

VALE DENIS RICHARDSON

WD (Denis) Richardson BA, FLAA, former University Librarian of the University of Melbourne, died on Sunday 1 May. Born in England in 1927 and educated at the University of Sheffield, Denis began his career in librarianship in public libraries in England before immigrating to Australia where his many roles included regional appointments in South Australia, Queensland and Western Australia, overseeing the growing Canberra Public Library Service (along with services in New Guinea, Nauru and the Northern Territory) and his pivotal role as Deputy National Librarian at the National Library of Australia in the 1970s.

In 1974, Denis was invited to apply for the position of University Librarian at the University of Melbourne, and began a career of both local and national significance, embarking on a long and arduous effort to bring material purchased with University funds under the control of the University Library, to reduce unnecessary duplication of materials and to have all the collections appropriately housed.

This required a total reorganisation of the staff structure and personnel, almost constant shuffling of the book-stock in an effort to make the best possible use of inadequate accommodation, and an enthusiastic embrace of new technology. It also required regional and national co-operation and Denis was a moving force behind the establishment of CAVAL (Cooperative Action by Victorian Academic Libraries) in 1978, which saw the provision of shared storage, ownership of material, cataloguing and reciprocal borrowing rights. In 1980, he was elected President of the Library Association of Australia. From 1986-89 he chaired the Committee of Australian University Librarians.

Denis was also a Victorian Committee member and National President of the National Book Council, a non-profit organisation representing Australian book publishers, book sellers, libraries, authors and readers. In 1989, the University of Melbourne Library amalgamated with the Melbourne College of Advanced Education, a marriage that brought enormous problems as well as advantages. Twenty years on, the University is only just approaching a solution to the disposition of book-stock and use of space provided in the Eastern Resource Centre. When Denis Richardson assumed responsibility for the College Library and its staff challenges were posed by material, buildings and personnel.

Denis Richardson perhaps was unusual among Australian librarians in being equally fascinated by the old and new information technologies. Just as he embraced and promoted what was at the time cutting edge technology (CD-roms, manuscripts reproduced in microform), he authorised the acquisition of book materials as varied as the 1472 Schoeffer Bible or private libraries of books in Yiddish and Russian as well as other European languages.

He greatly expanded the University's Chinese holdings and took a personal and informed interest in the development of the Music Library. His appointment of

a senior Collection Development Librarian in 1978 was evidence of his determination to increase and improve the capacity of the University of Melbourne Library to support research in all areas. The Library's first comprehensive Collection Development Plan was prepared as a result.

Many scholars in all fields of academic endeavour owe Denis Richardson a debt of gratitude for his steadfast determination to see that Australians were not substantially disadvantaged by their distance from the vast resources of European, Asian and North American libraries. He persuaded University authorities to vote the funds to achieve this.

Denis Richardson is survived by Barbara, his wife of 58 years, their four children and six grandchildren.

Dr Juliet Flesch

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New Professor of Information Studies for CSU

The School of Information Studies at Charles Sturt University (CSU) has appointed Dr Lisa Given to the position of Professor of Information Studies after an international search. Currently a Professor in the School of Library and Information Studies at the University of Alberta, Dr Given will join the staff at CSU in July.