

Obituary – Dr Margaret Chisholm



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Nancy Lane has paid this tribute to a distinguished American librarian, a frequent visitor to Australia and a good friend to many Australian librarians.

Dr Margaret Chisholm died from colon cancer on 2 November 1999, at the age of 78. Her colleagues paid many tributes, saying that she was instrumental in changing the role of librarians in the US, that she created a place for librarians in the emerging world of information technology, and that she showed how librarians could be leaders in every aspect of information work.

She was president of the American Library Association, originator of the Snowbird leadership conferences, first woman vice-president of the University of Washington, dean of the University of Washington library school, consultant to the Guadalajara and Zimbabwe book fairs and the Caribbean Library Association, board member of the Public Broadcasting Service, and Civilian Aide to the Army. More importantly, she was my mother.

Many Australians would have met Mom or heard her speak at ALIA or ASLA conferences, at seminars she ran with Don Ely in Perth, or through the consultancy she carried out for Curtin University (then WAIT) on establishing an alumni and development program. She sought out and introduced herself to Australians at IFLA and ALA meetings, and invited them to visit or teach at the University of Washington or to contribute articles or chapters to publications she was editing.

Mom was an inveterate traveller. She took 1000 photos of penguins and icebergs in Antarctica, and bought amber with insect inclusions on her trips to the Dominican Republic and across Siberia. She tangoed in Argentina, took a balloon trip over Kenya, rode an elephant in Nepal, was tossed in an Eskimo blanket in Alaska, traded her snake-skin sneakers for carvings in Papua New Guinea, and prospected with a metal detector in pouring rain in Kalgoorlie. We tried counting up her visits to Australia — we think it came to sixteen.

Mom enjoyed wherever she was, wherever she was with, whatever she was doing. She had a network of friends around the world. Her curiosity was insatiable—an ideal characteristic for a librarian. She lived



Margaret Chisholm

according to the motto she took as ALA President: 'Motivate, inspire and lead'.

In November just before she died, she was looking at the proofs from Neal-Schuman for my textbook, *Techniques for student research*, that she had adapted for the American market.

She did not want a funeral service or a grave stone. Instead, she asked me to spread her ashes in the waters of the Great Barrier Reef, where she always enjoyed snorkelling and — occasionally successfully — taking pictures of fleeing fish.

To commemorate her life, the University of Washington School of Library and Information Science has established the Margaret Chisholm 'Motivate, Inspire and Lead' Fund. The purpose of the fund is to develop initiatives focusing on leadership. To contribute to this fund, cheques should be made out to the 'University of Washington Chisholm Fund' and posted to Carrie Lowe, School of Library and Information Science, University of Washington, Box 352930, Seattle, WA 98195-2930 USA. For more information, e-mail slis@u.washington.edu.

Nancy Lane

• **11/3 NSW Library Technician section.** *Upgrading your qualifications — information session.* Speakers: Katherine Raper, UTS course; Karen Green, CSU course; Kevin Dudeney, CUT; Meredith Martinelli, ECU. UTS, Department of Information Studies, Broadway, 1pm, refreshments provided. Contact: Kerry Darnell, ph 02 9715 8316, kerry.darnell@tafensw.edu.au

• **13/3 NSW School Libraries section.** *AGM.* Shore School Library, (Sydney Church of England Grammar School), Blue Street, North Sydney (A short walk from North Sydney Station; school parking available off Union Street). 6 for 6:30pm, please come along and contribute to the discussion about the ALIA restructure. *RSVP to:* Di Simpson, ph 02 9959 7128 (w), DSimpson@msamc.nsw.edu.au

• **13/4 NSW Far North Coast Library Technician section.** *Meeting and dinner.* Pioneer Tavern, Function Room, Bruxner Highway, Wollongbar, 5:30 for 6pm. Dinner from bistro available, all library people welcome. *RSVP by 10/4 to:* Michael Wheeler, ph 02 6620 3995, mwheeler@scu.edu.au

• **29/4 NSW Library Technician section.** *Mudgee Shire Library visit.* Topics: Library week activities, including Library Technician's day and Mildura weekend workshop. Mudgee Shire Library, 64 Market Street, Mudgee, 1pm. Dinner: tba, 7pm. For more information, please contact: Kerry Darnell, ph 02 9715 8316, kerry.darnell@tafensw.edu.au

• **20–21/5 Joint NSW & Vic Library Technician sections.** *Mildura Weekend workshop.* The Grand Hotel, Mildura. Registration: \$170 LT section members, \$180 members/students, \$190 non-members, includes Riverboat dinner cruise Sat night, 1 nights accommodation (Sat) & breakfast/lunches/morning/afternoon teas. Non-resident registration (does not incl. accom. or cruise): \$75 LT section members, \$85 members/students, \$95 non-members. Contact: Kerrie Kelly, ph 03 9669 9721, kkelly@slv.vic.gov.au

• **22/5–30/10 NSW School Libraries section.** *General meeting.* Joint Council Meeting Rooms, Corner Marion and Norton Streets, Leichhardt, 5:30–7:30pm, often concluding with an Italian meal in one of the suburb's restaurants, all ALIA members are warmly welcomed. (22/5, 26/6, 28/8, 30/10). Contact: Ian McLean, ph 02 9886 7501 (w), ian.mclean@det.nsw.edu.au

14–16/6 APA Australian Book Fair, Sydney Exhibition Centre. Leading trade fair for the book industry in Australia. Features new releases, seminars, awards and more than 120 exhibitors. Contact: Expertise Events, ph 02 9939 4445, fx 02 9939 4229,

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