

2004 Fall Conference Report

Submitted by Jason Dupree

The Oklahoma Chapter of ACRL along with our co-sponsor, the Oklahoma Chapter of SLA, held a joint Fall conference on November 19, 2004 at Thurman J. White Forum Building and Conference Center at the University of Oklahoma, Norman, Oklahoma. The conference theme was “**Being a Successful Librarian in the 21st Century: How to Address Professional Development Issues in Today’s Job Market**,” and the day’s activities were divided into career planning and career development with two keynote speakers and four breakout sessions.

[Sarah Johnson](#) started the day with the presentation “Getting the Job You Want: Tips for Job Seekers (With Hints for Employers).” As webmaster for *Library Job Postings on the Internet* www.libraryjobpostings.org, she discussed the current trends in job titles and duties especially those jobs that required specialization and multitasking, status of the current job market, and career planning tips for job hunters.

To compliment career planning, our second keynote speaker [Priscilla Shontz](#), continued with a presentation on “Keeping Your Career on Track.” As webmaster for LISCareer.com, she discussed several topics that were important for librarians to be successful in their career such as, networking, mentoring, interpersonal skills, leadership skills, and publishing.

In the afternoon, each speaker followed up their presentations with a breakout session. Sarah Johnson discussed “Marketing Yourself Online!” and Priscilla Shontz discussed the topic “Being a Proactive Mentor.” After our guest speakers, two more breakout sessions were given by Oklahoma professionals. A session on “Recruitment and Continuing Education” was co-presented by Sharon Saulmon, Director of the Learning Resource Center at Rose State College and Chair of the Oklahoma Library Association Career Recruitment and Retention Committee; and Rhonda Taylor, Associate Professor at the School of Library and Information Studies, University of Oklahoma. A session on “Alternative Career Paths” was co-presented by Brad Robison, Library Director for the National Memorial Institute for the Prevention of Terrorism and President of the Oklahoma Chapter of SLA; and Tom Rink, Librarian for the Training Division of the Tulsa Police Department and President-Elect of OK-SLA.

This year’s conference appealed to a wide variety of librarians, para-professionals and graduate students enrolled in the Library and Information Studies program at the University of Oklahoma. Our organization was pleased to see so many new faces and to provide the next generation of librarians a glance into their careers. Also, our organization was honored by the attendance of the 2003-04 recipient of the ACRL Spectrum Scholarship, Mary Kirk.

State Spotlight: Mary Kirk, ACRL Spectrum Scholarship Recipient

Everyone has a tendency towards tunnel vision, and we forget that other institutions exist beyond our own. However, an individual in Oklahoma who deserves to be recognized, is Mary Kirk.

Mary is employed at Rose State College as a library technician in the serials and acquisitions department. Mary came to my attention at this year's annual OLA conference. Our paths crossed based on her latest personal goal, which is a graduate library degree from the University of Oklahoma.

My first impression of Mary was one of curiosity and joy. I remember Mary's smile, her bubbly personality and her pure enthusiasm for becoming a librarian. At OLA, the highlight of the entire conference for me was meeting Mary and hearing her express gratitude to ACRL for the opportunities this spectrum scholarship was providing. I have often wondered about the extent of our organization's impact at the state level. I've read feedback surveys from conferences, and I realize our annual conferences provide a service to professionals who can't afford to go to national conferences. With Mary, I witnessed a deeply personal example of our impact. Any questions I had about the purpose of ACRL went out the window with any doubts I had.

After I returned to work, I was curious about Mary's career experience. As time went on, I noticed that Mary was constructing an electronic portfolio through the University of Oklahoma. I discovered she had worked in a library setting since 1980 and began as a student assistant. I was enjoying the similarities between us already (since I worked as a student assistant too). As I read further, I began to see the pattern of drive and determination that was at the core of her character. She served on various committees with the Oklahoma Library Association, SIGALO, and at Rose State College. She was recognized with three different honor society citations. Mary was equally diverse in her education and technical training.

Mary was the 2003-04 recipient of the American Library Association's Spectrum Scholarship. The sponsor of this scholarship is the Association of College & Research Libraries. The spectrum initiative was established in 1997, as a national effort to address the issue of underrepresentation of critically needed ethnic librarians in our profession. For further information about ALA's Spectrum Initiative, select the Awards & Scholarship tab on the ALA's web site www.ala.org.