

### Artemis Kirk

Artemis G. Kirk, university librarian, has led the Georgetown University Library since 2001 and plans to retire in October 2017. Prior to Georgetown, she held library leadership positions at the University of Rhode Island, University of Miami, and Simmons College, where she also taught in the library school. Artemis earned an AB in music from Vassar College, an MA in music from Harvard University, and an MS in library science from Simmons.



In 1990–1991, Artemis served as a United States Information Agency (USIA)/American Library Association (ALA) library fellow in Hong Kong. In 2013, she received the Simmons School of Library and Information Science Alumni Achievement Award.

ARL's Kaylyn Groves spoke with Artemis in September 2017. The edited interview follows.

#### **Why & how did you get started in librarianship?**

I had a music teaching appointment at a college in Massachusetts. I wanted to put some items on reserve. When I spoke with the library staff about that I learned that the library didn't have a reserves system. They said, "We can put your items on the shelf and students can use them." After my experience as a student at Vassar and Harvard, I was taken aback, especially after I found some recordings and other library materials squirreled away behind books in the stacks. I thought perhaps I would be more helpful as a librarian, to steward materials like this. It was the best decision I ever made and I never looked back.

#### **What is a highlight of your career?**

I've been fortunate in that all the positions I've had have been wonderful. If I have to pick, I'll highlight a few. The USIA ALA library fellowship in Hong Kong was extraordinary experience. At Georgetown, I wrote the application that was awarded a Laura Bush 21st Century Librarian Program grant to create a Chesapeake Information and Research Library Alliance (CIRLA) fellows program, which recruited MLS students from diverse backgrounds. This was one of the first grant programs to help diversify the profession and served as a model for other programs, including ARL's. Georgetown also gave me many international opportunities. I put together the library program for Georgetown's school in Doha, Qatar, now 12 years in the making and going strong. I spoke at the Jaipur Literature Festival in India in 2013, sharing the library perspective on publishing. And since Georgetown is a Jesuit university, I developed good relationships with the pontifical libraries in Rome.

#### **What still inspires you about librarianship?**

Two major things: both are examples of opportunities that abound. Libraries can be "icons of transformation," a phrase I borrow from historian Thomas Bender. Libraries transform the life and work of the people in our institutions through their interaction with our collections, spaces, and services. I'm also inspired by the people entering our field. So many multi- and inter-disciplinary

## **ARL Member Representatives Retiring Fall 2017**

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experts are joining us; they broaden our perspective and our influence. And I see excitement to forge even greater opportunities for new library professionals, especially African Americans—we're still not diverse enough.

### **What advice do you have for individuals who aspire to leadership positions/roles in libraries?**

Be prepared to put in countless hours beyond what you think is a normal workday. You are always on, especially with the ease of communications today.

Be flexible and willing to adapt to change. I had a mentor who said, "If you're halfway good at your job, you're going to please some people and displease others." Make the best decisions you can with the information you have at hand.

Everything is built on relationships. Work hard to build them in the library, across campus, across the profession, in higher ed, and in your donor and friends communities. Listen very carefully to their complaints as well as their compliments.

### **What do you look forward to in retirement?**

The gift of time is exciting and a little overwhelming. I relish the chance to be a large part of my new grandchild's life. I will also volunteer in homeless shelters and literacy centers, especially for immigrants. I hope to read and re-read all the books in my personal library and be the biggest borrower from my public library. For years I've been writing a murder mystery in my head—maybe I'll actually finish it. I'd also like to travel and train for a half-marathon. I'll be busy!

### Jim Mullins

James L. Mullins, dean of libraries and Esther Ellis Norton professor, has led the libraries at Purdue University since 2004 and will retire December 31, 2017. He began his career at Georgia Southern University and held positions at Indiana University School of Law Library, Indiana University South Bend Libraries, Villanova University Library, and MIT Libraries before going to Purdue. Jim earned BA and MALS degrees from the University of Iowa and the PhD from Indiana University.



In 2015 Purdue Libraries received the Excellence in University Library Award of the Association of College and Research Libraries. In 2016 the American Library Association presented Jim with the Hugh C. Atkinson Memorial Award. This year Jim received the Indiana University School of Computing and Informatics, Information and Library Science Distinguished Alumnus Award.

ARL's Kaylyn Groves spoke with Jim in September 2017. The edited interview follows.

#### **Why and how did you get started in librarianship?**

It was the last semester of my senior year in college at the University of Iowa 45 years ago. I had worked in the library as an undergrad but hadn't been thinking of librarianship as a career. A friend of mine was going to library school and I saw that he was actually being taught to **do** something—a protocol or methodology that was more prescriptive than what I was used to as a student of history, religion, and political science. I had been accepted into a doctoral program at Princeton. Upon consideration of the immediate future, instead I applied to library school at Iowa. At commencement, I announced to my family that I was staying at Iowa for library science. They were overjoyed. They saw I would be able to get a job, while they hadn't been too sure about the other path. This was the wisest decision I ever made. I'm amazed I was able to do that at the age of 22.

#### **What is a highlight of your career?**

I had the opportunity to start working in the mid-1970s. I saw libraries as they had been for 50 years prior to that with very minor changes over that period of time. There had been the advent of microforms and photocopiers but that was about it. Computerization was just beginning. OCLC had not yet extended outside of Ohio. In the last 40+ years, I've seen tremendous changes. I'm always looking back and thinking about how something new relates to what we did 40+ years ago and I'm always trying to anticipate the future. Libraries must create their own sphere within the university, dependent upon what the university needs from libraries. Forty years ago there wasn't much difference between one research library and another and the roles played by the librarians; now they can vary considerably. It has been exciting to see this evolution and to see the opportunity that libraries and librarians now have.

### **What still inspires you about librarianship?**

When I meet the younger generation coming into the field they have a perception of the important role a librarian can play in instruction and research. This is considerably different than when I came into the field. We saw ourselves as assistants or as being in service to students and faculty. Now we see ourselves as educators who are completely involved in teaching information-seeking and information-evaluation skills. We've always done this one-on-one but now this is a more critical, integrated role for librarians. This role will continue to evolve and is an important factor in the success of students.

### **What advice do you have for individuals who aspire to leadership positions/roles in libraries?**

Don't be afraid to take risks; embark on ventures and adventures in your libraries and institutions. You need to be willing to put yourself on the line to further the goals of the library and the institution. You also need to be willing to envision and sell/market the role of the library in the institution in order to capture the imagination of librarians, staff, other campus community members, and, perhaps especially, donors. If we don't have donors, we won't be able to undertake major initiatives and advancements.

### **What do you look forward to in retirement?**

Making decisions about things that I want to be doing. A young librarian once said to me, "It must be great being a dean—you can do whatever you want to do." I replied, "Actually, I bet my time is less at my discretion than your time is at your discretion." I'm usually responding to situations at my institution or in the profession, or taking care of obligations. One of the challenges of being an administrator is that you are not always in control. You're actually a facilitator who helps others do much of their work. It takes a great deal of concentration and effort to understand what you need to do to help other people achieve their goals. I will continue to do some volunteer work in the profession, but I want to take time to decide which are the things that are most rewarding and enjoyable for me.

### Susan Nutter

Susan K. Nutter, vice provost and director of libraries, has led the NCSU Libraries since 1987 and plans to retire this fall. Prior to going to NCSU, she held various positions at MIT Libraries, including associate director for collection management and technical services. Susan received a BA in American literature from Colby College and an MS in library science from Simmons College.

In 2016, Susan received the Association of College & Research Libraries (ACRL) Academic/Research Librarian of the Year Award, and the NCSU Libraries was awarded a National Medal for Library Service by the US Institute of Museum and Library Services.

NCSU's James B. Hunt Jr. Library, which opened in 2013, has been awarded numerous honors for innovative design. In 2005, Susan was named *Library Journal's* Librarian of the Year. In 2000, NCSU Libraries was the first university library to win the ACRL Excellence in Academic Libraries Award. Susan received the Hugh C. Atkinson Memorial Award in 1999 and the Simmons School of Library and Information Science Alumni Achievement Award in 1995. She was elected president of the Association of Research Libraries for 1992–1993.

