

ARHISL Remarks

Presented by Pat Thibodeau, President, Medical Library Association
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I am so pleased to be back here in Rhode Island celebrating ARHISL's 50th anniversary.

It's a great chance to see old colleagues again, as well as meet new ones.

In preparing for this event, I discovered that I had safely tucked away my ARHISL pendant, which I believe was given out at the 25th anniversary.

Of course that somewhat dates me, but it made me realize how much of my professional knowledge and skills I owe to my Rhode Island colleagues who influenced my early development as a librarian many years ago.

Thanks so much for inviting me to share your celebration and recognize your accomplishments and service to health care professionals, students, and your communities over the past 50 years.

As President of the Medical Library Association I do bring a special message from the Association today in recognition of your anniversary and would like to read a resolution passed by the MLA Board of Directors.

[READ RESOLUTION]

I am pleased to present this document to your president, Tovah Reis.

I do want to say a few more words about my experiences in Rhode Island.

When I graduated from URI with my MLS I had never dreamed of being a hospital librarian.

In my eyes, being a hospital or medical librarian was one of those lofty and exalted positions only held by those with a penchant for science and a strong knowledge of medicine. I had a mere humanities background and did not view health sciences librarianship as even a remote possibility. So I turned my interest to cataloging.

Fortunately for me my colleagues at Rhode Island College, including Beth Perry who is here today, did not see my BA degree in history as an obstacle and recommended that I try for an opening at a hospital down the street – Women & Infants Hospital of Rhode Island, formerly Providence Lying-In, or WIHRI as the health care community called it.

It turned out the Vice President conducting the search for a librarian was looking for someone with a strong education in librarianship, sound skills in the field, and who was willing to learn about health care. Fortunately for me, she thought I was the right match. By the way, did you notice I said she – a female hospital administrator was a rarity in

those days and I had the benefit of being mentored and guided by a woman in health care administration.

I did learn a lot that first year – all about green journals, and gray journals that were actually brown in color, and the fat green textbook on pediatrics and the fat red one on obstetrics. And I was taught by a lot of experts – my colleagues in ARHISL, as well as Kelly Stein my assistant at Women & Infants taught me the wonders of medical journals, serials check-in, interlibrary loans and the importance of having colleagues across the city and across the state. Being in a teaching hospital meant that the doctors, nurses, residents and students also helped me learn the terminology, procedures, and culture of the medical field.

But it was still my ARHISL colleagues who guided and nurtured me in my early professional development and taught me professional philosophies, attitudes, skills, and knowledge that would be invaluable in my future roles. It was from ARHISL and my time in Rhode Island that I learned the importance and value of

- forming professional partnerships and friendships
- sharing expertise, advice, and experiences
- providing a sympathetic ear to a colleague during times of crisis
- building strong networks of libraries to ensure access to quality information
- sharing resources through union lists, ILL, and informal means too
- supporting librarians new to the field and new to the state
- continuing my professional growth and development

and while taking my professional duties seriously, making sure I had fun along the way as well.

It was my ARHISL colleagues who turned my interest in health care to my passion for medical librarianship and service to the profession.

I know that as professionals and librarians you have provided this support and nurturing for librarians who have joined ARHISL long before I was a hospital librarian and have continued to do so for the past 25 years and will continue to do so well into the future.

I salute your continued accomplishments and successes, and know you will continue to be an essential part of the health care community and librarianship for the next 25 years.

Thank you for letting me join your celebration.