

New Horizons for Academic Libraries

More than 2,600 librarians and their friends gathered in Boston in November 1978 for a four-day conference on the occasion of ACRL's fortieth anniversary. This first national conference for academic librarians was not a time for retrospection; rather the conference theme, "New Horizons for Academic Libraries," provided a chance to look forward to the changes, opportunities, and challenges awaiting college, university, and research libraries in this last quarter of the twentieth century.

A group of distinguished educators and librarians presented a series of theme addresses in general sessions at the conference, each one addressing a specific aspect of this future. In this issue of *College & Research Libraries* we are pleased to present seven of these papers.

Mary F. Berry opened the conference with her view of the road ahead for higher education in the United States and the role of the federal government in its support. Warren J. Haas succeeded her and presented his overview of the ways and means involved in the future of academic library management.

Joe B. Wyatt addressed the conference on the subject of technology and the library; and Barbara Evans Markuson summarized the contributions of networks to academic library change.

Richard W. Boss viewed a future for the academic library in which it serves as an information broker; and Jay K. Lucker discussed the future for library resources and their bibliographic control.

Millicent D. Abell concluded the theme sessions with her thoughts on the changing role of the academic librarian and the choice between "drift and mastery."

These papers present the speakers' views as seen from the vantage point of the autumn of 1978. This was a time when the nation's librarians prepared through a series of state meetings for a White House Conference on Library and Information Services and when they were speaking of the need for and desirability of a national information policy. Several months earlier the Council on Library Resources had published its technical development plan for a national periodicals center; and only a few weeks before the meeting began several national groups had announced their support for a national library agency. Developments such as these served as major motifs in the speakers' comments.

As these speakers looked to the future, calling attention—as Barbara Markuson expressed it—to some of the cloudy issues on the academic library horizon, they enjoined librarians to control their environment rather than to be controlled by it; to transform themselves if they are to meet their obligations; to know there are risks in new endeavors and yet move ahead, or in currently popular words to be "born again." As Penny Abell concluded her paper, she stated the choice between drift and mastery should not be left to "a few articulate and powerful professional leaders—our stars." Rather the responsibility is for each of us. That choice must be "not in our stars, but in ourselves."

R.D.J.

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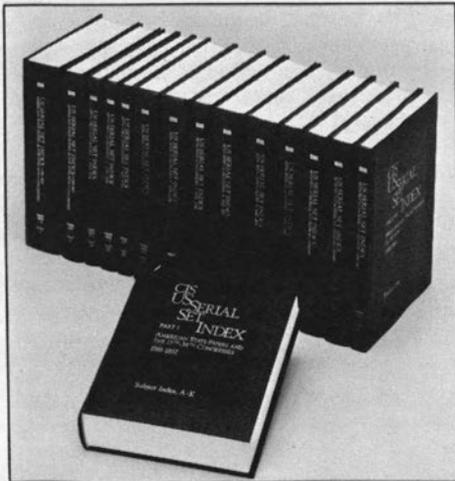
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