

VALE Harrison Bryan, AO, FLAA (1923-2008)

Harrison Bryan, Director-General of the National Library of Australia 1980-1985, and Librarian of the Universities of Queensland (1950-1962) and Sydney (1963-1980), died on 12 February aged 84.

Beginning in 1949 as Assistant to the Librarian at the University of Queensland (UQ) he was effectively in charge of the library. Bryan was formally appointed Librarian of the University in 1950 and was responsible for moving the library to the new St Lucia campus, making it work within an imposing and thoroughly unsuitable building. In his thirteen years at UQ he increased the collection three-fold and made service to readers a priority.

In 1963 he began a seventeen year appointment as Librarian of the University of Sydney. Sydney pioneered the use of automation in Australian university libraries with a punched-card circulation system in the mid-1960s, and by the mid-1970s both circulation and cataloguing were controlled by online computer systems. Bryan was largely responsible for the internal design of the Fisher Library and designed several

branch libraries. He was asked to advise many universities and colleges on their library buildings, and became the best known and most prolific writer on Australian library buildings. At Sydney Bryan enjoyed a close relationship with the Vice-Chancellor, Sir Bruce Williams, for whom the library was a top priority, and the collection grew four-fold during his tenure.

The Council of the National Library invited him to become Director-General in 1980. The National Library at that time faced many problems. Importantly, he championed the establishment and successful operation of the Australian Bibliographic Network. This was not his creation, but he worked hard to have it accepted by the government and the Australian library community.

Bryan's leadership of three major Australian libraries naturally led to his playing a leadership role in the profession generally. He served 25 years on the General Council of LAA, including two terms as President. He was twice Editor of the *Australian Library Journal*, and was for eight years Chairman of the Board of Examiners. He was a member of the Standing Committee of AACOBs for twenty years, he served on UNESCO's Australian Advisory Committee on Libraries for a decade and served several terms on the

Council of the Commonwealth Library Association. Bryan's contribution to the professional literature, more than 300 items, exceeds in number those of any other Australian librarian.

Bryan was honoured for his achievements by his country, his profession, and the scholarly community. He was elected a Fellow of LAA in 1963 and received the HCL Anderson Award in 1984. Also in 1984 he received the Alfred McMicken Award of the Australian Library Promotion Council. A Fellowship of the Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia was bestowed on him in 1981, and in 1984 came national recognition with his appointment as an Officer in the Order of Australia. He received honorary doctorates from three universities, Monash, Queensland and Sydney.

He used to say that his success was due in large measure to good luck but his ability and hard work played an equally important part. We are all fortunate that he was there at the right time to make the most of them.

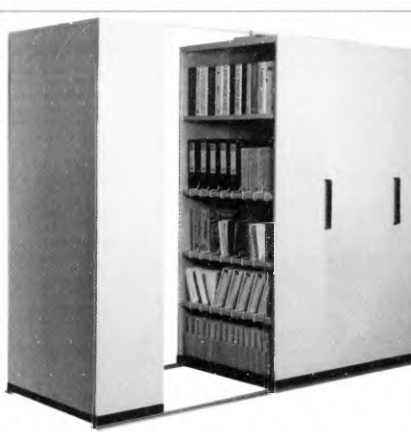
A full obituary will be published in the *Australian Library Journal*.

Neil A Radford
(University Librarian, University of
Sydney, 1980-1996)



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