as opposed to head of public services. But over time we were having a hard time with that title because we actually didn't have a university librarian. We had a dean. So they changed the titles later on. So I went from being an associate university librarian to being a director of public services. We still did the same thing. We still got paid the same. Just our titles,

our names changed.

Tell me what the job entails, public service.

When I had that role, which I really held from '91 [1991] through -- well, there was a time when I took on the branches. But initially it started out being overseeing circulation and interlibrary loan and what we called non-book, which was media, and instruction. I think that was all. That was a group that reported to me. I coined the phrase or I continued to use the phrase -- I'm not sure now -- that was used called public service heads round table. And we had started meeting in a room that had a round table, which was the public service head's office. So it was called public service heads round table. PSHRT was the acronym. So if you've ever heard the phrase PSHRT that was what it was. That was the group that met.

My management philosophy was basically to bring smart people together and help them all work together and help me determine our future and the future for public services, the future of how we would serve the users at all of the front desks because basically that's what a head of public service does is oversee all of the services that are designed to deliver reference service, which is helping people with their research, and circulation that is helping them check out books and find books in other libraries so that they can get them on interlibrary loan and to put books on reserve. So faculty members put books on reserve for students to use in their classes. And the non-book area was helping people use video, back then videotapes and audiocassettes. Now, of course, it's DVDs and CDs and streaming video and streaming media and media labs so that you can do podcasting and create videos based on what you take on your camera phone even.

It's amazing.

It has been a lot of change. And then instruction was we did everything from multiple classes, teaching library skills in five-week sessions. I did that when I had a head of reference and then oversaw that when I became the head of public services. So we were focused way early on on instruction. It's morphed into a number of approaches now. But at this point instruction is a major theme of the dean and it's a focus on bringing the faculty members into the process so that they get a chance to work with liaison librarians, special subject librarians to design assignments and establish the library as a major part of the curricular effort instead of just teaching a single session in a classroom. In the library business we call that a one-shot. We still do a lot of one-shots. But

we are trying to encourage faculty to be more holistic in their thinking about how the library can help in more than just a one-session time period.

Who is the student that you gear the workshops towards learning to use the library, the freshmen?

There is a focus on that, but we also do a number of upper class sessions. In those cases there are probably fewer students, but it's a little more challenging for some of the liaison librarians because they have to go into more sophisticated databases while still covering the databases that maybe students should have learned earlier on but they didn't. Of course, we have to spend time convincing people that there is something other than Google to make use of and to make use of Google in a really robust way that's more useful to them for their class work than might be for just surfing. So it's a balance.

Great. So that position was until when?

I served as head of public services until April 2008 when we split the division. It was split into user services and research-and-information.

In the meantime, I had also taken oversight of the branch libraries. But when we moved into Lied -- because there's a whole part that we've sort of forgotten here and that was my involvement in the building process. I had expanded my service to include branch librarians, which meant that I had a very large portion of the library reporting to me almost -- well, over half. So it was a fairly large contingent as we looked when Patty Iannuzzi, the most recent dean and the current dean, when we looked at some organizational structure that could service better when we had a vacancy in our collection development head position. So we just as we often do looked at the organizational structure and saw where we could make some adjustments so that there was a better balance of staff reporting to the directors.

So at that time I shifted to what was called user services and took over, well, what we had called access and delivery services, which was a merger of circulation and document delivery -- so that was a task in and of itself -- then the media, which had prior to that time merged information, commons and media resources, to become media and computer services. Then I had also the web services librarian reporting to me. So that was called user services.

Then the other half of public services was instruction, collections, which was brought in

under research and education, which was the new name, research and education division. So that had instruction, reference and collections and the branch librarians. That was Vicki Nozero, who applied that for that position and got that one. So then she and I were peers, as opposed to her role as head of reference.

Tell me about the process of getting a new library for the university.

Yes. That was incredibly exciting. It started actually as early as 1991, ten years before we opened. It was started by Mary Dale Deacon, who was the dean back at that time. There was a statewide survey of libraries of higher education libraries to see which library needed to be renovated or built new because all of the libraries -- some of the community college libraries were newer and then there was Reno's and UNLV's. And UNLV's had an addition in 1981, but it was already out of space. Las Vegas was growing. UNLV was growing very rapidly. They did a survey and it was determined that UNLV would get legislative planning money. So in the early 90s we began the planning process for just thinking about a new library. Then the planning finished in one legislative session and it was agreed that what plans had been developed would be pursued. We'd go into design drawing and such.

In that early part of the time we had a very large group, a library building group. Several people served on it -- Steve Fitt, Sidney Watson, Shelley Heaton, several people who aren't here anymore. But it was a very sizable group. We all contributed. We all listened to the presentations by the architects. Just were very excited by this company out of Nebraska called Leo Daly. Tom Findley was the Lied architect, the project architect. He had actually led the survey that had been done by the state. So he had some experience. He was very influential in convincing the Lied Foundation, Dr. Hixson, to give money for the library.

So isn't that unusual for the architect to be that involved?

I think it is. But the Lied Foundation had done work in Nebraska before that. So he was familiar with Lied and familiar with Ms. Hixson, whose first name escapes me right at the moment. So he was influential I think. And so was the president at the time. President Maxson was president then. So together there was a lot of energy in going forward with the building.

And then President Maxson had to resign and Carol Harter came onboard. She was very enthusiastic. She was especially enthusiastic to get a new building as opposed to an old building,

one that would just have a frame built around. That was something that was suggested that there would just be one big wall that would be put around the square building and the round building. Then the insides would sort of be torn down. That would have been an incredible effort to try to provide service in a building that was being deconstructed and constructed around it, although libraries have done that. But I was not looking forward to that. So President Harter was very taken by Tom Findley and by the Lied Foundation executive director Hixson.

All together we worked to get a building that if it could only be one square foot larger than Thomas & Mack that was worth it. So we got a building that came in 302,000 square feet. Apparently Thomas & Mack was on or around 300,000 square feet. So the president could then take that concept and launch it as a marketing tool and focus on the academic side and that we were building a signature building for the academic side. That's what Lied Library was going to be. So we had a lot of support to be going forward and a terrific design to work with and architects who were very excited to work with us and who tapped our energies and we tapped theirs.

We knew that we wanted to move from a building that had been two buildings separated by a walkway and that was seven floors that you couldn't see any of the floors from any other floor and you were constantly having service issues. So all of us who had worked with service on the service side and had had to point people to going down the hallway and across the bridge and over to the other side, we were thrilled with the idea of creating a space that was open. I had had a lot of experience with places that weren't open. So my stamp I think, along with others who worked with me, was to make this place as open as we possibly could. So the atrium, of course, helped with that. The escalator helped with that and the main stairwell that everybody could see. Basically we were designing a building that could speak for itself in a large way so that it welcomed people into the space. And then the combination of the warm cherry wood and the Lied Foundation money that allowed us to get higher end furniture so the Warden furniture could be purchased. And the combination of that new 21st century look that the metal made for it combined with the wood made for a stunning piece of architecture and a very welcoming space. I was thrilled when it opened and my husband said it looked like I was so on cloud nine that it was like I had just delivered my second baby because I was just meeting and greeting people because

we wanted to have greeters. It was just a wonderful time. I became the tour master for other visitors when they came to see us.

Yes. Some of the visitors came from as far away as?

We had a lot of people coming from Australia and Korea and China and Hong Kong. The person who came from Oxford in England had the best testimonial that I could ever think of. He said that every professional in the library world should be required to come to our library to see how a library could combine the form and the function in such a beautiful way.

Oh, that's great.

He was just stunned when he came here. I was impressed that somebody from Oxford -- who by the way had said that he had gone to tens of dozens of libraries in his career and had never seen one as strikingly beautiful as ours.

Oh, that's great.

I have heard similar words from so many people who have come. We, of course, had a special feature in our library called the automated storage and retrieval system that we nicknamed LASAR or we gave it the name LASAR. We actually had -- the word has escaped me -- when you compete to name something -- a contest, a contest to name it. People submitted the name. I actually was the one that had come up with the name LASAR for Lied automated storage and retrieval system. But people didn't know that when they chose the name. At least that's my memory. It might be a false memory. If somebody else gets interviewed and they say that they came up with it, that's fine.

No one has.

So that became its name. We were able to publish moving into this building. So the whole Lied Library got a lot of attention and got worldwide attention. People from France came over to see LASAR and wrote in their professional journal in French. The Lied Library was the major cover picture. So it was exciting times. I've even had people -- I haven't had one this year yet. But even as late as 2009 we were still having people coming here to see how we'd set up the LASAR system. And then, of course, they get to see the building as well.

Yes. So you think they're going to UNR now?

Well, I don't know. I suspect they are. I've gone to their building. I've seen it. It does fit their

campus. So it's an older model. They don't call it a library, though. They call it their knowledge center. It really is lovely in the sense of the brick and it follows their framework for their architecture. I find it a little difficult to maneuver in myself for many of the same reasons that I've always found it difficult in several libraries is that it is not as open and you don't always know where you are. I'm sure that from time to time people don't know where they are in this building. But I think it happens less often because when you are out anywhere near the atrium you can see where you are. If you're on the outer edge, there are windows all along the outer edges. So you can tell where you are in relation to your surroundings. So I'm very prejudice I'm sure when it comes to buildings. But I do love Lied and have just always enjoyed working here.

That's great. Did you see a change in morale when people moved from the old buildings into this one?

Absolutely. Absolutely. There was a struggle, as there often is. We had a lot of changes that we had to prepare for before coming to the building, organizational changes. And I was a major part of that process along with several folks who are still here -- Vicki Nozero and Shelley Heaton. But planning for how we were going to deliver service because we weren't going to have as many service points or at least the service points were going to be different. We made too many service points in this building. But we were merging a government publications department, a periodicals department and a reference department. And they were all going to come together under something called research and information, R&I. We had to create that before we actually got here. So it was hard for people to make those adjustments and those changes before getting over here. And so I would say that there was a struggle initially because several people couldn't quite put their heads around what it was going to be like. This building was so much more massive, twice the size of the old building. And people had a hard time getting their heads around it. So there was stress and strain prior to the move.

On the other hand, there were several of us who knew what it was going to be like. We could envision it. We could have that abstract thinking. Of course, some of us were living it ourselves. So it came a little easier to us than those who had to be still holding down the fort and doing all of work there.

But once people moved here it was so refreshing and so many people were so excited

about a new building and coming to this place every day and seeing students just be so wowed, seeing parents being wowed, seeing faculty come here being interviewed. And they'd walk in the door and they'd say, that does it; I'm coming here. Literally I heard people from faculty to parents to students say, this tells me where their money is, what they are supporting. They are supporting academics. They are supporting their library.

Oh, I love it. So I don't even have to ask about the library's significance on campus.

No. I mean I think it has been influential. The fact that our most recent deans -- Myong-ja Kwon when she was an interim dean and Dean Marks and Dean Iannuzzi -- were able to convince without a lot of convincing the president and the provosts on campus to make good their pledge for sustaining this physical facility with what's in it. So the collections, the electronic access in particular because we were so able to deliver the 21st century technology if you will in this building. That's been what was so exciting that that kind of support was there to go forward with many, many exciting technologies as well as ongoing services.

That's great.

Today is June 22nd, 2010. I'm in Special Collections, the Reading Room with Wendy Starkweather again.

So how are you doing today?

I'm very good. Thanks.

Okay. You found some additional materials as you were cleaning out your office. Those will come to the university archivist. What are some of those things that you ran across?

Well, I had files that couldn't fit in the files in my office. So when we first moved into Lied, there were some additional file cabinets. I decided to put all of the Lied Library materials that I had accumulated into a file drawer there. And then I had been part of a team that had done an assessment and self-study of the library prior to the move. So I had files from that. Then there's another set of files from annual reports back to 1985 because I have overseen a variety of departments. Some of those may be of value to Special Collections archives. I'm not sure. But I thought I would look through them. And if they seem relevant I'll give them to Tom for archiving.

Great. Tell me about the self-study that you found. This was prior to the move that we did a self-study?

Yes. In 1990 -- well, I haven't looked at the file yet. So I haven't reacquainted myself. But I think it was in the mid 90s as part of our strategic plan we knew we needed to do a self-study. I think Peter Michel and Jeanne Brown and I participated in that. It was at the request of the dean, Matt Simon. We had a good working group. I'm not sure how substantial the end result was, but we at least began the process of self-study for the library. It prepared us I think for our accreditation visit in 2000 and kind of began the concept of assessment in somewhat formal fashion.

You had talked about deans and you covered all of the deans up to Matt Simon. You had talked about all of the ones prior to that. Could you tell me a little about working under the leadership of Matt and Dr. Marks and then Patty?

Ah. Well, I had sort of the benefit of working for, as you noted, a number of deans, actually six in total, four official deans and two interim deans. Learning to work with the styles of each one of them was quite fascinating actually.

Matt was a very creative spirit. I thoroughly enjoyed working with him in regard to the Lied Library planning because he was inspired in a number of areas. I think I had mentioned about his going to lunch and going to a diner-type of place. He came back with the concept that we were going to have booths in the library for students to sit in. It would be like diner booths. And we indeed did keep that concept in the building plans. We didn't put as many in as we were expecting to just because things changed in terms of what we wanted certain rooms to be. Booths that are like study booths that encourage open study and loud conversations, or at least open conversations, weren't appropriate for some of the places that we had originally put them. But we put them all around the information commons. They have to this day been among the most popular areas. Librarians who have visited have often talked about the booth concept. Actually now the companies that build furniture for libraries have begun designing booths. So new libraries can set them up with booths. I don't know that we were the very first groups to think about booths, but we were certainly one of the very few in academic libraries.

I like that. Thanks for that example.

What was Dr. Marks like, what kind of dean?

Dr. Marks was very methodical, very professional, very organized. He was interested in making sure that the library got the funding for the personnel that it needed to open a building that was

302,000 square feet as opposed to a prior building that was about 150,000 square feet, whereas the planning committee had not wanted to push the envelope for personnel. Thinking that we might not get the building if we pushed too hard for personnel, we didn't do a lot of planning for additional personnel. And when he arrived he noticed immediately that in order to have a successful new building we would need many more staff than were planned for. And so he set about making sure that the president and the provost knew that. We ended up justifying positions that were brand-new to the library; for instance, all the security staff, the facilities manager's staff, additional staff for all of the service areas. In total -- I think my memory is a little fuzzy -- it was either 22 or 27 new positions. Actually over time we got almost 20 as I recall and fairly early on got some of those positions filled. So the security officers and the building manager were two key concepts that we had never had in the old building.

I think that's when we began the whole idea of having professional staff, people who could fill a role that wasn't just librarians but that were people who had specialties in their own area like development positions and on down the line, your position for director of oral history. So it was a turning point for what the library could offer in expanding positions.

The other thing that happened was his emphasis on technology. He was very eager. He had come along later in the process than he was used to because he had built at least two other buildings and he had been part of the design process. With this building he was coming in and not having a chance to design the building because that was already pretty much done. He needed to help coordinate the building of the design and also what to put in it. So his emphasis was to make it not just a wonderful building that uses space well and all of that but that has some fascinating high-tech things in it.

Now, we had already planned for the storage system, the automated storage and retrieval, but we hadn't planned for the RFID tags for the book collection such that we could monitor books on the shelves, know what was where. It was a new concept for libraries. So he worked with 3M and arranged for us to help them. We served as their alpha site as well as their beta site for their RFID readers. That happened over at Curriculum Materials Library, but we applied it in Lied. So we had to do a number of things in preparation before we moved.

But that was his focus and a lot of emphasis on the newest in computers. He worked with

the systems staff. So he wanted to make sure that what we had in the building was special to a library. It wasn't just going to be a computer lab, a large computer lab. He wanted to help fulfill our plan that the computers were going to be located very near the reference service desks, which we were calling research and information, such that we could be there when people needed help with their research. We weren't going to have all the same software that the labs had because computer labs are basically doing something different from what the libraries were attempting to do. Some of the software was the same. So that was his emphasis.

Wow. This is interesting.

He was very good at working with the president and the provost at the time in gaining their respect and support. That's when we began getting year-end monies for collection development and began working very closely with the OIT, office of information and technology, not as closely as we are now, however.

But the relationship had begun.

But it had begun and was nicely established. He was someone who ran a tight organizational ship, but he was also open to -- oops. That's my phone. I'm sorry.

Okay. So we were talking about Dr. Marks.

Yes. And his focus on working with the university administration to get support through year-end funds for collection development. He didn't seek a high profile. He focused primarily on simply stating "just the facts, ma'am" kind of approach. He always wanted to be responsive to their needs if we had to do a strategic plan. He was very political in the sense of this is what we need to do. We're not going to complain. We're just going to do it. Don't spend a whole lot of time focusing on it because sometimes these things don't matter in the long run or they only matter a little bit. They seem like they're going to matter, but they don't matter a lot. But we can be seen as being responsive. So he helped us do that.

There was some other point I was going to make in that regard. But I lost it.

As we talk about Patty, you might remember what you were going to say about Dr. Marks.

Right. Oh, I know. It had to do with how we were going to organize the structure. He was very good at helping us plan for organizing -- well, for establishing an organizational structure that was a little different from what we had before and how it was going to work within the new building. I

may have alluded to this earlier in our conversation from last time, but he helped us look at technical services in a new way. That's when we created the knowledge access management department that was including cataloging, which had a new name, bibliographic and metadata services, the web indigenization services. So he helped us focus on what kinds of organizational structure changes we would make to work most efficiently in this building. That was when we also merged collection development and document delivery and acquisitions, which was then called -- it's still called materials ordering and receiving. So we changed a lot of names. Sometimes the actual activities didn't change as much as we had hoped. But he helped us at least consider other approaches.

Before you start with Patty, one of the things that Dr. Marks did was to add positions.

Yes.

Now, with the current recession we're doing just the opposite.

Right. Right.

What do you see as the future now that we are cutting back on some of those positions and probably some of those that he initiated?

In terms of total numbers, yes. What I see happening is that we may have had more than we ultimately needed. We were so successful that I think it was easier for us to not focus as much on how we could be as efficient in our procedures as would be useful. I think what we've been doing in light of the cutbacks and position changes is looking at ways that we can do the processes faster or a little more efficiently and save time that way. I think I alluded to some of that with our new head of circulation and her focus on the lean management techniques. You study certain processes and see where there is duplicative effort. So where we might have had additional staff, we don't necessarily have to have that staff.

But the other thing that we're bearing in mind is we may still need the staff, we just may need to put them in different locations and different focuses. For instance, we still need to be providing services for research, but not necessarily research when somebody is in the building but when they are seeking help when they're at remote sites. They're at their own apartment or whatever and they're wanting to use their mobile phone to ask questions or they're wanting to do chat reference, all electronically. Well, that means we need to be supportive of that service. So

people who might have been in the circulation area can shift focus or they can shift focus to help with ordering. Or we definitely need more people in our web indigenization area. Sometimes it would be a matter of just retraining and providing people with new skills so that they can do things. I think Special Collections has benefited from people shifting to that area when we had to make some changes in other areas.

Now if you would talk about Patty for a few minutes.

Yes, Patty brought with her a fresh perspective of what she saw as a new library. A library that wasn't the old fashioned research library focused on collections. But wasn't such a small-scale library. When she met us and decided to take the job, she was very excited about how eager we all were to shift into a new focus. We had been in the library for about five years. So we needed to think about how the library itself would evolve and how our service, especially our instructional efforts, were going to change. That was her strength. She had brought that from past experiences. She was very well known in the instructional area.

She was also known by her own words and by prior reputation as someone who likes to make sure that the library is recognized on campus. While we had a very good reputation on campus, it wasn't necessarily for our role in instructional efforts. She brought that focus with her in her own background and helped the deans and helped the provosts recognize how liaison librarians or subject librarians can be influential with classroom faculty in designing assignments. So as the campus is focused on assessing and assessing student outcomes, her focus is how the library can help with the research assessment. How do we know when the resources we have in the library are going to be valuable to the students and how the faculty know of our resources and how they can relate their assignments to the resources we have, not just the resources that are physical resources or electronic resources but the resources of our personnel and their skills and knowledge in how best to help students find and evaluate the information they're going to be using. So that's our skill and that's what we're offering to faculty. It was not unknown to us before Patty came here, but Patty helped shift an emphasis to that arena.

In much the same way that Dean Marks wanted to focus on the technology and not necessarily focus on the space because he knew the space was going to speak for itself -- and, indeed, it has overall these years -- Patty felt the same way. The building and the social space and

the physical aspect for study and just using the physical nature of the building was already quite successful just by virtue of the way we had designed it. She wanted to add another dimension of success. So we had had the facility successfulness or being of success, the technology being successful, and now she wanted to focus on how our instructional service could add another dimension of success.

Do you see a good evolution, a very progressive evolution in that area?

Yes. I think there is a renewed focus on it. We have a new department head in that area. She comes with considerable experience in training librarians to work with methods of instruction and pedagogies for instruction and ways to help faculty work with librarians. So she brings that expertise. And combined with Patty's expertise in that area, it's going to help meet our strategic plan in that arena.

The other thing that's happening that I will actually miss working on the development of is after ten years it is time to work on the physical building, the evolution of what are new ways to design collaborative areas? When the building was built our focus was on an information commons and primarily one-to-one. There would be one computer to one student. Then we did design some areas that were one computer to two to three students. And that was a good start for collaboration. That was the kind of study and collaborative work that was starting to be done in the late 90s and early 21st century.

Where is an area where it's designed so that one computer to two or three students?

Right behind our research and information desk near the reference collection. So that instead of the typical 36 inches of space there was 72 inches of space and one computer and two chairs. So that has encouraged some group work as time went by. But now there is even more group work and people are gathering around tables designed for four and wanting to have six or seven people around that area because so much is being done in groups. The furniture has to be redesigned differently and space for that kind of larger collaboration, the type of thing that happens in our group rooms. And you can never have enough group study rooms. We can build 150 of them and there wouldn't be enough. We only have about 18. But what you can do is design open space and configure it in such a way that people feel like it's small group. You do that by getting dividers that are movable, by getting furniture that's movable. So that's the newest focus. That's been the

renewed focus for the physical changes that will be taking place as they expand the space for Special Collections.

The library administration determined that it was appropriate to begin to look at public spaces in a different way. And we designed the building flexibly enough so that we can do that. So the vision is that the reference collection will be incorporated -- much of it will be incorporated into the main collection and/or discarded if it's no longer relevant or stored in the LASAR area thereby making much more space on the floor, on the first floor for this collaboration area.

We've studied the articles on the NETGEN, the new millennials who study differently and want to create their own self-service areas. So how do you provide furniture for them to be able to just move the chairs, move the tables to the size that they need? It's tricky because how do you make sure you've got electrical outlets because we don't yet have wireless power? We only have wireless data streams. But it's planning ahead for that.

I envision that in the next couple of years that kind of space will be available. Libraries are doing it. The new Knowledge Center up at Reno has something like that, although it's not as maneuverable. I don't think they've shifted into the idea that it's okay to move furniture around. Of course, that's a little messier. So there are plans under way to kind of create areas where that takes place. But it's not necessarily right in your open area where people are coming in and seeing a mess, different people's ideas of messes that are interesting.

Yes. This is academic learning. So sometimes it is messy.

A few minutes ago you talked about the new emphasis on librarians being teachers and helping professors on campus.

Right.

Sometimes on some campuses the librarian is not looked at as equal to other professors on campus. Do you think that will increase that leveling?

I think it's possible. This is an area that's always challenging for librarians and our faculty status and what we have to offer and how it's perceived. But I think if it's done well the strength that the librarians have is to -- when they have had appropriate training and knowledge base -- and you don't necessarily just come off your library degree with all of that information, although there's more emphasis on it now than there used to be. But I think it's just a question of helping faculty

members who may not be as focused on the new methods of teaching. It's finding that balance of what do you want them to actually learn? What is your goal and are they learning it? And if the answer is no, they're not really learning it, and if you can help me help them learn -- and the librarians have been concentrating on those techniques. So we may not be able to convince all faculty that they need to have librarians. And not all faculty have assignments that are particularly pertinent to library resources.

On the other hand, there are techniques that librarians concentrate on, at least the newer instructional librarians, that help respond to the emphasis now on large class size because as fewer faculty are available due to the budget crunch, there needs to be a plan for how do you manage large class sizes and how can you still test for learning? And librarians have been studying some of that and helping identify ways that faculty can encourage students to be searching online but getting valuable resources as opposed to not getting valuable resources to knowing what the resources are and how can you establish some assignments that make the best use of those kinds of resources.

I haven't been as much involved in the actual implementation of that. So you may have to wait for someone to retire who has done that on a regular basis.

That's great, though.

But it's a fascinating area. You're right to see that there is potentially an area for concern. What does a librarian know about teaching in the sciences? Well, it may be that what the librarian brings is a knowledge base of the databases in the sciences and how they can best be used in certain classroom settings.

So over the years have you participated in the larger UNLV community outside of the library?

Yes. Probably my first exposure was when I served on the faculty senate in the late 80s. That's a three-year commitment every other Tuesday. So you get to know a number of faculty that way and help present the library's point of view but also just an individual person's point of view. I found that valuable, but I didn't want to make a career of it. Some people on campus have made careers of senate service. But I found that my job tended to -- or my focus in the libraries with services tended to focus on student services, other entities on campus that wanted to consider the

retention of students and customer service and that kind of focus. And a large number of people who have that in mind are people in the student services area, student services division.

So I found myself working frequently either on special task force kinds of committees or on other interviews for different people in positions in the student services area. That's where I began to make connections. And I found that when I did that, I then became the face of the library. Since I was always here as opposed to the deans that changed and other people who changed, my name got synonymous sometimes in ways that were fine and sometimes in ways that probably weren't so good because they really did need to be thinking about the dean or thinking about other people. But I could always refer people to them.

One of the areas I remember working on -- and what I don't remember is exactly when it was, but I believe it was after the building was built when I had a little more time -- working on a student retention committee. I was on a subcommittee for customer service. So I worked with a person in the marketing department. I worked with someone who was in gerontology but who is now the dean of the Academic Success Center. So a contact with her earlier on at this customer service subcommittee meant that when she became head of Academic Success Center we had an immediate connection and could work together quite easily. I worked very well with the former dean of student services or associate provost or whatever the title is now before she left. That was Rebecca Mills. I worked very closely with her and started working on a committee that she had created called the Student Issues Committee. That was something most of her staff or her reports met on a regular weekly basis just to make sure that we were aware of areas where students of concern, students who might be posing problems with one area, other areas would become aware of those problems. And sometimes if you don't have those conversations, you don't necessarily know that this person is not just having a problem with you. They're having problems with lots of places and, indeed, they may really need psychological help. So there were ways that we could be talking about that.

And that got us talking about how do you prepare for very stressful situations on campus so that we don't have security issues? So what kinds of protocols do we have to set in place so the police -- assistant police chief was on that committee. And they were also interested in retention and ways to make sure we created good areas on campus and not problematic areas.

So that again put me in touch with other people who were focusing on how to improve customer referrals, student referrals. That ultimately worked into my focus just within the recent time with the Welcome Zone on campus and how do we help refer people that are coming onto campus to get to the right place? That's something that librarians have been doing at service desks for years.

That reminds me, too, I worked on the very first task force on what is now known as the Ask Me booths. I was on the committee that originated that concept. Again, it was a student services division. But I was very active because I wanted to help them realize that this is something the libraries do all the time and we can be helpful to them in planning how to set up those kinds of booths and what are the questions that people will want to have answered because we have been answering that kind of question for years. So having sort of an experienced voice at the table. And they had experienced voices, too. They had been in charge of student union. So this helped us all know a little bit more about each other.

Wow. And I love the Ask Me booth concept.

Right.

I volunteer for that because I remember my first day on a college campus.

Yes. Yes.

It was the most frightening thing on earth.

Oh, and one other area that has had its positives and negatives -- we've had to work very closely with the RebelCard services because the RebelCard serves as the library card. It's been hit or miss as to how well that area of campus was managed. So it's been a struggle sometimes to make sure that they understood the Lied Library's needs for consistent bar code numbers on their cards since they would manage the assignment of those numbers and having our systems staff work with them and having our circulation staff work with them. So I was part of the liaison in that effort. Sometimes it's been successful and sometimes it hasn't. Again, it's with the idea of trying to have the least number of hoops for students who are coming onto campus to have to jump through. So we've been trying to simplify our approach to that and trying to encourage the RebelCard people to be aware. Of course, the RebelCard was also tied in for a long time with the copiers and still is with the photocopiers on campus. That's another whole story unto itself that you really don't want

to hear. But those are all my campus connections.

Wow. Well, thank you for that.

What do you think is the biggest change that you've seen on campus over the years?

I think we're still in this change. But it's trying to appreciate the shift from being a very young and relatively immature college campus with lots of individual silos and people doing what they know how to do and doing it well to recognizing that -- and I should say and not necessarily working together so lots of systems would develop that worked well for this division or that division but didn't necessarily talk with each other. And this has a lot to do with infrastructure. So I think more people who are on campus now recognize that we are no longer children and we're no longer adolescents. We are really needing to become the full adults of the university system. Along with that means that there's a need for recognizing that to best serve the users, the students, a lot of these systems have to start talking to each other. So recognizing that does have to happen and putting resources to that happening, like the new student information system is one example of that. It's taking it seriously. Of course, they need money and the resources to support it.

The other thing I think is attracting, at least when we did have money, attracting scholars of a caliber that the community is not necessarily as aware of as they should be to recognize that we have grown in that regard as well and we have some very knowledgeable scholars on campus and instructors on campus and worthy of respect.

Yes. I agree.

I think now in our current president we have the opportunity to again be successful in reaching out to the community and continuing to get more and more support. That will happen again once we get past this economic downturn. But I think we'll be well positioned to do that.

I think so, too.

What would you change about the library if you could?

Well, this is hard for me because I think I've been part of what I think needs changing. And that is we tend to take a very long time to make decisions. Sometimes it's because we haven't thought we vetted enough with enough people. And in that process of vetting sometimes we over vet. And then in response to over vetting, then we under vet. So I think working on making sure we learn to share our ideas but respond more quickly to suggestions to allow for experimentation, to allow

for failure. And we do that in our minds sometimes, but then we have to be careful we don't spend money that we don't have on learning through failure. I mean there's a happy medium.

I think it's important for people also -- remind me of your question because I've just thought of something else and I want to see if it actually --

We were talking about what would you change if you could.

Ah, yes. This goes to my focus. I'm a believer in something that's now called -- and it didn't use to have this name. But it's called appreciative inquiry. Basically it's an aspect of making sure that you focus on the successes and minimize the fact that we haven't accomplished certain things that maybe we wanted to accomplish. But, for instance, if you've got 19 points on your strategic plan and you accomplish 13 of them, take a lot of pride in those 13 and don't fret about the six or seven or five or whatever the number is that we haven't done and to be sure to give your staff the support that they need, the thank-yous on a daily basis. Yes, it's their job. And, yes, they do need to do their job. But in my mind you can never thank anyone enough. Just to be able to remember that people are often underpaid and there's not an opportunity for bonuses in our environment especially since merit has gone by the wayside for a while. So it really makes a difference if you can remind yourself to thank people for doing the job they do.

That's good.

I have tried to do that as long as I've been here. I'm sure I haven't done it all the time, but I have tried to. I think it's also important that when new people come to help them feel welcome. That was something I was very pleased that people had mentioned in my retirement gathering that they remembered how welcomed they felt because I made a point of going to lunch with new people just to help them feel welcome and tried to stay in touch with new people. So I thank our staff, our most important commodity if you will, in trying to help make sure that they feel comfortable in doing the job they're doing and feel valued for doing the job they do. That will show on how well they treat the customer, the student and also --

That's a great point.

-- even within the library. Not everybody deals front line with people. But they do have a front line with some other member of the library who is their customer. So just making sure that people play well together. That's some kind of spirit I've tried to promote. I think you can never have

enough of it.

Good. Wendy, is there anything else about the library that you'd like to mention, something that maybe I haven't even thought about?

I think we've covered an awful lot of territory. I can't think of anything specific. I am very glad that I've spent 25 years here. I've really personally benefited from the connections I've made with staff here, with the opportunities to grow and develop professionally. I love this building. I have sometimes been accused of being Lied-centric. It's probably true. But I do really know there is something more than just Lied in our libraries. It has been a wonderful experience overall.

Great. So what do you plan to do in retirement?

I am first learning just to enjoy that every day doesn't have to be planned for or have a structure. I will travel, as I guess almost everybody does when they retire if they have some funding for it. My first big trip is to the Amazon and Machu Picchu as part of the continuing ed or ed outreach program on campus. So taking advantage of that kind of thing.

I expect to be volunteering for a number of opportunities. Well, I am very fond and partial to KNPR. I was here when it started and went on the air. I'm also very partial to libraries in the area and literacy and reading, especially reading to children. I haven't yet begun that process, but I will investigate that process after I've had a little free time under my belt. But I would love to work at schools where they could benefit from people who come in and either help the teachers with reading or preschool. I started out as a children's librarian or took courses in children's literature. I'm very expressive when I read to kids. I did themed parties for my son for birthdays and chose stories that associated with the themes and read to kids then. I just love the joy and the wonder in the children's faces to hear people read. And sometimes people haven't had that opportunity. I've done it a couple of times here with our Curriculum Materials Library and know I'm pretty good at it so that I'll do it so more. So that's partly what I have in mind.

Well, I think those are great, great plans.

And the very last question is what is your favorite book?

Oh, my. Oh, my. I don't know that I have a favorite book. I have some favorite authors. Toni Morrison is a favorite of mine. Margaret Atwood. Alice Munro. I guess impartial to women authors.

That's what I was thinking.

And fiction. I was part of a charter member for a book club. We started in 1993 and are still in existence. We meet once a month at Marie Callender's in the library, the Marie Callender's on Eastern. We've had the same waitress for almost the same time. We have read over 160 books and tried for a variety of authors, although I would say the majority have been women authors. But we've also done Gabriel -- now I can't remember the last name -- [Garcia Marquez]. Anyway, *Love in the Time of Cholera*. The Portuguese [Columbian] author who just recently died.

Oh, I heard about him on KNPR.

Yes. *Blindness*. Very powerful book. I was very moved by that. Anyway, I love reading. I will have more time to do reading. I'm still very moved and I haven't reread it. But I was very moved in college by James Agee's *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*. That was his study of the sharecroppers in the South. He was a journalist, as well as being a playwright. It put me in touch with what it takes to be a journalist who's really living a part of someone's life or trying to feel what it's like to be the people he was interviewing and live with them. So I was very moved by that book.

Oh, that's amazing. I grew up as a sharecropper.

Oh, my gosh. Walker Evans was the photographer. They paired up. Yeah, *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*.

Good. I will read that.

It's had some negative press of late because the people who he interviewed have spoken up, and the children of the people. So that's fascinating. I haven't read that book yet, but I've read a review recently. So it's still influential. It was taught in college and that's where my exposure was to it.

Good. I have to find that book. Wonderful.

Wendy, I appreciate this so very much. This was wonderful.

Well, it's been a delight. I have enjoyed recounting my memories. I'll no doubt think of a dozen other things that I would have liked to have mentioned.

Once this is transcribed you'll get a draft. You may read it through for me. If you find things, a story that should have been there, we will put it either in an appendix or footnote.

Oh, okay.

So that's what we'll do.

Okay. Great.

This is wonderful. Thank you so much.

Well, it's been fun. It's been great.

Good.

Thank you, Claytee.

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