

Honours for two quiet achievers

Mr Harrison Bryan and Ms Edna Haynes, two 'quiet achievers', have recently been honoured for their services to librarianship

No names no packdrill

Describing someone who has been a National Librarian who is already an AO as a 'quiet achiever' may be an anomaly. But those people who know him well (the people who casually call him 'Harry') will agree.

Here is one example of his 'quiet achievement'. He is presently editing and compiling a multi-volume encyclopedia (his own brainchild) for the LAA. The Publications Board suggested, and then urged, that the publication be called 'Harrison Bryan's Encyclopedia of Australian Librarianship etc' in recognition of Harrison's status in the library world and to acknowledge the huge and daunting task of co-ordinating such a large publication. But to no avail. Harrison Bryan is a modest man who largely shuns the limelight.

However recognition has sought him out and he was recently awarded an honorary degree from the University of Sydney being admitted to the Degree of Doctor of Letters (*honoris causa*) on 13 June.

In presenting the Degree, the Vice Chancellor, Professor John M. Ward AO acknowledged Harrison Bryans' distinguished contribution to Australian libraries, librarianship and the scholarly work of universities and the nation over a period spanning almost four decades.

'The strength with which Australian libraries face the approach of the twenty first century is due in no small measure to the work of Harrison Bryan,' Professor Ward said. 'He has served this University with great distinction and he has given outstanding service to his profession and to the scholarly community generally. He is as well liked as he is respected, both among academics and among his fellow librarians, who know his powers of leadership and his capacity for hard work.'

Harrison Bryan graduated from the University of Queensland with a Bachelor of Arts Degree with Honours in History in 1947 and



gained a Master of Arts Degree in 1954.

At the early age of 26 he became University Librarian at the University of Queensland. After 13 years in this position he became University Librarian at the University of Sydney in 1962. In 1980 he was appointed Director General of the National Library.

Harrison Bryan was a member of the General Council of the LAA for 25 years and served twice as President. He was a member of the AACOBs Standing Committee for 20 years including two periods as Chairperson. He was a founding member for the Commonwealth Library Association, and the foundation Chairman of the Australian Libraries and Information Council. He is the author of nearly 300 publications on librarianship and allied subjects and has been an outstanding leader in advancing the cause of libraries and librarianship in Australia and internationally.

'From storehouse to powerhouse'

'I like the reference to being a quiet achiever — that's me exactly'. This is how Edna Haynes a recent recipient of the Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) in the General Division responded to an article on her achievements in the *Melbourne Age* (8 June 1987).

Speaking to Edna while she was recovering from an eye operation in St Andrew's hospital I soon realised why someone such as she would be a likely candidate for a Queens Birthday Honour. Edna Haynes is warm and vital with a dynamic outlook on life. How many 77 year olds do you know who are Acting President of a Business and Professional

Women's Club at the same time as being actively involved in the local history society and spending time visiting nursing homes delivering and returning books for others?

'Libraries are an essential service. They are part of community life and people turn to them for so many things. A library is more than a storehouse, it is a powerhouse' says Edna in *The Age*. The 'storehouse to powerhouse' motto is something which Edna has taken very much to heart after listening to a lecture on this topic by Helen Wessels, the Librarian who started up the US Information Library, back in the 40s. For Edna libraries are not just treasure troves but catalysts for personal development, places where 'people can not only augment their knowledge, but really branch out.'

Edna started her library career in 1940 at Prahan Library. A grant from the Carnegie Foundation enabled her to train at the State Library of Victoria. She worked as Reference Librarian and Children's Librarian at Prahan and was Prahan City Librarian from 1953 — 1975. As a Committee Member of the Braille and Talking Book Library from 1965-1984 she was involved in bringing the library up to a professional standard. From 1976-1984 she worked for the Noah's Ark Toy Library.

Looking back on developments over the last 45 years one thing which stands out is technology. Procedures have speeded up and library patrons can be told that a particular title is on the shelf at a particular Branch etc. The variety of items in the collection is another big change. However, Edna feels that a degree of personal contact may be lacking and stresses the importance of librarians knowing their collections — 'putting the right book into the hands of the right person'.

Obviously it has been Edna's personal approach to her work as a Librarian, her caring attitude and her breadth of interests — public libraries, library services for people with disabilities and for children, for history and preserving the past — which have brought her recognition. Does she agree? Not likely! Her response is 'Well that's just life isn't it'.

Kathy Husselbee

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