MEDICAL LIBRARY ASSOCIATION
ORAL HISTORY COMMITTEE
INTERVIEW
WITH
NAOMI BROER经ING

Interviewed conducted by Diane McKenzie

September 23, 2000

Edited by
Kathryn Wrigley

July 2006
CONSENT FORM FOR MLA ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

This confirms my understanding and agreement with the Medical Library Association (MLA) concerning my participation in an oral history interview as a part of MLA's Oral History Program.

1. I agree to be interviewed by **Diane McKenzie** on **September 23, 2000**. I understand that my interview will be recorded, and that a transcript and edited version of my interview will later be created. I understand that I will be given an opportunity to review and edit the edited transcript before its release.

2. I hereby grant and assign all right, title and interest to any and all recordings and transcripts of my interview including copyright [and all rights subsumed thereunder] to the MLA. I will be given a copy of the edited transcript for my personal use. I understand that the transfer of these rights to MLA conveys no obligations on MLA to promote, market, or otherwise make publicly available copies of the interview.

3. One or more edited and/or condensed versions of the interview, approved by me, may be disseminated by MLA as it deems appropriate.

4. I understand that the original, unedited recording of my interview and the original unedited transcript will be maintained in the MLA Archives at the National Library of Medicine, or at such other place as MLA may reasonably designate, and may be made available to researchers who have demonstrated that they have appropriate qualifications. I further understand that the original unedited recording and/or the original unedited transcript will be made available with the following restrictions (Check one):

   - [ ] No restrictions
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**Naomi C. Broering**
Name of Interviewee

Signature

Date **10/7/2000**

Accepted by: **Erika Smith**

**Diane McKenzie**
Name of MLA Interviewer(s)

Signature

Date **9/24/00**

Date **12/21/04**
BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH
Naomi Cordero Broering, M.L.S., M.A.

Naomi Cordero Broering is Chief Executive Officer of Broering/Chauncey Consulting, a library and management group based in La Jolla, California. Currently, she is editor of the Friends of the NLM Update, a monthly online publication and senior information specialist on health care system development projects. Ms Broering has over 33 years experience in the biomedical informatics and library field. She was Executive Director at the Houston Academy of Medicine - Texas Medical Center (HAM-TMC) Library, and Director of the Regional Medical Library from 1996 to 1999. She was Director of the Biomedical Information Resources Center and Medical Center Librarian at Georgetown University Medical Center, Dahlgren Memorial Library from 1975 to 1996. She is known for developing the Georgetown University IAIMS Project, the miniMEDLINE system and the Georgetown University Library Information System. She has developed a Knowledge Management Center with Knowledge Network databases, Digital Library resources, and a consumer health information system at the HAM-TMC Library. Her skills include authoring and editing journals and electronic publications, successfully leading health information projects, renovating libraries for information technology applications, writing successful grants and contracts, planning and conducting computer and library conferences, producing library publicity videos and speaking on timely health information topics, including consumer health at conferences.

Ms Broering was President of the Medical Library Association (MLA) in 1996-97, editor of the Bulletin of the MLA, a peer reviewed journal, from 1991 to 1996, editor of Capitol Notes column, MLA Newsletter, Member of the Board of Directors and Chairman of the Legislation Committee. In addition, she was Secretary and Board member of the American Medical Informatics Association 1992-1996. She is a Fellow of the American College of Medical Informatics (ACMI), Fellow of MLA and Distinguished Member of the Academy of Health Information Professionals. She received the SLA 1999 Winifred Sewell Award, SLA 1987 Professional Award for her work on IAIMS, and the MLA’s 1986 Frank Bradway Rogers Information Advancement Award for the Georgetown Library Information System and the miniMEDLINE SYSTEM used by over 40 libraries. She writes extensively on informatics and knowledge management in the health sciences (over 200 articles 2 books) and has served on the NLM’s Biomedical Library Review Committee, the Department of Education’s Library Grants reviews, and study panels of the Institute of Medicine. She serves as a field grant reviewer for the Institute of Museums and Libraries Agency in Washington, DC and is Adjunct Professor for the Texas Woman’s University, School of Library and Information Science.

She earned an MLS degree in Library and Information Science from UCLA, 1966, an MA, 1963 and BA, 1960 (with honors) from California State University, Long Beach. She received a (1966-67) fellowship from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) for postgraduate work at UCLA, where she was a doctoral candidate in History (1963-66). She was an evening Law student while Hospital Librarian at Children’s Hospital, Los Angeles. She is a member of the Chancellor’s Associates at UCSD in La Jolla, CA.

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September 23, 2000 Interview with NAOMI BROERING by Diane McKenzie

Diane McKenzie: September 23rd, Saturday, in 2000. This is Diane McKenzie. I’m going to be interviewing Naomi Broering and we are in La Jolla, California. Naomi and I have been chatting and so we have some new ideas as well as what we’ve taken as an outline for our interview. I always like to start out by asking what influenced you to go into librarianship and how you came to that decision.

Naomi Broering: I don’t know very many people who decide when they’re a youngster that they want to become a librarian. So, I guess I’m one of that group. My career was headed towards being a Ph.D. in history because I was going to teach history. But I became enamored and so impressed by the librarians at the UCLA Research Library, which is where I was studying on my doctoral program, and I thought, well, they were so helpful and so intelligent. They knew everything and they could find information within seconds. And that really impressed me. So I decided I wanted to be like them and I went over to the library school and asked Lawrence Clark Powell if I could become a library school student.

M: And he was the dean of the library school?

B: He was the dean of the library school.

M: Now was this a one year, two-year program? What was it like then?

B: Well, it was an interesting conversation that I had with Larry Powell because he said they had just changed the program into a two-year program and they had just gotten accredited, because the school was fairly new at the time. He said, “Well, it will take you two years.” I was very poor and I needed money. And I said, “But I need a job.” And he said, “Well, it’ll take you two years.” And I said, “Well, I can do it in a year and a half.” He said, “Oh, I don’t think so.” And I said, “Well, let me try.” And I did. Because I started midway in the program, they were already started for the year. So he helped me with that to make sure I got all the right courses and was able to do it in a year and a half.

M: Do you remember any specific courses or specific faculty that were important to you? Or were you going so fast that you don’t remember? (laughter)

B: Oh, sure. No, they were some great people at the library school at UCLA. We had Andrew Horn that taught us the history of the book and we even worked in his shop. So that was really great. And, of course, Larry Powell was also an instructor. Then Robert Hayes came. He was new to the school during the period that I was there, and he taught the introduction to computers. And since I had been working part-time
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doing keypunching at North American Aviation, I knew a lot about computers because I had to keypunch those IBM cards. So I just loved the classes that I took in computers with Dr. Hayes.

M: So your interest in computers grows from that?

B: Right from the beginning.

M: Right to the beginning. Was the structure pretty much the same in terms of library school? Obviously you had a computer class, and I think that was innovative at the time.

B: Yes.

M: But you had introduction to librarianship and reference and all?

B: Sure. We had reference, we had cataloging, acquisitions. They did a lot of children’s literature at the time. I hated cataloging lab and I decided I would never become a cataloger. However, I do want to tell you at some point I had a change of heart with that, and I just love cataloging now. I think it’s one of the most intellectual pursuits that librarians have because they’re working with content, and making decisions about how to index something, and how to catalog and record it. But at the time I was, I guess, like many of the people in the 1960’s. I wanted to become a reference librarian and give information to the public. And actually, I think that has always been my mission. It stayed with me as far as giving information to the public. And that’s what shaped my career, I think, the fact that I dedicated myself to teaching students how to become better doctors.

M: Did you work while you were in library school, or did you have fieldwork, or did you have your own job?

B: Well, we weren’t supposed to work..

M: Oh, really?

B: ...over ten hours. But I put myself through school all of my career. I worked all the way through bachelors and master’s degree and then the library master’s degree and the doctoral program. So, I couldn’t survive on 15 hours. I worked part-time while I was in library school at the university research library with those librarians that I told you I was so fond of. And then the other ten hours—I worked maybe 25 hours a week. So, the other 15 hours, I worked at the medical center at the Neuropsychiatric Institute coding records of the psychiatric patients for the computer lab. But, nobody was supposed to know about that!
M: And you went in a year and a half. So was this your introduction to medicine, the Neuropsychiatric Institute, or how did you get involved in the medical side of libraries?

B: I took one bibliography course that Louise Darling directed with Biomed Library, a group, and liked that very much. But I really didn’t set out to become a medical librarian.

(interruption)

M: We’re restarting our interview after closing the window because we have a group of small children swimming in a pool outside and they were getting very noisy. While the tape was off you mentioned another faculty member?

B: Yes, Betty Rosenberg. She taught acquisitions and she also taught how to manage a library. I really learned a lot from her.

M: I think sometimes a faculty member, in a course that we really liked, influences so much of our later development.

B: Yes.

M: And this must have in your case.

B: The importance of budgeting in her library was one of the things that she sort of pounded into our heads.

M: And it helped later on. (laughter)

B: Oh, yes.

M: Well, you said you took a class from Louise Darling and that was your first real introduction to the medical library world. But then you went on and took a NIH fellowship with her. Was that directly out of library school?

B: Yes. That’s an interesting story, too. When I was in library school, since I had been working in history and I was going to become a history professor, I decided that I was going to become a Latin American bibliographer, and deal with history that way, and match it to my library studies. I had no interests in becoming a medical librarian. But, one day Dr. Powell called me in his office and told me about this internship program, this fellowship program with NIH, and the possibilities that it offered. He encouraged me to apply. And I told him I really wasn’t interested in it, and he said, “Well, we’re looking for librarians that have a background in science. We went through the records of many of the students in the school and you came up with something like 32 credits in science. We just think you would be a good candidate because there just aren’t enough people in the field with science backgrounds.” So I
went ahead and applied because he had encouraged me, and lo and behold, I got it. I was amazed because I just thought I really didn't know much science, but maybe I knew just the courses that I had taken in school.

M: These were just general undergraduate courses?

B: General undergraduate courses, biology, chemistry, geology, anthropology—fun classes.

M: What date was it that you went into that program? I don't think I have that.

B: Oh, one thing I should say was I took a lot of botany, and I think that may have caught the eye of Louise, but I didn't know it. Because I took some botany courses and then I found out later she was a botanist.

M: Could be.

B: So that may have helped me get selected.

M: Do you remember the date that you were a fellow?

B: The date that I was in the NIH program? 1966-1967. I graduated from library school, I believe, in 1966 and then I did the additional year. And it was all done at the Biomed Library, which, of course, later on became the Louise Darling Biomedical Library. There were four of us selected for that program and I was on the program with Lorraine Schulte and Faith Meakin, and another librarian whose name was Phyllis, and I cannot remember her last name. [Editor: N. Broering later corrected the name. It was Paula Krantz.]

M: But you said she hasn't stayed in the medical area?

B: She went on to other things. Lorraine went to... She was at UCLA at the Brain Research Institute for awhile, and then she went to USC, and then became the librarian at the Upjohn Company. She's retired now. And Faith Meakin, of course, went to San Diego for awhile and then she went to...

M: She was at the Regional Medical Library in Maryland for awhile.

B: Right, but before that she was in Geneva at the World Health Library.

M: And now she's in...

B: And now she's in Florida. And Faith and I have been really good friends.

M: I know Faith from MAC activities. [Editor: Mid-Atlantic Chapter]
B: Yes.

M: So what are some of the things that you remember from that particular year? I remember Fred [Roper] saying that they had to do a display and that was the worst thing he had to do. (laughter)

B: We had the same assignment, and before you said that, I was going to say the exhibit. We had the same assignment and we chose botany. So I had the opportunity to dig into a lot of great books in the History of Medicine Room at UCLA Biomed. Martha Gnudi, Dr. Gnudi, led us to a lot of marvelous sources and we really had a nice exhibit. We had a lot of fun doing it. We put some plants in the exhibit case and so for us it was, or at least for me, it was a great experience. I really liked that part of the work.

M: And you came through for Louise in the botany. (laughter) How was that year structured? I know you did the exhibit but how else was it structured? Did you spend most of it in reference?

B: It was a wonderful experience because when you come out of library school you really don’t know very much about the practical world, and you need to reflect on what kind of librarian you want to be, or will become. At first I started out thinking I wanted to become a scholarly librarian, but then I changed my mind and part of it was because of the fellowship program. The way it was structured we spent three or four months in each major division of the library, getting instruction, and also working as a member of the team. Also, we worked at the reference desk, and we worked in cataloging, and we worked in the history of medicine area. And then we had the MEDLARS search station unit there, because the RML program was at UCLA. So, we worked for awhile there. And then, I worked a little bit in acquisitions, not as much as one might have thought. And then, I think we had maybe a couple of weeks at the Brain Research Group. So it was when I was at the Biomed Library studying under Sue Gullion...

M: Who’s still there. [Editor: She retired recently.]

B: ...in cataloging that I really learned a lot of respect for cataloging. Sue taught me everything I know, and it was just marvelous because later in life when I ran a small library all by myself and had to do it all, I was able to follow some of the guidelines and rules that she had taught me. She’s just one of those great people who’s so strict, but is so fabulous, and you can learn from her. So it was just a good experience. Gloria Werner, of course, was head of reference and she was a tough teacher as well. She taught you to respect the sources for information and guided you to some of the key and major ones. And I know that through Gloria I learned great respect for Beilstein Chemical Sources. And probably I never would have had the experience if it hadn’t been for some questions that she had that led me to that source. And also, how to do a really good quality manual bibliography, because we used to do bibliographies for the physicians in the reference department. And I’m trying to
think. For Martha [Gnudi], in the History of Medicine Division; she gave us tough questions, too. Some of the things that she would give us...I suspect that she probably gave us all kind of the same question to see how we went about answering it, but since we were with her at different times during the year--we were alone when we worked there, you know-- she could see how a person went about conducting research. And she liked the way I did research and I think a lot of it was because of my history background. And so, she wanted me to stay and select the History of Medicine Division, but I didn’t because I just became enamored with working with the public.

M: Although you could see that as a real connection, your history background, the history of medicine, seemed like a natural.

B: I think I hurt Louise because when I was about finished with the program she offered me a position in the History of Medicine Division. And I guess a lot of it must have been the recommendation of Martha Gnudi. I turned it down because I said I wanted to be a reference librarian. And Faith told me one day that I really hurt her by having said that. I didn’t mean to. It was just where I wanted to take my career.

M: It’s unusual for Louise to have someone stay. She liked people to go out, I believe, from her program.

B: Lorraine stayed.

M: She did. Well, I guess Gloria stayed, too.

B: Gloria stayed, Anna Lee, and I think Phyllis [Paula Krantz] stayed. I think they offered Phyllis [Paula Krantz] a job. She stayed for awhile there as well. So Faith and I were the only two that went on.

M: Well, let’s talk about where you went on. Did you go to [USC] Norris and to Children’s?

B: Yes. I went to USC and I worked for Dr. Vilma Proctor.

M: Now is he the head of the library.

B: She was the head of the library.

M: Oh, Vilma.

B: She was the head of the library and a very stern, I believe an Austrian scientist. She was very instrumental with MLA, by the way, on setting up the internship programs.

M: Oh, really. I’ve not heard.
B: Even though they did not have an internship program at USC and it went to UCLA, she worked with Louise Darling to support the concept. The idea was that there was a scarcity of trained medical librarians and there was some concern about the future, and that’s why they started this program. I was the acquisitions reference librarian, and Dr. Proctor, I will never forget, had these weekly meetings with me to review the books that I had selected to purchase for the library.

M: This was before the approval program?

B: I would panic at every meeting that I had with her, (laughter) because I always felt, oh I know I’ve selected the wrong books and she’s going to criticize me and she’s not going to want to buy them. But then we developed this really great relationship while I was there. And it was when I was working at the reference desk that one of the physicians, a pediatrician, came in and told me that there was a position at Children’s Hospital, and that was the pediatrics department for USC medical school, and he was encouraging me to apply. So, I discussed it with Dr. Proctor and then the librarian at Children’s Hospital arranged for me to have interviews. And, that’s how I got the position at Children’s.

M: That’s close by and it was affiliated?

B: It’s the pediatrics department for USC at Children’s Hospital, or at least it was at that time. They are on Sunset Boulevard, which is quite far from the USC campus, being more in the east part of LA. But, they do a lot of the teaching over at USC.

M: And were you there by yourself? Did you have staff?

B: Yes, it was a one-librarian shop. I had an assistant and we would work on checking in the journals and doing, you know, some of the office work that needed to be done, ordering interlibrary loans, but I did most of the reference work. It was an interesting time. I was there for about three and a half years and I absolutely loved it because I ran my own shop. But I really appreciated having worked in a larger library, an academic library, such as UCLA and at USC, because I knew the sources that they had which we could not purchase at the hospital library. When I needed information that I knew was at the main library, I could call the librarians and tell them, “Please check in Encyclopedia of Associations, or please check in the textbook of such and such for this information. Like, I remember Duke-Elders Ophthalmology. I would ask them to look at that because it was a multi-volume work and we simply couldn’t afford it at the hospital. So that basic training was just absolutely invaluable. And I think that today, you know, so many librarians go immediately to work in a hospital library after being in library school, and it must be extremely challenging for them.

M: To not have any background?

B: Not to have that background, yes. But I think the RML program helps with a lot of that, too, now, and the National Network of Libraries of Medicine.
M: You also are one of the people who worked both in a hospital library and an academic library so you appreciate these issues that a hospital is up against, like not being able to afford...

B: Oh, I know the scarcity of resources in the hospital libraries. While I was at Children’s Hospital, I heard of this man at the National Library of Medicine, Davis McCarn. And Davis McCarn was head of the computer systems. He had come up with a concept to put *Abridged Index Medicus* on computer tape. They were doing an experimental program on this; they called it AIM-TWX. And so here I was, this little old librarian in this tiny little hospital, and I write to this important person in Washington about the AIM-TWX, because I had read about it or heard about it. I asked him if I could experiment with it and bring it to our hospital. Well, they hadn’t done this because they were going to be testing it at some larger, better-known sites, but he agreed. And I got it and I talked to the administration and we got a Teletype machine in the library and we were doing the TWX searches for the doctors. Prior to that, I was doing a manual bibliography, *A Guide to Pediatric References*, which we printed up and made available as a book for the doctors. But this helped so much because you could do on-the-spot searches. And prior to that we had to send them to the MEDLARS Search Unit at UCLA, and it would take weeks to get them. So we were one of the first hospitals to get the AIM-TWX System.

M: I’m sure that’s a little known fact. (laughter)

B: It’s not an important fact, but the thing that I liked so much was that the NLM, when you contacted them, they were so encouraging. You know, I just didn’t think that anybody would be that interested in what a little hospital librarian had to say. And then the other thing that happened, at one of the meetings with the Southern California Regional Group, I found out about the grants programs that NLM had. And we were in such need of money at the hospital, so I wrote to the Extramural Grants Program, they told me to write to them, and ask them about submitting a grant proposal. And I wanted to renovate the library and also purchase some resources. So they put me in touch with a man by the name of Arthur Broering.

M: Oh, I see. (laughter)

R: And so he was just great, too, you know. I called him on the phone and introduced myself. (First I wrote a letter and then I called him up.) And he called back and said that he was interested in the concept that I had. I didn’t know... But I wanted renovate the library and it turned out that he was an architect, even though he worked in the grants program. So he became very interested in this librarian that wanted to renovate the library. And he said, “Well, we ought to meet,” and we tried to figure out an appropriate time so I could write this application. The next meeting of MLA was going to be in New York City and he was going to it because he was going to speak at that meeting. So, we made an appointment to meet at that meeting. (laughter) And at the end of the meeting we had a date. (laughter)
M: You had more than a grant. (laughter)

B: I never got the grant.

M: Well, that's, I suppose, as it should be. (laughter) You don't want to be nepotistic.

B: I never got the grant. I wrote the grant, but for some reason or other I didn't pass through the review committee, and I never got it, and he was very apologetic. (laughter)

M: But it had better –

B: Well, also I really wasn't there to get the final word because in the meantime we were married. We met in June, late May, at the MLA meeting in New York City, and were married on October 26.

M: And then you moved.

B: And then I moved to the east coast.

M: I was wondering how you got to the East Coast.

B: But that was another experience of the NLM people being so wonderful. And I have always been a champion for NLM, even though during the phases of my career a lot of the library world has had their ups and down with NLM. I always defended them because they gave us such great opportunities to improve our services to our constituents.

M: It's almost a theme for the people that I've interviewed that NLM has this great support that's just not been available in other countries, and it's really made a difference. You mentioned something to me last night that was also a first when you were at Children's. I think it was the photocopier machine? That was so funny you should say something about that.

B: Oh, yes. Well, in addition to introducing TWX, and I guess maybe before AIM-TWX, I started to work a lot on interlibrary loans, and through my work with the doctors in providing reference services, I would try to get them the articles. And I would actually go at night (because I lived in Westwood) to UCLA and photocopy articles for the doctors. So then I talked to the people in the hospital and said, “We have to get access to a Xerox machine.” Photocopying was kind of a new, innovative technology in the library world. So they had put one up in the supply room of the hospital, and we would photocopy articles there. And I never was able to get one in the library itself. But it was kind of revolutionary because prior to that, people had to take notes and we were then able to just give them the article and they wouldn't have to sit for hours in the library. I thought that was neat.
M: It must have also been the beginning of the highlighting pen.

B: I can’t remember that, but the free photocopying “ate us out of house and home.”

After awhile I was really lucky that the administration would not allow me to put a photocopy machine in the library, because my budget never would have been able to stand it. This was in the supply room’s budget which covered all the photocopying that we did. And, you know, that really begins an interesting theme, too, because during the 1970s when interlibrary loans and free photocopying became so important to the library world, it set the stage for a lot of interesting discussions through the RML Program and with the National Library of Medicine. It was a transition period of being able to get us in the library world to accept the fee-for-service concept. It was a struggle with so many of the Regional Medical Libraries, I know. But they were right; we should charge for those services, we couldn’t continue the way we were going. Part of my romance with Art Broering included many discussions about free interlibrary loans. (laughter)

M: Very romantic.

B: Arguments, actually.

M: Well, that takes us to the next step in your career, when you went to Dahlgren. Now I know how you got out to the east coast, but tell me about how you ended up in Georgetown.

B: I should tell you that when we were married and I moved to Washington, D.C., I had a hiatus...

(end of tape 1 side a)

M: Just as the tape stopped, you said that you had a hiatus in finding a job, and you got a job at Walter Reed when you were in Washington.

B: Yes. I finally got a job at Walter Reed at the hospital, because I was looking for a hospital library position. But it wasn’t in the medical library. The library at the time was divided into two libraries. One was the medical library for the doctors and the other one was the patient library. I was able to get a position in the patient library because their librarian was about to retire. So, I became the assistant librarian for the patients’ library, and I would work half a day in the patients’ library and half a day in the medical library helping with reference work. And Walter Reed was a wonderful place, but the facilities were very, very old, and they needed really a new hospital, which they got in later years. From the Walter Reed Library then, I was able to get a position working for the Veterans’ Administration Central Office because of my background in hospital librarianship. The VA Central Office is different because, as you know, at the time there were over 171 hospitals that were part of the VA network. The central office supports the hospital libraries. There were a lot of things
that the central office library did to support-- cataloging, for example, indexing and acquiring video materials--because video media was becoming very important, and tapes, and developing network lists of the consolidated resources. So that was where I got into the resource-sharing concept among the VA librarians, by providing them with loans of the materials that they needed. It was kind of a mini-National Network of Libraries of Medicine for the VA group. We did a lot of manual bibliographies so the training that I got from Gloria Werner became invaluable for the bibliographies, because we published the bibliographies at the VA, then they would distribute them to the hospital libraries. And, they were on various topics.

M: How long were you at the VA?

B: I was at the VA for about three years but that time was divided between being in the library for about a year and a half, and then being in the grants program for another year and a half. The VA set up a grants program to establish medical schools throughout the country, and they needed a librarian in the group because they were going to help the centers to develop medical libraries. So, I got an opportunity to join that group to review the grants and administer the grants that came in. One of the projects that I had was the development of Wright State's Medical School and the library at Wright State.

M: They became a RML? So that grant information was useful.

B: Yes. Yes.

M: Being on that side must give you a different picture when you go to write.

B: Well, that's why I developed the interest in writing grants and contracts, too, because we, of course, had to critique them and develop review committees, so I learned about how the peer review committees operate and what is a good grant and what's not, (laughter) what's a well-written grant and what's a grant that needs to be revised.

M: Okay. (laughter) That's the political way to put it. So then, after all this experience is when you went to Dahlgren? You went directly as the director or were you an associate first?

B: I was the associate director. I went to Georgetown in 1975 and I worked for Bobby Carter, who is now the director at University of North Texas Osteopathic School Library. And those years with Bobby Carter were just wonderful. He is a great person to work for. He gave me free reins to do whatever I felt was important, and so while I worked for him, I convinced him that we should get into OCLC because OCLC started around 1972 or 1973. And when I got there in 1975, they didn't have it, so we started OCLC in the library together. And they were keeping the searching of the bibliographic references so that only one librarian did them. I encouraged the program so that all the reference librarians got to do the literature searches on
MEDLINE. And MEDLINE was kept in the back office and we brought it out to the front. There were just a number of things that Bobby and I did together, then he informed me one sad day that he was going to go back to Texas.

M: He must have been from Texas.

B: He was from Texas, and all the time I worked for him, almost every day, we talked about how great Texas was. They say once a Texan, always a Texan. And so when he got this opportunity to go nobody could convince him otherwise.

M: He's still there you said.

B: Yes. And, after he left he encouraged me to apply for the directorship. He said, "You know, they were going to have a search committee and everything." So I thought about it and I decided that, well, maybe I would apply. But when I decided to do that I also thought, well, I better take this opportunity and look and see what other opportunities there are out there. And at the time, they were beginning the Uniformed Services School in the Health Sciences in Bethesda, so I applied for that, too. And the way it worked out was that I interviewed for the school in Bethesda, and I was going through the interviews at Georgetown about the same time. And it was just a streak of luck that both the dean at the medical school at Uniformed Services and the chancellor at Georgetown University offered me the position of director on the very same day. And I went home that day and talked to my husband and said, "You will never believe what happened. I have this decision to make. And here was an opportunity to develop a whole new library, the building wasn't even built, and an opportunity to run a shop that was already well-established at a very well-established school with a very fine reputation, but a very poor library." (laughter) We had a lot of budget problems. So on the one hand, I had to deal with if I go to work in a government library it'll be easy to get the money appropriated, (laughter) or if I work in a private school I'm going to have a lot of budgetary problems, and I struggled through that.

M: How long did it take to make this decision?

B: I asked them if I could take two weeks because it was really difficult. And I did all the things that everybody advised me to do, went through all the pro and con lists, and everything weighed very, very heavily on the Uniformed Services side. So logically, reasonably, economically, that was the way to go. But I kept swinging back to Georgetown because my heart was there. So I made an emotional decision to stay at Georgetown, and I've never been sorry because they got a wonderful library. And Chester Pletsky became the librarian at Uniformed Services and he's done a wonderful job. I'm always impressed when I visit the place to see the great things he's done. And I went on to write lots of grants for Georgetown and try and bring in money for Georgetown.
M: I think that when you’re making a decision and everything says I should make this decision and it doesn’t feel right, you just have to go with what feels right.

B: And I must admit that Art, my husband, helped convince me in leaning towards the private school.

M: There are things you can do in a private school that can’t be done at a state or in this case federal institution as well, probably.

B: I think his advice was excellent, too because, actually, the four years or so that I worked in the government, they were not my happiest moments because I found it very restrictive and very regulated. And I had come from academia where you can say anything you want, (laughter) and you’re not necessarily going to be fired for it, and you know, your opinion means something. I found that working in Federal government everything had to go through a hierarchy, and it was very strict.

Actually, I did interview, before I went to Georgetown I actually did apply for...[a position at George Washington University.] You’re going to laugh at this. Here I was, head of reference at the VA Library and an opportunity had come up for an opening at George Washington University. And since I had come to Washington, by the way, I’d become friendly with Davis McCarn and his wife Grace, of course, through Art. And there was this opening and one day I was talking to Davis and I said, “You know, there’s this opening there.” He says, “Go for it.” And I said, “No, no, I don’t think I’ll apply.” But he said, “Go for it.” And I said, “Nobody knows me.” He said, “Go for it.” So I applied for the job as Director of George Washington University. And I guess my career is full of doing kind of dumb things like this. I didn’t even know who the competition was and I didn’t even bother to try find out. (laughter) And there were all these great librarians applying for the job. And it came down to two finalists, and that’s when I found out that the finalist that I was competing with was Nina Matheson. (laughter) It was so funny. But I made it to finals.

M: Oh, really?

B: And the interesting part of it, there were other librarians that--I can’t remember all their names--but well-established librarians, that were applicants. But I think because I had ideas of things that needed to be done, it may have intrigued the search committee or something. There were some things that...I was very enthusiastic about things that we needed to do in the medical school arena. But then when the decision came I called Nina because she at the time was working at the National Library of Medicine in the grants program with my husband. I congratulated her and everything, and we had some laughs about it. And I said, “Look, I didn’t really ever think I was going to make it that far.” (laughter) And I was kind of relieved in a way that she got it because I needed those years with Bobby Carter, when I got the position in 1975 to work with Bobby. I needed those years in the administrative office really learning how to manage and run a library. And I think, if had gotten the position at GW maybe perhaps I might have failed.
M: I don’t think you would have failed, but it would have been a lot harder.

B: God takes care of us. Yes, God takes care of us. And I got some training with Bobby.

M: Well, that’s kind of interesting because you and Nina are good friends.

B: Oh, fabulous friends. And so after Bobby left and then when I accepted the position at Georgetown, Nina and I got together and we decided that we would meet once a month to go over things that were going on in our libraries. We liked each other anyway, so we would have lunch once a month. And it was just great. We’d go down to the Watergate and have lunch or she’d come up somewhere to Georgetown. And then we started doing some consortia work with the other schools. And Joe Forrest was the library director at Howard University at the time, and Joe Forrest and Nina and I (Nina being at GW, and I was at Georgetown) we decided to set up a consortium of the medical school libraries. Now, they also had at DC, the DOCHSIN Group, which was for all the health sciences libraries, and many of the hospital librarians belong to that. We were participants in that as well. And Bobby Carter was very instrumental in helping that group get its foundation. And then when Chester Pletsky joined Uniformed Services and that library started to be developed, he joined our little threesome. So the four of us would get together, Joe, Nina, Chester Pletsky and I, and meet about what the schools were doing, and trying to find ways that we could share resources. From that, Nina and I got an idea about automating journals and automating the way we did the cataloguing with the DOCHSIN program. And we took a trip out to St. Louis to visit with Estelle Brodman, and--I’m trying to think of the fellow that did the program for the PHILSOM project--Simon Igelnick. He was the programmer and he still handles the PHILSOM group at St. Louis. And they agreed. Estelle Brodman agreed that we could establish a PHILSOM site in Washington. And so what we did was PHILSOM went to GW, and Nina worked with Dr. Helmuth Orthner--he’s an ACMI Fellow now-- and I to develop the cataloging project. And, we would catalog our journals, because we decided we wanted to catalog them into PHILSOM. Then both the schools had the PHILSOM records, automated records, and we were able to get rid of the Kardex. At Georgetown, we were going to do the cataloging for both the schools for the monographs and other cataloging projects. So, we both wrote grants and submitted them to NLM to get assistance in doing that. This time I was successful and I got the cataloging grant that helped us. And that was the very first project that we introduced the concept of faxing information to one another. We would …

M: When was this, 1978?

B: I’ll have to look and see when I got that grant. I think it was around 1978 or 1979. Well, it had to be after...Bobby left in 1978 and that’s when I became director, around that time, so it had to be maybe 1979, 1980.

M: It doesn’t sound that long ago for faxing.
B: Maybe it was 1981. Through the grant we were able to purchase fax machines for a few of the libraries. Because not only did GW participate in that project, but Children's Hospital was one of the participants, and I think the Washington Hospital Center, and maybe Fairfax Hospital. So we got fax machines for them. And, the catalogers would then do the basics on what the cataloging record should be like, and then they would fax them to us, and then we would refine it and fax it back to them. Then one day we got this bright idea, well why not fax interlibrary loan articles to each other? And so Nina and I started doing a little bit of that. But it didn’t really catch on, and one of the problems was that nobody else had fax machines. And they were very, very slow.

M: And the paper was awful.

B: And the paper was terrible, right. So we, Nina and I, did a lot of...I kind of have to laugh at it to call it high-tech. (laughter)

M: Well, it was.

B: We did high-tech projects at the time (laughter) just getting automated records for journals and bibliographic control.

M: Just the thought of working together is sort of what encourages you to go on and how can we communicate better, faxing and using PHILSOM. Do you know what they’re using now at Georgetown? Have you been gone too long to know what they’re doing at Dahlgren? What system do they use?

B: They still have the Georgetown Library Information System that I developed. I think they were going to get Innovative Innopac, but I’m not sure that it ever went through. That’s another whole story, but it was just great developing the system.

M: Well, let’s move on and talk about some of those other things that you did in Georgetown. I don’t even know where to begin. We have the IAIMS and MiniMEDline, and the Information System. But actually I think I’m jumping ahead. You talked a little bit about what was going on when you got there, that you’d been a Georgetown with Bobby Carter to start with. And so did you have a vision for the library? Did you have any ideas about what you wanted to do with it when you started? How big was the library, how many people were working there? Maybe that’s something that comes later, but I thought you might have some ideas.

B: I think it’s part of that story. Bobby did manage to convince the administration that they should extend the library because it was very small in staff and in services. And so, he launched some of that. And then when I took over, I was able to make a few more things happen. If you can imagine, when I got there, we only had six. There were six librarians on the staff, including me and Bobby. They had just moved into a new building. Because Bobby took over, I think in 1971 when they had dedicated the building. There was, at the time, this huge facility and very small amount of staff.
We were on "roller-skates," running around the library to give services; there were six librarians and six assistants. By the time I left, we had 13 librarians and we had something like 16 library assistants, and then we had 13 programmers. They were, of course, all supported by the MiniMEDline, and the library system, and the money we brought in through grants and various contracts and projects. The budget didn't go up that much, but we were able to make money. That's how we were able to support so many of the things that we did. We were also able to get grants. We attracted a lot of grants. It all started with a cosmetic project that I was able to get for the library, around 1988 (1987, 1988). There was going to be a cosmetic review board checking on one of the cosmetic companies for something--impurities in some of the cosmetics that they developed, and they needed some searches, literature searches in the field. They approached me at one of the meetings. It was one of the pharmaceutical meetings which I had attended. I said, "Sure, we could do that." So Helen Bagdoyan, who was the assistant librarian, (who worked with me for about 17 years before she died) and I got that project going and we made a lot of money. I convinced the chancellor and the finance officer that the library had made this money and the library should keep this money. So, they let me establish a little account for the library of different monies that we made. We started with that project and I think we made about $25,000 and we were able to store it all away. And then we had a few other projects that came after that. I did a literature search that Al Brandon suggested that I do for Harriman Brown Brothers in New York City. They were conducting a study on the publishing business, and so I did that study for them. That was about a year long study, and made a--I can't remember how much money I made on that one, but quite a bit of money. So those two projects, plus other little projects that we had on the side, we kept stashing this money away. It ended up that I had about $100,000 in the bank. And so I went to the chancellor one day and I said, "You know, GW has a computer and Nina's able to do a lot of these things." Because we had put the PHILSOM project on a computer that they had gotten for her. And I guess it was being shared with the medical school, it was part of the medical school computer, but she at least had access to it. I said, "We don't have a computer, and I could do so many things if we could just get a computer." At the time the PDP1134s were out, the Digital. The DEC Company had those. And I said, "I just know I can get a computer for the money that I have in the bank. If you let me get a computer I will be able to automate so much. I want to develop this system to get bibliographic searches for the doctors and the medical students, and I'll be able to do that." because I had this idea to be able to do our own searches at the library, and then the students could do it themselves. So he said, "Well, you go and talk to the finance director. You know, we don't have money to support these kinds of things. These projects get started and then they come to us later on for the money to maintain it." So he says, "If you do this, you know, you're going to have to promise us that you will never come back for any money." "I promise you, I will never come back for any money." Well, he released the money, the computer cost us $78,000, and then I saved some of the money to be able to pay for somebody to do some of the programming for us, and some of it I squeezed out of the library budget as well. So we started to get together on how we could do this project to do our own MEDLINE searches at the library. And that's how we got started with the MiniMEDline. You
know, it was just great because if it hadn’t been for this fabulous chancellor who’d said, “You know, you can do whatever you want as long as you don’t come to me for money.” I mean, he didn’t say, “Don’t do it.” He was so encouraging all the time. And when we did these things he allowed me to have big shows and big demos at the medical school, and dental school, and the nursing school. We would go and show them what we had and everything. Because of that, MiniMEDline got its start.

M: Well, talk a little bit more about MiniMEDline. Last night you were saying how you had to download and press enter every five items.

B: Okay. I had this idea since I did the AIM-TWX project at Children’s Hospital...

M: Oh, for awhile.

B: ...that, well, because I did the searches and then I thought if I can do this, anybody can do this. And then how do you store this information. So I’d had this idea back when I was in Los Angeles. The problem was that there were no computers with these capabilities. But around the 1980’s when the computers, the PDP1134s, were available and affordable, then you could think about storing that kind of information, megabytes of information, (laughter), maybe one megabyte anyway, in the computer. There were a couple of doctors that would come into the library a lot and there was also a dentist that taught over at the dental school. He had been the head of computer sciences at Georgetown, who later became a dentist. We developed this little kind of coffee klatch, and we’d get together. I said to them one day, “I got this idea, do you think it can really be done via computer?” Because I didn’t know enough about the computers, but they did. His name was Walt Bechtol, and he was a dentist, and Alan Zuckerman, M.D. and Helen Bagdoyan, and Bonnie Canard and me. So the four of us met on this little concept to see if it would work and if it was doable. And Alan Zuckerman liked to program, even though he’s a physician. He’s a pediatrician, by the way. Alan said that he could program it, and Walt told us that he would help us with all the technical capabilities and make sure we had the right computers, and the right software, and what kind of programming we would do. And he was dedicated to MUMPS, as was Alan Zuckerman, because of COSTAR project was in Boston and it was in MUMPS with Dr. Octo Barnett, I believe, that group. So as we talked about it and it became more and more a concept with a reality attached to it. We were talking about it one day, and I said, “Well, we could do the same thing that NLM does with MEDLINE, but ours will be a MiniMEDline.” And Bonnie said, “You just named it.” (laughter) And that’s how it got its name. Because then the group said, “Oh, that’ll be our name, MiniMEDline,” and the name caught on, too. So we developed it and then we had to decide how we were going to get the information from the NLM and how we were going to store the records. And so from MEDLARS, of course, we had learned all about the tree structure and the subject, the MeSH vocabulary, and you know, the subject terms. Alan Zuckerman was in charge of getting that vocabulary set up. I visited Dr. Joe Leiter at the National Library of Medicine, and I said, “Is there a possibility that we could have the MeSH tapes
because we’ve got this project that we want to do?” And he...nobody had asked for
it before, etc., etc. and then finally says, “Well, that’s going to cost you, you know.
We do spin them out, so guess you could possibly get the MeSH tapes.” And he said,
“We’ll have to figure out what it’s going to cost you.” So I said, “Okay, you think
about it.” Then in the meantime, we were struggling doing our own little thing and so
we had gotten it started with our own vocabulary. And then we worked with the
reference staff on how we could develop the database. That’s when we would go in
and do a search on the topic that we wanted to put into...the data that we wanted to
store into the system, and then store the references that came up. But the way it
worked with MEDLINE was you only got five at a time. So you did five references,
and then you had to hit the YES key if you wanted more. We were doing gigantic
searches, so we would have to sit at the computer and just--and it was all using a
modem via the phone--and hit five references at a time. And I won’t go into the
stories of the number of times we got disconnected.

(end of tape 1 side b)
(tape 2 side a)

M: When the tape ended, we were talking about going to NLM and talking to Joe Leiter
about getting the NLM tapes for MEDLINE, and in lieu of the tapes, you were sitting
and pushing ENTER every five items, and that eventually he said that you would be
able to have the tapes.

B: Yes. Well, finally Joe Leiter did agree to give us the MeSH vocabulary tape and that
was essential, that was just a great thing. In fact, Alan Zuckerman said to me, “Oh,
that’s the greatest thing you could have achieved.” But then we didn’t give up on the
regular tapes. What happened during the course of events was that once we put up
MiniMEDline and it was so popular with the students and everything, the chancellor
encouraged us to show it to everybody. And there was an AAMC meeting being held
in Washington, as usual, but we were ready at the time then to go ahead and have a
show of our system for the library community. Many of the library directors were
having their meeting, the AAHSLD meeting. We invited everybody to come, and we
must have had about 250 people. We had to set up buses for people to come, [to
Georgetown from the meeting] to see this MiniMEDline system and see the library. I
should go back a little bit and just tell you that we had renovated the library and that
was one of the things I did before I got into the computers. Because the library
needed carpeting, it needed new furniture. By this time it was already ten years old
and a lot of the things that they had bought originally wasn’t the best for long wear
and tear of the students. So I had engaged in that whole renovation project, and my
husband, Art Broering helped us. I got him involved in doing all of that for me. So
the library looked pretty nice. And then we got into the computers. We were really
ready to have a show and have people come and see the place. So all these librarians
came and in the group was Donald Lindbergh, who at the time was a candidate for
the head of the National Library of Medicine, and all these behind the scene things
going on. Dr. Cummings was still at the library and his deputy was Kent Smith. And
so anyway, Don Lindbergh came to the library with Kent Smith as part of the group.
I think maybe Dr. Lindbergh was just a new arrival at the library, I’m not sure. But he came with the group and just loved what we did. And Dean Schmidt, who was at Columbia in Missouri, has called me many times and constantly tells me that that demonstration that I did was what really helped him get a new library, because Dr. Lindbergh came back to Missouri and said, You have got to get us a new library, and he talked to the people there. So Dean Schmidt was always very appreciative of what we were doing at Georgetown. Well, when Dr. Lindbergh came to NLM, once again we approached the National Library of Medicine, and this time it went up to him as a question, and I didn’t take it directly, but I guess Joe Leiter did, and the answer came back affirmative, you could get the tapes instead of having to download five at a time. And it was the greatest thing that could have ever happened.

M: Now did they charge you for these?

B: Yes. Well, would you believe that the McSH vocabulary tapes cost us all of $1,000. (laughter) And the MEDLINE tapes were very expensive, they cost $2,500. Of course, the price of the MEDLINE tapes went up over the years. But we had that money in the bank so we were able to go ahead and do that. And for that money we would get the updates, too, and we were getting monthly updates, and so it was really great. We were laughing about the development of MiniMEDline because here we were, four of us in this library, designing this little system, and we just knew that the big time vendors were going to grab onto that concept, and they would come in with their big bucks and develop a really great system, and we would be left in the dust. So we always consoled ourselves by saying, “Well, this is a three-year project. We know the MiniMEDline’s not going to live any more than three years.” Well, 17 years later...Actually, it took the vendor world about ten years to come up with a system that could catch up with what we were doing because we were doing, you know, self-service searching. Now we were not the first one to do this. About the same time, the PaperChase project got going. That was developed by a physician in Boston, and it’s a marvelous project. They released it and were selling the service so that people could get the bibliographies from them, the bibliographic references. They could mount it in their library but the data was all stored back in Boston. Our concept was you could get the tapes and you could store it in your own computer and you’d have control over it. So when many of the libraries wanted MiniMEDline, then they would get their own computers and they would control it in the library. We liked that better because we felt the librarians would learn more about how to run a system. If you have somebody doing it for you all the time, it’s a service and then you never grow, and you never learn enough about computers. This way you learn how to database design, you learn how to create search screens. All the easy to use search screens that MiniMEDline have, I designed because I felt I had an understanding of how intuitively the students would look for information. Librarians know that. It’s just part of our training and we work with them all the time. So to get a programmer to do it, or somebody else that has never worked in that service, you’re not going to come out with a system that is as easy to use as ours was. So we designed that. And then one day, the cataloger--we were doing this cataloging project, in the meantime, continued to do that with GW. And the cataloger, Wilma
Ewens, who is now at University of Maryland, she came to me and she said, “You know, Naomi, I know you want to get an integrated library system and all that, but we’ve got the possibilities of doing one ourselves. I think that we could do a better job because you’ve got all these other ideas and you know how, you know what people want. I would encourage you to do that.” Because we were toying with two concepts, one was to buy one, or the other one was to design one. And she said, “No, you can do it, you can do it.” So we did, and we developed the Georgetown Library Information System, an integrated system, based on the concept of the one that the NLM had developed. It was a trial system that they had designed, but it was never intended to be sold. And it became AVATAR and the system that OCLC developed that so many of the libraries got. That had its roots at the National Library of Medicine with Chuck Goldstein. He was the designer of that. So we used the integrated approach that Chuck Goldstein had, but he basically just did the catalog and we wanted to do everything. So that was how we were able to bring in our serials component. We dropped the PHILSOM and designed our own journal system, and we designed an acquisitions systems, and the catalog, and then we adopted a lot of the key word concepts searching that we had in MiniMEDline in the catalog. And so, when the libraries came to see that, because they saw the MiniMEDline and the catalog system at the same time in that tour, then a lot of library directors started to contact us about acquiring the system for their libraries. So that’s how we got both and we went into business. But the library still had to get their own computers, but we would provide them with the services. And, of course, we had to hire programmers to provide them services and, of course, librarians, I mean to this day, are not still totally 100% sold on the way MEDLINE is searched. So you can imagine they had a lot of ideas about how the library system should work. (laughter) We developed a user’s group committee to tell us all the different design approaches and things they wanted to change on the library system. Then they said, “Well, we’ll get the service from you, we’ll support the salaries of those people, whatever it takes, you know, in the budget, by yearly subscription service.” So that’s how we got all the programmers in the library to work on the system. And while we were doing that, then I thought, well, if we can do this with the MEDLINE tapes, and we can do an integrated library system, surely we can take on ISI and bring Current Contents into our Library, because all the researchers liked Current Contents. I thought we needed to do something for the research staff. And so we negotiated with ISI for the tapes. Now those cost us a lot of money.

M: More than a thousand?

B: More than a thousand. I think our first contract was something like either $15,000 and then it went up -- And I signed a contract that it was not to go up more than 10% per year, and it was like a three or a five year project. So it went up about...Maybe it maxed at $18,000. But then immediately after that agreement was over, they really increased the fees of the tapes.

M: Yes, it’s a lot more.
B: But it was new for ISI, too, and they didn’t think it could be done. But we took the same basic software that we had developed for MiniMEDline and transposed it for Current Contents. It was a little more difficult because they didn’t have the subject headings that the NLM had. The MeSH vocabulary was just wonderful. We had to build our own vocabulary for the ISI.

M: And did you purchase just one piece, just the clinical services, or did you purchase the whole set of the life sciences?

B: We did all the life sciences. I don’t think we did the social sciences, which, of course everybody wanted later on, too. I think we may have adapted those later. But we started out with the clinical and life sciences. So it was great to have done that.

M: And this was in the 1980s, correct?

B: Yes. And I’m trying to think what else. Oh! And then we decided that we had this computer and here all our librarians were typing into library loan forms, why not automate interlibrary loans. So we designed our own little automated interlibrary loan forms. So those were like maybe four of the big things that we sort of did, made that paperless. And it made a lot of sense to get us out of all that paper.

M: I suspect that all of this led into the IAIMS Project?

B: It did. It did.

M: Do you want to move on to talking about the IAIMS?

B: Well, of course, you know the story about Nina Matheson and the book, the issue of the Journal of Medical Education, and the concepts that she had. And what grew out of it was that Dr. Marjorie Wilson, who was one of the vice presidents at AAMC, approached [Dr. Martin] Marty Cummings about integrated information access and the need for an entire renovation of the way the medical centers operated. And so, from that came the idea of getting some legislative support for the IAIMS program. And when I found out that the National Library of Medicine was getting grant money for IAIMS, we looked into it and talked about it at Georgetown with the chancellor, the same chancellor who was so supportive. And we talked about whether or not Georgetown would dare apply for this because certainly there were going to be bigger schools going for the grant project, and we didn’t know whether we could compete. But then we were convinced and encouraged by many people. Dr. Lindbergh encouraged us to apply, and Kent Smith, and Bill Cooper who was head of the extramural grants program, and my husband worked for him. Art Broereng was his deputy. But Bill Cooper said, “Oh, sure, go ahead and apply. We need good schools to apply for this.” So we decided to undertake this project. Well, the grant application was volumes thick, and the work that you had to do to get ready to submit the grant was horrendous. And we didn’t think that we could really do this in time, because they wanted a complete inventory of all the automated resources of
the university and all that kind of thing. We had to set up committees and everything. But the chancellor, at one of the council meetings...he had a council of the deans and I participated in that. So he said, "If we're going to go for this, I think the best place to put it is in the library because they have this innovative library system." It's coming from the NLM, and all this and that and everything. And then they must have had a secret little executive meeting that I wasn't in on, because they somehow decided that I should be the PI. So I get this phone call from the chancellor, "You're going to be the PI." And I thought, oh my, because I was hoping one of the docs would be the PI. So that meant that I had to put the grant together. And so we applied for it and got it. And I think that one of the reasons that we were able to get it was that we were one of the institutions with an integrated library system, and that "we knew where it was at." We could maybe take this concept and run with it and see what we could do it. The chances, you know, for success might be good there. I think that was one of the things that NLM was very concerned about. Where were the best chances for success in the original programs that they started? So I can't remember all the schools that competed, but the winners were University of Utah with Homer Warner, Dr. Homer Warner, and University of Maryland, and Marion Ball was at the University of Maryland, Dr. Ball, and Georgetown University. And why am I drawing a blank of the fourth one? I'll have to look it up. I think it may have...Oh, Columbia, Columbia University with Dr. Paul Clayton.

M: All on the East Coast.

B: What?

M: All on the East Coast. Oh, I guess Utah isn’t. No, not all on the East Coast.

B: It was interesting because...like, for example, I was amazed that the University of California System didn’t apply because they were developing that Melville Medline, and of course, their computer resources were wonderful. But I guess they decided that they wouldn’t. They must have met on it but decided they wouldn’t apply. The second round, I believe Duke University got a grant, and Baylor College of Medicine.

M: Vanderbilt, was it in that?

B: Vanderbilt may have been in that group.

M: And some of these are not library based either.

B: No, they weren’t necessarily library based. I’m trying to think, because we established an IAIMS Consortium. Cincinnati, University of Cincinnati had a program. Nancy Lorenzi, I believe, started that one. But she wasn’t working in the library at the time, she moved over to the vice president’s office. I’m trying to think of when University of Washington got it. There may have been more than four in the next group. So the IAIMS Program was a gargantuan task for our little library, and we had to bring
together all the computer resources of the medical center, and also work with the main campus. The hospital information system was the biggest automated group, so we worked with them. And then the radiology department had a big program with the imaging systems. Georgetown's very famous for some of their work in that arena. Research still did not have anything and the individual schools didn't have their own computer resources, so dentistry, and nursing, and medicine didn't have anything, but they worked with us on the committees. We established the IAIMS Committee. Would you believe there were, any time we met, we had between 45 and 60 people in our meetings? I would chair these meetings with all these docs. But we had subcommittees that worked on projects. And what we decided to do with our program was to have sub-projects. So the hospital group had a sub-project from the IAIMS funds, and the radiology group, we were working with them on voice recognition and imaging programs, and so they had a sub-project. And then we had an educational project that we worked on with the schools to put up resources for the nursing school, and medical school, and dental school, and then the library resources. But library's resources were so well-developed that they kind of just kept growing, but we had done a lot of the basics and so we were concentrating more on integrating the other types of resources. So it was a great program. And we finished the planning project, and that was two years, and we submitted a proposal for implementation, and we got that. I believe that was three years. Then we wanted to conduct some research and we put in another proposal and we got a research proposal for three years. That's where we got a lot of the imaging and radiology things, was in that research proposal. And then we got the Phase III, which was the final implementation. Oh, that's how it went, it was planning, then design and prototyping, and then final implementation was the third program. And we finished that. The successes were great from the standpoint that we got more people in the medical center to think about information access than we ever dreamt, and how information should be made available and accessible to everybody. We overcame a major barrier, which was probably one of the biggest problems in the early days. Because you had asked me separately about what were some of the problems and issues. One of the big problems was territoriality.

M: In academe, yes.

B: Yes, because a lot of...Like the hospital computer group, they weren't sure that they could trust this medical library group to develop anything, because we didn't know anything about computers, they were computer scientists and we were librarians. But, the thing that was so great was that everything fell in place over the years. And since everybody had their project that they had to do, and the idea was to come and meet at the group and report and think about new ideas and new things, and how we could move it along, we developed a camaraderie and a trust, a mutual trust for each other, the various paths that we were going through. So out of that just came this great team, and people went on to do other projects and went on to develop their careers in a very interesting manner. So I thought that was really great. One of the things that did happen at Georgetown that may have been a bit of a failure was that we were never quite able to integrate everything. We kind of linked things together,
but we were never really successful in the full integration. But during all of these events, of course, other things were going on in the world: like somebody came up with this ARPA project where you could do email by this thing called the Net, and then this chap developed this system where you could do Internet email, and then, of course, in order to do Internet and everything, there was this program called Mosaic, and the concept behind Mosaic, and then, did you dare redesign your access to your system with a homepage. So we got into design of homepages, and access to email, and all the issues that go with that. So at first, our information policy that we developed was everything should be free. People should have universal access of the institutions to support the database tapes, and this and that, so that people in the center could get information. But then we moved on to, well, are we going to let those students have email?! And that’s going to tie up all of our time on the computer, and nobody will be able to get into the computer to do their searches. And so the many discussions that we had in the IAIMS meeting were really interesting and fascinating. And I said, “Well, we’re going to do email and we’re going to give it the students.” And I worked with the assistant dean, Dr. Bill Ayers, he was the assistant dean at the medical school, and he liked the concept of email for the students. And of course, we had other concepts about giving the students disks and tapes and tutorials. Bill Ayers and I developed tutorials for the students and all that kind of stuff, and a nutrition program that he was so fond of. And everybody had their little projects. But if we were going to go with email on the medical campus, this was going to create a problem on the main campus. And of course it put me on some committee on the main campus where they were doing a lot of things about access to information and everything. They were years behind the medical center. (laughter) I shouldn’t say that, but, policy-wise, I think they were reluctant to release any of those kinds of things. It almost seems kind of hilarious now, that if you would approach anybody they’d probably say, “No, I never said that.” But we went down to those meetings, and I said, “Well, I would allow a certain amount of storage in our computer for the students to have their email.” And they would have these little pigeonhole boxes where they could store their data. It wasn’t well-received in the main campus, but somehow or another I think as the Internet got more and more popular, and other possibilities were out there. And of course you had to pay to get a lot of this, to make it accessible for you. We never really had to worry about it too long because while we stored it for awhile in our library system, and the students were doing their little email with one another, etc., when the Internet really became available and we switched to that, then they just used our computers as a gateway to the other systems. Then, of course, the complaints were that the students are out there playing chess on the system, and the students are investing on the stock exchange on the library system. Because tuition at Georgetown was very expensive, and so many of the parents would give the students money that they could invest and make money for their livelihood or for living in dorms or wherever they lived. So students would use our system to access the computer to keep us with the latest on what was happening with their stocks. And I’m sure that they’re still doing that now to this day. But that’s more or less where it was in 1996 when I left.

M: But we don’t worry about it anymore. (laughter)
B: No, I know it. Who in their right mind would tell students that they can’t have email? (laughter)

M: It is fun to look back at projects and see how restrictive and how frightened we were sometimes. I remember we used to take away the keyboards of the two computers that we had when there was no reference librarian on staff, so it wasn’t there in the evening. Only up until 10 o’clock could you use the computer. This was like in 1987.

B: Back in the modem days they used to unhook the handset off of the phone so that somebody couldn’t access the MEDLINE through the modem that way.

M: We were very worried about that. That’s really changed.

B: Yes, it really has. But I just never liked [that]...I mentioned to you, I think, maybe last night, that once I got into librarianship, I really got into the mission thing that I really felt that my career should be dedicated to help doctors become better doctors, once I got into the medical aspect of it. And you couldn’t help doctors become better doctors if you didn’t give them the information that they need, and help them help themselves. And so I really liked the self-service searching approach of MiniMEDline and PDQ. We brought on PDQ, by the way, during that. We went out to NCI and met with Dan Masys, M.D., who was at the time at National Cancer Institute, and asked Dan Masys for the tapes. He said, “Yes,” right away, you know. So it was interesting. Once we started to develop this reputation for doing these things then other things fell in place. But the whole idea was don’t become a “bean counter,” just look at the big things, and the big things that need to be done, and the details will take care of themselves. And I’ve made a lot of mistakes along the way with that kind of philosophy, but I just could never see myself as a “bean counter,” very restrictive person. That’s why, in a way, with cataloging I always thought, “Well, I’ll never be a good cataloger because I don’t dot all the I’s and cross all the T’s. But I did like cataloging. I like dotting the I’s and crossing the T’s but I liked the bigger projects, too, you know, the more global ones.

M: Well, do you think we’ve covered everything that we can about Dahlgren and about Georgetown at this point? Do you have anything else you want to bring up? I did write down questions about your involvement with the University Library and with the university in general. I don’t know if you had anything about these?

B: You’ve probably figured out by now that the university main campus was separate from the medical center and the law center was separate. And we had the concept at Georgetown that everybody floated on their own bottom. And that followed through with the libraries. The libraries floated on their own bottom. So the medical center... the library got it’s funding from the medical center, and then any other monies that we had. But we did have a consortium of the three library directors and we met monthly to share and exchange ideas. I met with the law librarian and with the university librarian.
M: Just as the tape clicked off we were talking about your meeting with the other library directors on campus.

B: Yes.

M: And did you share any resources with them?

B: Oh, yes. Oh, yes. In fact we set up a mechanism to give them access to our system because they were waiting to get their own library systems and they needed to be able to look up our catalog and our resources. The main campus in particular because they also had a separate science library that reported to the main campus. And so the science library was able to use MiniMEDline and the online catalog and that kind of thing. But then, they got...The two directors went together and they got the Innovative Innopac System. And we found a way of linking them, the resources, so that people could have access to all the resources on the campus. And one of the big things that the three library directors worked on was the mechanism to do that. And so it was really great relationships, but there was this approach at Georgetown to keep the campuses separate. I don’t know where they are with that philosophy today. I had done so much at Georgetown and it was so exciting, and one of the sad things that was beginning to happen in the mid-1990’s, around 1995, is that a lot of the people that I worked with were leaving the medical center. The head of the computer systems at the hospital left and he went to work in another larger HMO type computer system. The dean of the medical school, Milt Corn, left, and he ended up at the National Library of Medicine running extramural grants program. [Shortly] after Art Broering died, [Milt Corn became head of] that program. The dean of the nursing school left. Georgetown decided to close the dental school. The medical director of the hospital retired. So this was my old gang, the council of advisors that worked with the chancellor. Then the chancellor retired. Well, he had actually retired maybe around 1990 or 1989 or so. But sort of the old gang was kind of going away and I was a little bit lonely. And then about that time, the associate dean, who I had worked with a lot at the medical school, came over to my office one day, and he said, “You know, I’m leaving.” And I said, “Well, you will not believe this, but I’ve been approached by the Texas Medical Center to go down there, and I’ve gone for an interview.” So then the interview process at Houston took hold and became stronger. So I ended up deciding to go to Houston. And it was a sad moment because I had been at Georgetown for 22 years, and I figured I was going to be there about 25 years. And I had to cope with all the issues. Is this where I really want to retire from, or do I want to do anything else in my career? And as I looked at the Texas Medical Center and that library, Houston Academy of Medicine Library, I thought perhaps I can do one more thing, and maybe one more great thing. And there was a tremendous challenge there (laughter) because they really needed to do some things. And I thought, well, maybe I have done all I can for Georgetown and they’re up and
running, and they're going great guns. And oh, I had even established a great reserve for them, about 2 million dollars we had set aside in monies of various projects. So they could maintain the library, you know, with the budget they got, plus a little extra, taking out of the till all the time. It would be some monies to do a few [extra] things. Because I wasn't always generous with the money, I only spent money when I felt we really needed to kick it in, and the idea was to keep as much for the rainy day. So I felt, well okay, I will go to Houston and do my one more thing. So I accepted the job and went there. And when I talked to the associate dean it turned out that he and I both resigned the same week, and the vice president at that time was very upset with both of us. And I think that was kind of the end of the old gang.

M: Yes. That was 1996?

B: Yes, it's 1996 I left and went down to Houston.

M: And you said that there were things that needed to be done at Houston. And in my memory, you said that it'd been over three years since they'd had a director, is that correct?

B: Yes.

M: That they were without much direction, without much leadership there for awhile. Obviously, someone was taking over as an interim, but they needed some direction and mission.

B: Well, when I met with them and the board and the various people on the search committee, I could detect that they had fabulous ideas, actually on a grandiose scale, and grandiose goals.

M: Sort of maxi rather than mini. (laughter)

B: Yes, yes. And of course it was that wonderful building that had such a great potential if it could all be utilized by the library. Part of it was being used by other groups. And there was a tremendous challenge there. Although I had worked with the Regional Medical Library Program all of my life, because I was familiar with it at UCLA, and then going out to the Mid-Atlantic group, I worked with Baltimore, University of Maryland, and also when it was at NLM. In fact, I was chairman of the RAC when we when we separated the RML from the NLM and took it over to University of Maryland. So I was very familiar with that. But the Houston Academy of Medicine did have an RML program. And so, I had never been involved in the management of a regional medical library program, and also a library that was as large as Houston Academy of Medicine, and then had so many challenges. So that intrigued me. I think that was kind of what made me decide, well, this would be a neat thing to do at this point in my life. In the meantime, of course, I met a wonderful man [Gregory Chauncey] who had proposed [and later became my present husband]. (I had been widowed for about four years.) And I had to cope with whether or not I
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was going to leave Washington and leave him, or whether or not he would agree to come down. If he agreed to come down then I could accept the position. And he did agree to come down and so I accepted the position and made him leave his wonderful job, which I felt very guilty of for years. But he came down and we moved to Houston and I accepted that job. I think maybe I accepted because I like challenges. You know, you asked me earlier why I went into medical librarianship, and I said, well I liked the librarians and I thought they were great. And why did I like medical libraries? Well, because I didn’t know anything about medicine and they were the most interesting subjects to me when I was in library school, was finding out about medicine. And because I didn’t know anything about computers, you know, I had to learn about computers. Well, here, I didn’t know anything about how to run an RML or be involved with an RML. And we had a wonderful executive director there for that program. And maybe dealing with a library that was operated by a board, where you reported to a board, and had so many schools involved.

M: It’s huge.

B: So it was a like a consortial library. I thought, this is going to be an interesting experience. So it was the challenge. When I went to look at the place, I could see that they were in the dark ages because they hadn’t had the resources for so many years to do all the automation that they should have done. And so many of the things that we had going at Georgetown weren’t even there yet. And I thought, oh, this’ll be a piece of cake. All I have to do is just tell them how to do this, and bring in that, and do this, and do the other, you know, a piece of cake. I can do this with my eyes closed. Then in the meantime I’ll find about these other things that I don’t know about. Well, (laughter) that was probably, kind of the biggest error I made, because it wasn’t a piece of cake. It was really hard work. And I really have to hand it to people like Sam Hitt and Dick Lyders that were directors of that library prior to my coming on board. They did a wonderful job and it is a difficult task. And while I think the board was very supportive of me while I was there, one of the things that I could see is that when you have 12 people there are 12 different ideas of how things should be done. And they did try to coalesce some of those things, but there’s always different people that want different things to favor their groups, and you need to be able to cope with that.

M: Can you back up just a minute and talk about what made up the board? You said there were 12 different people. Not necessarily the names, but who did they represent?

B: Okay. The funding for the library all came from the various institutions, and so there were the six major institutions in the campus at Texas Medical Center that supported the library. The two biggest supporters were Baylor College of Medicine and University of Texas Houston Health Sciences Center. And they, of course, were the major players on the board. Then there, of course, was the Houston Academy of Medicine, which is comprised of community physicians, but just about everybody in medicine in Houston belongs to the HAM. Then there is the Texas Women’s University Health Sciences Program. They have a nursing school, an occupational
health, and a number of allied health programs. Texas A&M, has a campus there for the biological sciences division and the researchers. And then, there was also Prairie View Texas A&M School of Nursing.

M: And then there’s hospitals there, too?

B: And the major hospitals, of course M. D. Anderson, being one of the big players. It’s M.D. Anderson, University of Texas, so they’re part of University of Texas, but they’re separate from University of Texas Houston Health Science Center. They have their own setup. And then some of the major hospitals are places like Methodist Hospital, which is very big, Texas Children’s Hospital. Now Dr. DeBakey is at Methodist Hospital and of course at Baylor, you know, he’s the Chancellor of Baylor. Then there’s Texas Children’s, and the Texas Heart Institute, where Dr. Denton Cooley is.

M: Big names here.

B: Yes. Then there’s Herman Hospital. I’m just giving you the highlights because there’s so many.

M: So people from these institutions make up the board?

B: Right, there’s about 41. In fact, the University of Houston has a pharmacology program and they’re in our program. So there are 12 board members and they were representatives of the big players. One of the board members is the president of the Texas Medical Center. So while that’s not a medical institution in itself, it’s more of an administrative institution for the entire Texas Medical Center. They’re very influential because they maintain all the facilities, the parking, all the things that a lot of us don’t like, they handle that. And Dr. [Richard] Wainerdi [President, Texas Medical Center] was very supportive of the library. He saw the things that we needed to do.

M: So you worked with all of these people, just give them library support?

B: Yes, and we had monthly board meetings during the school year. We didn’t meet in the summer months but we had monthly board meetings. And I would just prepare reports on things that the library was doing, what our goals were and everything. When I went there, I developed a five-year plan of things that we needed to do, it was an obvious thing that you have to do, and how you’re going to achieve it, and how you’re going to afford it, and how you’re going to budget for it. So I had to make a lot of changes. I restructured the whole library and reorganized things, and then took a really hard look at the library budget, and tried to develop how we could afford to do this. Because although Baylor and UT did say that they would kick in some money, a little money every year for three years, it was going to be a total of a million dollars and it really wasn’t enough for all the things that we needed to do. I needed to find ways of getting it. And so I just managed to do that. We did a little bit
of downsizing, and then there was some natural, should I say turnaround. And so every time somebody did leave, I had to look at that position very carefully to determine what kind of person we wanted to replace it, or if we even wanted to replace the position. So I was able to scale down. We had 25 librarians when I came there. I was able to scale that down to something more reasonable and more affordable for the library and still be able to give the services. And so we instrumented a lot of different things that they were not accustomed to doing.

M: Was it all in one site or are there several libraries?

B: No, we’re in one site. There are other libraries throughout the medical center, and there was a consortium of that group, and we met with them as well, part of that consortium every month. Well, they all were part of the UT system, so they felt that the Houston Academy of Medicine Library should give them a lot of services, you know, for their libraries as well. But they had their own separate budgets. They had their budgets which came from their departments and their schools.

M: And you did a certain amount of physical cleanup and changing when you got there.

B: Oh yes, another renovation project. A total renovation. Because I found out that the carpeting, the original carpeting that Sam Hitt had put in the 1970’s was still there. It was really old. It was worn through. There were holes in the carpeting. And that was a big undertaking because there are a lot of books in that library, a lot of stacks, and they had carpet in that whole entire area. But you know, you just have to roll up your sleeves and decide it’s going to be done. The lighting was very poor in the libraries, I had to change all the electrical systems. I started to work with an architect at the Baylor College of Medicine, and it started as a project that Baylor agreed to volunteer and help on. But then at that point they got rid of their architectural shop, so then the library had to hire an architect. And so, when the architect that I was working with left Baylor to start his own business, we put him on a retainer to work with us. We drew up plans. A lot of my background in architecture came from my experiences with Art Broering, [NLM architect and my former husband] and so I knew a lot of the things that needed to be done, and I knew how work flow needed to flow in a library and what would be good ways of doing it. So it was good for me, I mean, it was good that I used to kind of review some of the things that he....We would have conversations about some of the things, projects, that he was involved in. He started originally working with the NLM when they had the Construction Act monies for the construction of medical school libraries. And so he would work with a lot of the deans of the schools to develop libraries. In fact, in one trip I went with him to University of Virginia when that library was being built because they were the first library with air rights license agreement, because the library goes over the road, over a main road, to access the library.

M: And they’re just doing a big renovation.
B: Now they’re doing another one, yes. So anyway, we worked on that for.... I phased [the renovation] as part of the five-year phase program, and I developed it in three phases, over a three-year period. So by the time I left, all of that was pretty well done. The only thing we needed to do were a couple of the restrooms. So I felt that I finished that project. And the place just sparkled and looked great. And the reason I was in such a hurry was that after I accepted the job at Houston, and I was there three weeks, I was informed that the University of Texas accreditation committee was coming to the library, the LCME. And I thought, well, I had gone through a number of LCME reviews at Georgetown, this is a piece of cake, you know. Well, I figured they would just accept everything I had to say. And no they were looking at the facility, and the facility was so bad. So I was put on the carpet to answer why the facility was so bad.

M: Only been there three weeks! (laughter)

B: And I kept saying, well, I’m doing this, and I’ve got this plan, and I’m doing that. And why doesn’t it have a computer lab? It’s in my plans, it’s going to have a computer lab. Because, you know, everybody had computer labs by 1996. Well, then I found out that Baylor College of Medicine was having their accreditation visit the same time next year. So I said, “We have one year to turn around this library.” So we really got to work. When the Baylor review came, we weren’t quite finished with everything, but they could see some of the construction going on and everything so we passed that with flying colors. And then the next year, the nursing school was undergoing accreditation. And I thought it was so funny because....both nursing schools, the Texas Women’s and the Prairie View, I had two separate site visits for them. But when the dean that was on the review committee for the nursing school came by and she said,” Isn’t it just wonderful to work in such a luxurious setting, it’s such an elegant library that obviously has everything.” Because the place looked so different, and it was so modern, and it sparkled, and it looked good, and it had all the computers, and she thought that we were loaded with money. (laughter) So I thought it was kind of funny because she just didn’t know the history. (laughter) Life as a librarian sometimes becomes a struggle, and mostly it’s the money.

M: Yes. It seems to always be more and more money. But you seemed to be able to find money.

B: You can’t let it stop you. You have to find the money to do the things you believe in.

M: But I hear over and over that you’ve found money for all these projects. So you were there, and you left just this last year, correct?

B: Yes.

M: And now you’re in La Jolla and supposedly retired.
Right. (laughter) Well, when I left Houston I thought, I don’t think I want to be another library director. I’ve done it and I want to do something else. And I had always wanted to come back to California. I mean, this was something I yearned to do. In fact, when I first got married and moved out to Bethesda, Art promised me that the next year we would move back to California. (laughter) It was kind of sad because when he was dying and he was so ill, and he said to me, “I’m so sorry I never kept my promise.” But he said, “You didn’t really believe me did you?” (laughter) And I said, “Yes I did.” But anyway, now with Greg [Chauncey], I said, “Greg, how about California.” And he said, “I love California.” So we came out and explored three different places where we might go and we settled and chose the San Diego area, and ended up in La Jolla. And then we decided we were going to do a business and just consult and try it out for a year or two. And so we started to just set up shop. We’ve been concentrating on that and how to get mail on my own computer because I had already sold my old one, which was a Mac. I’m a Mac lover. But this time I had to get one of the different systems. I bought a Dell [PC]. And then Greg got his, and we got our house wired up with Internet. We have all that. We’ve linked our two computers, and we have our printers, and a scanner, and fax machine. So we spend a lot of time doing all of that. And then starting to see, you know, where there might be some possibilities for consulting. The wonderful thing that has happened is that I was approached by the executive director of the Friends of the National Library of Medicine to do an electronic newsletter for them. He got it started with one, with the first issue, and he said, “Now this will be a labor of love, but would you like to do it?” And of course, you know, I was editor of the Bulletin, and I wrote the column for the MLA News, and “Capital Notes,” and I’ve written all those articles. I thought, oh yes, I would love this, but you know, an electronic newsletter? Because I was accustomed to peer reviewed journal articles and having a stack of articles that you could fit into the next issue. And the electronic is very different, so it’s a whole new life. I mean, I have to find out the very latest information of what’s going on in Washington, what’s going on in the medical information arena, what’s going on in medical libraries, and highlight what is important in this newsletter, and turn it out every four weeks. And you know, if it’s old…I mean, now people want instant information. So if it’s old, it’s just old. You can’t really put it in unless it’s very, very important. And so you don’t get articles submitted to you by anybody. You write them up yourself. You write the little summaries of different things that you find. So, of course, I’m reading literature all the time and I’m on the Internet accessing information. And I put myself on a lot of listservs, not a lot of library listservs, but other kinds of listservs. And that’s what I do. I produce the electronic newsletter. So it’s a whole new venture. And I’ve tried to do that with another group, but they’ve never really made a decision in that area. And I’ve worked with a few doctors that have had some ideas for developing consumer health database programs. I’ve spent a lot of effort doing that, trying to see if they could get funding for their projects. They’ve been unable to get funding, so most of it, this business, is volunteer work at this point.

M: Now with the consumer health, is that where your article--your Spanish language article--grew from?
B: Yes. Well, actually I was approached by one of the medical librarians for the ICML meeting to do a paper in Spanish. And she said, "I know that you’re involved in consumer health, so..." I had a consumer health project at Georgetown. We called it Georgetown Med Info. I just forgot to mention it to you. That was one of the projects that we did through IAIMS, too. And when I was editor of the Bulletin, around 1992, one of the symposia that I supported for the Bulletin was on consumer health. And I’m trying to think who the editor, sub-editor, for that was. But anyway, I’ve been involved in consumer health for a long time. And then, of course, when I was at Houston Academy of Medicine, I developed a consumer health program for them. In fact, we started to develop a collection in that area and I supported it with some of my own personal funds. I donated money towards it. And we got a small grant through the Friends of the Library there. So that’s how the Houston Academy of Medicine developed their consumer health program. And then we developed, in addition to our web page for the library system at the Houston Academy of Medicine, we developed a consumer health web page. And so I worked with one of the librarians there to design that. And now they call it something else because we went on and got a small grant from them through the NLM contracts in public health. They call it Houston Health Ways. So it has a whole new design, that homepage. I look at it every now and then. It’s really good. And maybe the influence of being in Texas, and then coming to California, and then being approached by this librarian whose name I will remember in a little while, I decided, well, why not come up with a paper on web sites, Spanish web sites. I wanted to start with the NLM MEDLINEPlus, because the NLM MEDLINEPlus was one of the greatest things that happened for consumer health and for access for patients and their families. So it was kind of the starting point for my paper. And they had an interest in Spanish things. They’ve linked to a few Spanish resources in the MEDLINEPlus now. So I started to look at some of the things that were in the federal resources, and some of the things other librarians in the country had done, and I started to gather those. And I thought, well in order to do this and really make it beneficial to the people that can’t speak English, it would be good to do it in Spanish. So I wrote the paper in both languages and presented it at the London meeting on July 4th. And it’s at the ICML website. I think it’s www.icml.org, and I think it’ll be there for about a year. But I’m trying to see if I can get it published or get it on some other web site. I won’t tell you all the different people I’ve approached, but they have good ideas about it, but then I never hear back from them. (laughter)

M: Well, as you said yesterday, that when you’re writing about something on the web it changes constantly.

B: Oh, yes. And other people are catching up, and other people also think it’s a great idea and they’re developing their own. I think the RML Program is now working in that arena, the whole consumer health. And of course, MLA has a big consumer health section, so now they’re starting to think about the other languages. And they have the resources to do it bigger and better than I do, just independently doing it by myself.
So the only thing I can think of is that maybe some of these things I kind of start or plant the seeds.

M: Now the one thing we didn’t talk about was...

(inaudible)

M: We were just starting to talk about the RML in Texas.

B: The RML was a great experience and it was a wonderful group. Mary Ryan was the executive director of the RML Program. When I came there, she came in and told me one day that, she says, “Now this doesn’t reflect on you at all, but I want you to know that I’m a candidate for the position at University of Arkansas. I have a feeling that they’re going to ask me for a second interview, and that I might be one of the runner-ups.” And so, lo and behold, about two or three months later she got the position and so she was off. But it was great working with Mary because she had established that whole setup under, partially under Dick Lyders. She knew the region, she came from that area, she had been at Tulane, and of course, in Arkansas. And so she knew all the librarians in the area and so it was a very, very well established RML program. And it really didn’t need any helping hand whatsoever, it just ran itself. And Mary was great about doing the renewal proposal. She did a renewal proposal while I was there, and she did all the reports in a timely manner and everything. But then when Mary left we had to find someone, and the RML program had a board, and the board was made up of many of the directors of the various resources libraries. Everybody, of course, had a great deal at stake as to who might be the next executive director. So we had a search committee and we reviewed candidates and we searched, you know, for someone to replace Mary. Well, that’s a difficult thing to do, to replace Mary, but we did have someone for awhile, and we worked very hard in the program, and I got to learn a lot about it because since we had a new person working on it, I was much more involved than I ever was when Mary was there. And so I was forced to learn a lot. However, also the individual that we had was a senior person and had a lot of experience so, you know, I believe in giving people free reins to run their shop, and so she had free reins to run her shop. But after about a year or so, I could see there were some things that still needed to be done in there, and so she ultimately left the library. She had some other opportunities that she was also pursuing. I could see that some things were not being done and I was going to have to report to NLM about that. But anyway, the search committee met again and we hired someone who had been formerly a coordinator in the RML program, Renee Beaugard. And Renee Beaugard is now running the program and is doing a great job. And of course the interim director there now is Dr. Bob Beck, so Renee reports to Bob Beck. And he’s interim director but I think as soon as he becomes director, they’ll probably make him director of the RML program as well. Renee has a lot of energy and she’s more like I am. I mean, I’m more task oriented. If a task has to be done, it gets done. If a deadline has to be met, it gets met. If a report is due to the National Library of Medicine, it gets done. If the newsletter has
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to go out, it gets done. Well, Renee is like that. So obviously you can see that I feel that it’s functioning.

M: It’s going to work.

B: Yes.

(interruption)

M: We are back after our lunch break and are continuing with an interview with Naomi Broering on the 23rd of September, 2000. And we are just about to move into talking about MLA activities. And I start out by saying, when did you first join MLA and what were your first involvements in the organization? And you told me a wonderful story about your first MLA meeting and I hope you’ll repeat that one. (laughter)

B: Well, I first joined MLA when I was at the UCLA Biomed Library working under Louise. And all the interns, I think we got our first year paid as part of the grant, part of the stipend. So that was in 1966 or 1967. And I went to my first annual meeting, and that’s when I really became interested in MLA. The meeting was held in Miami Beach, so we can look that up. And I believe Mildred Langner was president of MLA at the time, and all the board members were very distinguished people like, I don’t know, Sarah Brown, and Bill Postel, and Ralph Esterquist, and you know, some of that gang. And so, we were in awe of them and they were just really terrific. The four interns got together, the four interns from UCLA, and we decided that we would chip in all our money and get a suite at the hotel, and we were right on the beach, and it was just an absolutely gorgeous suite, and loved it, and it was charming. (interruption) Anyway, so we were in this wonderful suite and we were just getting in and the phone rang and I said, “Oh, I’ll get it.” We were all clowning around and everything about how great this place was. And I answered the telephone and I said something about “MLA love suite,” and lo and behold it was Louise Darling on the phone, our mentor. (laughter) She wanted to know if we could meet and have a little pre-conference meeting. And, of course, everybody in the room is laughing at me because I really got caught. (laughter) So that got us off to a great start. I think Louise never took me seriously after that. She always thought I was a bit of a playgirl, and I had a hard time living down that reputation.

M: But she still wanted to hire you so it couldn’t have been too bad.

B: But the MLA meetings were very impressive and we all, of course, wanted to continue to go to them and be with the group. And I became active in the Southern California Medical Library Group, which is a chapter of MLA, and was very involved with them. And I became the archivist because I have a master’s degree in history. So I was the archivist for the little group. It was sort of getting started around those early days. I don’t think it had been formed as a group for very long. And then when I was at Children’s Hospital I started going to the meetings more faithfully because it was really important to network with all the librarians in the community. So we did a lot
of resource sharing, and the hospital librarians and I would all get together and then plan if we were going to MLA for business. And then when I moved out to the East Coast and I was at Walter Reed and VA, I wasn’t quite as active. I took a lot of CE courses at the time. And then when I joined the grants program at the VA, I decided to develop a grants course for MLA because I could see that was one of the problems. A lot of librarians didn’t know how to do grants. So I designed the first grants course that MLA had, the first one that I know of. And it was kind of rinky-dink, but I did objectives and everything. I had taken a grants course myself out in the professional world, and then working with the VA grants office I learned a lot, so then I just passed it on through the grants course. And I used to teach that CE course for MLA. Oh, I must have done it for about four years, then someone else took them over, and then it got redesigned and the NLM people started teaching it as well. So it was through the grants course and the CE that I got to meet a lot of librarians from all over the country. I already knew some from California and then I started to meet the ones from the east coast, being out in Bethesda. Then I became active in some of the [MLA] committees, I joined one committee, and then I got on the Legislation Committee. I was just a member of the Legislation Committee, but when I joined we were trying to develop what was important for MLA. That’s when we started to emphasize the need for a newsletter or something in the MLA News, and to get into legislation more actively than we had been. Now, of course, it was a rich tradition. Many of the senior librarians had testified for the Medical Library Assistance Act through the 1960s in Congress. And of course, Estelle Brodman, Louise Darling and a lot of those people had done that. But in the 1970s, we were getting ready for the renewal of the Medical Libraries Assistance Act, so we had to get active on that. And we wrote some of the needs that were important and we made visits to [Capitol] Hill. I’m not sure that much of that was being done religiously. Nina was in a group and I think she chaired it the year before I took over. And since we were both in DC, we worked closely together. Nina [Matheson] decided that we really needed to get board support for lobbying because the committee couldn’t do it by themselves. So I wrote up some recommendations for the MLA board to support a lobbyist, a part-time lobbyist to help us with the renewal of the Medical Libraries Assistance Act. And also when she was chair, we developed the guidelines for copyright, and mostly for the AVs, for audiovisuals, and we worked actively in that. Then when I became chair we worked to lobby for money from the board, and we finally got it, and we hired a lobbyist. And we used to go to meet with him to tell him what we wanted and who we wanted to see in Washington and that kind of thing.

M: That was about 1978, 1979?

B: 1979. Yes, around 1979. And we actually, I think, worked with two different groups. We started out with one small group, but we weren’t as successful with that group so then we got somebody that was a little bit better, but it was more costly. There were people, I’m trying to think who was president of MLA, maybe it was Erika Love, but we managed to get their support with some funds. And it was a struggle. I mean, we had to submit requests several times before it got through for the various board
meetings when they meet. So people think about that as being kind of an easy thing. (laughter). It wasn’t as easy as it sounds today.

M: How expensive was it to have a lobbyist?

B: It wasn’t very much money. It really wasn’t. But it was expensive for MLA to put money into that kind of activity, you know. So yes, Erika Love was president and Gil Clausman was president before Erika. Gil really supported us and then Erika came along, too. And Gil Clausman had me write a paper about the renewal of the Medical Libraries Assistance Act, and we got [it published] in the Bulletin. We wrote it as if it came from the committee but I was the author of the paper. And he presented some of it at a meeting. He was just so thankful for all this so that he could speak with some authority to the membership. And so then after that, it just kind of rolled along. The Legislation Committee became more popular, and the “Capital Notes” column was featured every month. Since I was chair, I used to pull it together and then I’d try to get the members to get me information to put in the newsletter and it became popular. And then when Nancy Lorenzi became president... Let’s see, it was Erika, Lois Ann, Trudy Lamb, then Charles Sargent. And when Nancy Lorenzi became president I think we restructured MLA. It was between Charlie Sargent and Nancy Lorenzi, we did a lot of strategic planning. And I was on the board by then, and it was at that time that they consolidated, I believe, a lot of the committees, and that may have been when they formed the governmental committee.

M: Let’s talk specifically about you being on the board. I have it as 1979 to 1982. Is that about right?

B: Yes, that’s about right.

M: And you said that Nancy and Charlie were probably president then?

B: Yes.

M: Can you remember some of the issues that were important while you were on the board?

B: Okay. Well...

M: Well, obviously the restructuring. (laughter)

B: Well, Trudy Lamb preceded Charlie Sargent, so she was president of MLA when I sort of first came on the board, and Lois Ann was past president. So Lois Ann was on the board and for some reason, Erika Love was also there, too. So there were a lot of issues left over from things that Lois Ann wanted to continue. And Trudy Lamb’s emphasis was the hospital librarians and so was Lois Ann’s. So the main issues were how to make sure that the hospital librarians had a voice in MLA and so we worked a great deal on that and helping the hospital librarians, encouraging them to present
papers at meetings and to become....Erika wanted everybody to be a researcher, which is not really possible, so we worked on different mechanisms to get people involved. I think the poster sessions were some things that came out of those years. I can’t remember the specifics on them, but that was very good for the hospital librarians because they could [submit] a poster and bring it to a meeting, and the little ten minute presentations that people would do, those worked out and were really fine. So we had those kinds of changes in the membership. And then getting everybody involved in committees. So they were trying to encourage people to join committees. And believe it or not, I mean, a lot of people did not belong to committees because....Some of the positions went vacant because not everybody had the money to go to the meetings. So if you couldn’t go to a meeting, you didn’t become a committee member. The issues were the hospital librarians want a voice but they did not participate in the committees, or they could not come to the meetings all the time, that kind of thing. So there were the academic librarians and the hospital librarian’s issues. We got over that pretty well, I think that worked out just fine, and I was pleased about that. And then making inroads with the rest of the world became important. And I think when Nina was on the board with me, we were both on the....She was sort of going off when I came on, but she was on the board and Nancy was coming in. So we were talking a lot about how to participate with other associations and how to get involved with the AAMC, and how to become more active with NLM so that we had a true role. And I think it was during that era, or maybe it was before that, that the director of NLM would then come and meet with the MLA board. So that was a new thing, too, that at our pre-conference meeting that he would come and meet. Those were opportunities and things that MLA didn’t always have. They would meet with the [NLM staff] at the RML Directors’ Meetings and things like that, but the rest of us were not involved in those activities. So little by little, I just think we made great progress. The budget was a big thing at MLA. We didn’t have enough money to go around. And if you can imagine in those days committees would meet at lunchtime or at breakfast and there was always a wonderful lunch, so the budget of MLA was suffering. So Nancy had to make a lot of those changes. (laughter)

M: Not popular? (laughter)

B: Yes, Nancy and Nina. But people accepted them and now it’s just part of the way you operate.

M: You’re lucky to get coffee.

B: Right. If you have coffee you pay for it, or you bring your own coffee to a meeting. But the budget has stabilized and we don’t have, you know, cash flow problems like we had. Testifying before Congress was becoming very important. We were always....That was one of the things we tried to do was identify who might be good spokesmen on behalf of the budget for the National Library of Medicine. So the board was working on that, too, and several board members would be sometimes the people that would testify. I’m trying to think. I was not the treasurer. I believe
Virginia Holtz was the treasurer, and Lucretia McClure, I think, was on the board when I was. She may have been secretary. So I was just a plain, good old-fashioned board member. I didn’t have any of those responsibilities. I think when I was on the board I was still teaching my CE courses, too. So I was pretty busy at meeting time trying to get to those. Then I went off the board and it was probably a good time to go off the board because we had finished the big issues. The Williams and Wilkins suit was over. The copyright issues were in good shape, I mean, people were beginning to follow those. Everybody was busy putting notices on their photocopy machines. The Medical Library Assistance Act had been renewed, got to meet a lot of people in Washington through that. And so it was kind of time to be off the board, and just be a member of committees. So I did that for a while. And then, some of the work at Georgetown, you know, got me involved with other things. Then around 1990 I had an opportunity to apply to be editor of the Bulletin. I had been writing articles in the meantime and I really liked the Bulletin. So I applied and I didn’t get it.

M: You didn’t!?

B: No, Irwin Pizer got it. I’m trying to think when he became editor. He was editor for a few years and did a wonderful job. I guess it was after Susan Crawford. Susan Crawford had been editor for a really long time, and then after Susan Crawford went off, they opened it up and they searched for someone. And so Irwin Pizer was made editor. And I’ll never forget when Fred Roper called to tell me that I didn’t get it. I said, “Oh, well that’s okay, you know, I’ll try again,” or something like that. So I got involved. Then, unfortunately, Irwin Pizer passed away in 1991, and then in 1992 I had an opportunity to become editor. And the reason I’m making a point about this is that when I went off the board some people asked me--and they were always searching for the next president--some people asked me if I had an interest in becoming president of MLA. And you have to remember the times. It was 1982, 1983. I was busy with MiniMEDline and busy with the library system, and people wanted our library system, and we even had a booth at MLA. So that’s the other thing. I had my course, I had the booth at MLA, and I was on the board. And so I thought, I don’t really want to ever aspire to be president of MLA, and so I told some people that when they asked me. I said, “No, I don’t want to be president of MLA.” But what I always wanted to be, down in my heart of hearts, was editor of the Bulletin, I wanted to be editor of the BMLA. And so when I got the opportunity to become editor, I was really thrilled. I felt that was it, my career was over, I had gotten to the top of the profession and that’s all I wanted to become.

M: Do you know why you thought of editing as being so special? Was it from doing “Capital Notes,” or just from writing?

B: Yes, I liked to write and I just liked putting it together. I do a lot of things because there’s certain people I admire, you know. I had admired the former editors of the Bulletin, and I liked reading the Bulletin, and I had ideas about it. Right after Irwin passed away, Susan Crawford came back on and she did one issue of it maybe, or
two issues. I’m not sure. While they were deciding what they were going to do she
took over an issue, and then when I was selected I worked with her on one of the
issues, too. So Susan kind of taught me the ropes. And I had put together a couple of
books, though, because I did a book on computers in libraries for the Library
Information System. I had done that pediatric book, in addition to the articles, and
the editing of the “Capital Notes,” so I was getting a little experience. Oh, and at
Georgetown I was associate editor for a couple of journals that we had with the
doctors. One was in thermalogy and we did one in computers in medicine, which I
did with Dr. Ayers. I was on his editorial board. And then we put together the
Faculty Bulletin of all the publications at Georgetown. We did that through the
library and Helen Bagdoyan and I did that. I was editor of that. So I was getting
some experience but nothing at the scale of the Bulletin. So that was thrilling. And
then when I got that I was able to do a few kind of fun things with it.

M: Well, one of them I know was the symposia. Talk about the things that you really
enjoyed or you felt were big contributions of the Bulletin.

B: Well, Irwin had started to change the way the Bulletin looked, and so...

M: Did it grow at that point? It used to be a much smaller size.

B: Yes, it used to be small. I think he did make it 8 ½ x 11, but he also put in a picture or
a painting, or some kind of image, and he did one or two that way. And Susan and I
decided that on the extra issues that we would do. We would continue that. But some
of them were like photographs. And so I changed that a little bit when I became
editor. But I just felt that each cover should have something that related to what was
going on in the world. So I had some covers with just media in front, of tapes and
videos and things like that. And we did collages. And then every issue of it, it was a
big deal to look for the appropriate cover. I have to tell you, I spent a lot of time on
the cover. But I thought we had good covers and they became really popular. I’d go
to the meetings and people would say, “Oh, that was such a great issue when you had
the Surgeon General,” a caricature that that painter Perez had done, and had on
public health. And there was a caricature of Dr. Koop. And so we had good covers
and that was interesting. And then for the symposia, I would go to meetings around
the country and try to determine what was some trends that were important. I would
select a trend that I thought maybe somebody needed to edit a series of articles on
that particular subject, and so we started that. And that became very popular and I
think they still do it. And so I felt very good about that. We did one on education, we
did one on IAIMS, we did one on—I think Nancy Lorenzi did the one—edited this one
on IAIMS. We did one on consumer health. And they were like issues that were just
beginning, so that we were trying to push, you know, push the envelope to the future
all the time. We did one on the RML, and we had pictures from....All the RMLs sent
me some photographs and then we did a collage for the cover. So I enjoyed doing
that, and then I did a special supplement for NLM on the RML program, and that
took a lot of effort. And I worked so hard on that to get it in time, so that Elliot
Siegel could have it in time for the MLA meeting and everything. We got the whole
thing done. I worked with his staff and would you believe that I forgot to put my name as editor of that issue? (laughter) And so you always think of these things. That issue, to this day, does not have my name on it, and I spent more time on that than I did any other issue in my life. We did some good editorials. We’d feature people and tried to make the obituaries something more than they had been kind of fun ones.

M: Now did you write those or did the fellows write those?

B: Sometimes you had a fellow to write them and sometimes you didn’t. Sometimes you just got information and wrote it yourself when you picked up something from the news and expanded on it. I think the readership went up. And I went to meetings and would approach librarians that were presenters and ask them to submit an article to the Bulletin. And these were like at the concurrent sessions where a lot of those young librarians had never written articles for the Bulletin, and so we gave them instructions on how to turn a presentation into a paper. So we started to get a lot of papers from young hospital librarians and other people in the profession that had not written articles before. And so it became a little bit more democratic. It wasn’t the same old people writing articles.

M: No. You also had software reviews. Did that start then?

B: Yes, I started the software reviews. We had some good editors of that. Connie Poole was one, well, she did book reviews. Who did… oh, I can’t remember her first name, [Janis] Brown is her last name, from USC. She became the software review editor.

M: Now it’s David Piper I think. Don’t know who was before. And also you mentioned an editorial board. Did that change?

B: We changed the structure of the editorial board. Dana McDonald was on the editorial committee and she helped me with that, and also Dottie Eakin, I think was on it at the time. We decided that the editorial board wasn’t getting the visibility that it deserved, and it took a lot of work to review those articles.

(end of tape 3 side a)
(tape 3 side b)

M: We were just wondering if the word résumé showed up on the tape. Okay.

B: So we developed, expanded the group and made some associate directors, and then editorial board members that had specialties of things that they were to do. And that’s like you said, we had the software review, and the book reviews, and the journal reviews. And so everybody got a place where they fit. You know, there was an associate editor. The titles just sounded better and I think that’s what we accomplished. I think it’s changed a lot now. It’s even more expanded and enhanced because Michael Holman made some changes and Scott Plutchak is making some as well. We started to explore the possibilities of automating certain aspects of the
Bulletin, and about the time that I became president of MLA and had to go off the Bulletin we were focusing on the need to get at least the table of contents in electronic format on the Bulletin. You have to remember that while I was editor, maybe it was the last year, MLA developed MLANet. And there is an issue of the Bulletin that has the MLANet homepage. I mean, if you go back to it, it looks funny because it's so different now. I told Carla Funk, "We have to get that homepage on the cover of the Bulletin so everybody knows that MLA has a homepage." And we had articles that went in line with some of that. So MLA was very, very involved in getting some things going as far as the MLANet and the listservs. So for them to be able to take on automating the Bulletin and automating the MLA News was a big major step. We were taking them a step at a time. The plan was that the next thing that we would explore was at least putting the table of contents up on the Bulletin. So I left that in the hands of Michael Holman, and I think he did some interesting things. I think now they're putting articles every now and then up on the network.

M: I'm sure that will accelerate now in the next few years. Don't you think that it should be full text?

B: Yes. Oh, I think there are a lot of plans. I've read a couple of things that Scott has written.

M: Now we certainly should be leading that and not trailing. (laughter)

B: Absolutely. And you're going to have an oral history on the net.

M: That's right, we're going to have an oral history. Your oral history is the first on, I'm hoping. (laughter) You were just sort of just thrown right into being president, which was 1996. Right? I guess you were elected in 1995 and then you have a year as the incoming, and then you're president for a year, and then you are past president. I have down that you were president in 1996-1997.

B: 1996-1997 and I was incoming president-elect in 1995-1996. You're correct. I was approached about becoming president of MLA in 1995. And as I mentioned before, it really wasn't anything that I desired, because I just thought it was a big job, and I was uncertain that I'd be a good president. I didn't know whether I was president material. But I went ahead and said to the nominating committee, "Okay, you can put my name down." And so I ran for president, but I didn't make it. Jana Bradley won and she became president, and I missed it by some number of votes, which I don't remember now. And I was somewhat relieved. (laughter) But the next year, when I went to the meeting, so many of the past presidents approached me about becoming president of MLA, and they really wanted me to run again. And I said, "I did it once. I'm not going to run again." "Yes, yes, you got to run." So I said, "Okay." Finally, I caved in on that, but I didn't expect to win then either but I did. Or maybe, I don't know why, maybe my name is better known.

M: It happens a lot I think that people will run twice and win the second time.
B: Yes. Well, actually Jackie Bastille was the one that convinced me that, “Go ahead and run,” she said. I ran twice. She said, “A lot of people don’t know that, but I ran twice.” And there were a couple of other past presidents that stepped forward and told me that, which I didn’t know, because, you know, you don’t remember it.

M: You don’t remember the people that don’t win. (laughter)

B: The also-ran. And so it was kind of interesting that some of them, people that I had set in such high regard, I held in such high regard, were people that had run a few times. Anyway, I did, and I became president. I was supposed to be understudy that year, under Jana Bradley, but it got cut short because Jana couldn’t make it to the MLA meeting. And I got a call about two weeks before the meeting telling me that I had to be at MLA, and I had to be there for all the sessions because I was going to be running the meeting because of Jana. So I was prepared to see how she did her inaugural address and all that. I had to go there and do all this. She did have someone present one of her addresses for her, and I chaired the meetings.

M: Now she did something on video, didn’t she?

B: Yes, she did something on video. But I had to chair all the board meetings, that kind of thing. So that was my first year with the new board because I had been off the board for about five years. So a lot of people that were on the board...I mean, I knew them as professional colleagues, but I didn’t know how they functioned on the board and who had what responsibilities and everything. So Carla Funk was just wonderful, the executive director of MLA. She helped me a great deal, sat next to me at all the board meetings and told me what to do. And so we got through it and it worked out well. We had an absolutely marvelous awards luncheon that year. There were some great people getting awards and I was able to present those. And that prepared me for the next year when I was truly president. However, I always had this feeling that maybe people got tired of seeing me up on the podium because they saw me for two years in a row. (laughter) Oh, here she comes again!

M: Well, I don’t remember that that was an issue. I mean, I was certainly...I don’t think I thought, oh, it’s the same person. I don’t think we remember that.

B: Now the biggest things that were problems during that year were the cutbacks in libraries, and so we had to work with a lot of the librarians that were loosing their jobs. So those were the big issues. When I became president, I went to many hospital associations and met with the management of a lot of the hospital groups about the role of the library and the importance of the hospital librarian. We met with the people at Kaiser Hospital [Oakland], (that’s how I met Ysabel Bertolucci) about their role and how they were doing and how Kaiser was, working with the [library]. We met with the Blue Cross Blue Shield staff in support of the hospitals. And, we went to a Hospital Association meeting. I say we because to a lot of these meetings, Carla Funk would go with me. So we had this master plan to get to the administration. And
then, there was one meeting that we wanted to go to that all the executive directors of
the hospital world attend. We couldn't get to that because the registration was
something like $2500 dollars per person to attend this meeting. So we just kind of
had to... We didn't have that kind of budget. So it was hard to make those inroads
because the executive directors, CEOs of the hospital management organizations,
have bigger budgets than the librarians do. We worked with JCAHO and Perry
Schuyler, who's in the AHA, I believe, worked with them. And we contacted Eloise
Foster who also helped us. So, the big issues were to help the hospital librarians, and
to help them with the accreditation. We had one board member that was very good at
that, whose name escapes me. I will find it somewhere. And I think probably that
plus at the same time technology was becoming such an important part of what MLA
was doing. We had MLANet. We were getting computers in many of the libraries,
we were trying to automate some of the CE courses and get people to take some of
those courses so that the librarians could come to the meeting and learn some of the
things that they needed to do. We would collaborate with the institutions to open up
their labs for us. So technology became a very important part of what MLA was
doing for the members. And we even had to change the way we were presenting our
papers at the meetings, through automated presentations. Sure, we set it up with
PowerPoint and you clicked the button and all that. It wasn't PowerPoint at the time,
but was some other program. But it was to show everybody that you can do it. "Oh,
how did you do that?" You know, "How did you get your slides developed that way?
Oh, they were computer produced." And then people in the field started to do it, and
found that, oh, okay, it was a good thing to do. Then the Internet was so important,
and I think one of my first speeches to the membership in 1996 was advising them to
"grab the Internet" because there were a lot of people that were very reluctant--
maybe it was 1995, in one of the early speeches--there were a lot of people that
didn't have access in their libraries, they were reluctant to bring it. The Internet
came in 1992 and not everybody goes onboard right away. And it didn't come in
with the "big bang" that we see now. People didn't know where it stood and it was
being developed by all these "techies" and that kind of thing. People were afraid of
it. So I advised the membership to "grab the Internet and become cyberspace
librarians." And that was one of my keynote speeches. I said, "Become a cyberspace
librarian." Well, you know, now they call it cyber librarian or cybrarian. But I coined
"cyberspace librarian." It didn't last very long. But in Seattle when I was president, a
lot of young librarians came up to me and they said, "We're becoming cyberspace
librarians," and they all laughed. (laughter) But the idea was get out there and do it!
You know, do it. And gee, look where we are today. It's just wonderful. They're way
ahead of me. I can't do that stuff because I used to have my assistant do my slides.
And now that I'm on my own, I have to do my own, so I had to learn PowerPoint. I
taught myself because I never take computer classes. But you can learn it and you
can do it.

M: Now you also had Dr. DeBakey testifying about free MEDLINE. Is that about when
MEDLINE opened up Pubmed?
B: Yes. I was president of MLA and the National Library of Medicine was working on trying to get free MEDLINE and expand MEDLINE, too, because they were having some access problems, too. It was slow to get into MEDLINE because the Internet… People were coming in all at once, and they needed better, enhanced capabilities. So the NLM budget really needed a “shot in the arm.” And Dr. [Michael] DeBakey went to Washington and he testified on behalf of the National Library of Medicine and on behalf of the public. He said everybody should have access to MEDLINE and it should be free. And for some reason or other, we had been saying it for a long time, but all he had to do was say it once and NLM got the approval to do it and the funding. Now Dr. [Donald A. B.] Lindbergh was for this all the time. [The NLM] didn’t like having to charge for MEDLINE searches, I don’t think. And I don’t think Lois Ann Colaianni liked having to keep all those records. She was Associate Director. The NLM used to charge for the tapes.

M: The $2,000 tapes.

B: Well, they went up to about $12,500 or something. And then, they had flat fee access for the tapes. But the vendors were coming in and they were developing their own systems, and they were getting the tapes for a very low price from NLM and charging high prices for their services—like the Ovids of the world, and the BRSs and those companies. I think, regarding fees for MEDLINE searches, there was a study and they determined that it was costing the NLM more, if not quite almost as much, to administratively handle the collection of the money than what was coming in for MEDLINE. It was just best to give it free, not have to keep all the records, and just keep computer logs on use. I think when they were able to do that, and then coupled with Dr. DeBakey’s testimony, they got approval. When Dr. DeBakey got free MEDLINE for the public they had a big announcement in Washington in June of 1997, I attended and sat in the front row, and in came Vice President Al Gore because he was very supportive. He’s always been very supportive of information technology. So he walked in and Senators Spector and Harkin, and the director of NIH, Dr. [Harold] Varmus, and Dr. [Donald A. B.] Lindbergh and Dr. David Lipman, and they had a big demo. This was in Capital Hill, in the Senate Office Building. They did a demo on searching MEDLINE, and the public searching MEDLINE. They had a lot of fun with it. I have some nice pictures that I could give you. Frances Howard was there, and she was sitting not too far from me. When they marched in, Al Gore came right up to Frances Howard and gave her a great big kiss. And I put my cheek out, (laughter) but he didn’t know me and he didn’t kiss me. He only kissed Frances Howard. (laughter) That was a great day. There were a few of us from MLA there. Then, NLM got started in supporting the public, and I think you know the rest of the story about health information for the public and working with the public librarians. I went to a session at NLM when they first demonstrated MEDLINE Plus. I thought that was absolutely a major milestone. I told them, “This is a major breakthrough. This is going to be something.” And it was even though NLM kept claiming, “We don’t know what the public wants and we don’t know what the public libraries need.” I think they were modest. I think they knew what
was needed, but they wanted support from the public librarians for it. Now of course, it’s just growing and growing.

M: Anything else about your presidency? I have a couple of kind of general questions.

B: Oh, go ahead and ask me.

M: Just in terms of what, do you think, effect does the MLA president have on the organization? It’s a very short time span, yours was a little bit longer maybe. But do you think that the president can really push the organization in a direction? What is the role of the president?

B: Well, it is a short time even though you’re on the board for three years, one year as president elect, and then the last year as past president. But you have to remember that there’s somebody else that’s president, so you can’t do much during their presidency. The major thing you can do is to get things started and listen to what the membership needs. Then just determine in your own mind what can I do during this short term as president that could be somewhat effective? And how can I help the people that are asking for help? For example, during my presidency when that issue came, all those hospital librarians and the downsizing. The downsizing was the big thing in 1995, 1996, and even in 1997. And I don’t think that’s as big an issue now. But they needed someone to be doing something about it, at least to get the ball rolling.

M: And to be supportive.

B: And to be supportive. So, as I said, I started that program and it didn’t go very far because the next president who came in didn’t want to do that and wanted to do something else. So it’s hard to do something that you think is going to continue forever. I think what I was able to do that did continue forever was emphasizing the technology, emphasizing to everybody that they better get on the Internet, and that they should get email, and that they should update their computers, and that they should become cyberspace librarians. Because you can see...You know, we’re reflecting back now, but if you’re in it—involved in it like I had been my whole career, you can see the way it’s going to go. If the library world didn’t get into it, somebody else would do it for us, and then we would be left behind. So showing by example and emphasizing those things when you address the membership, and writing about it, I think probably is the most effective thing that I was able to do. Other presidents have been able to go in and launch a full fledged program, like Nancy [Lorenzi] launched planning, strategic planning, and she restructured MLA, and then that took place. Then Fred Roper decided we needed to do something about education, and he did that. And I think the timing was right for them to do that. And I just think that might...Well, I didn’t have a big program. I think my big three-year contribution was to make people more aware of technology and not to be so fearful of it.
M: Oh, three years is a burden I’m sure...

B: Because it’s volunteer and you still have your job back home.

M: And at the time you took this on you were moving jobs and getting married. I mean, when I think about everything that was happening to you in 1996, it’s kind of scary. It was very big.

B: Well, I function best when I have a lot to do.

M: Well, you certainly took on a lot. It’s fun sometimes to hear what some of your favorite meetings were. You mentioned Miami as your first meeting. Do you have any others that particularly stand out? If not, that’s fine, but...

B: Well, the Dallas meeting was a lot of fun and we all went to a ranch or something and did a big barbeque. And I think the Majors brothers—I think it was Dallas, or maybe it was Houston, maybe it was Houston. I thought that was great. I don’t think I’ll forget the Denver meeting because we all went in a bus or something out to some ranch and I think Nina Matheson rode a horse or something. (laughter) We were way out there at a ranch. So I think laughing about some of those things is really funny. Nothing comes to mind right now. I think the Seattle meeting was funny because we went out to that island, and it seems to me that it rained, or some how or other it was cold or it rained.

M: At one of the early Seattle meetings it poured rain and we got stuck on a boat.

B: That was the one, yes. And it rained, and everybody got drenched. (laughter) Then when I was president of MLA it was in Seattle and they wanted to go back to that island again, and I said, “Oh, can’t we have a nice dinner in a banquet hall in the hotel? And we can all get dressed up?” And they said, “No, because the program planner wanted this picnic outdoors.” So we went, and it was fun to go on the boat. I enjoyed it. See, the meetings have gotten very casual now.

M: You mentioned that at the early meetings people really dressed up and wore evening gowns.

B: Yes.

M: Which has not been in my experience, that they haven’t been that dressy.

B: Oh, they won’t do that anymore I think. Well, for one thing they used to have dances because there were more men. A lot of the men were directors or associate directors of libraries and the women were the librarians that ran the library. So there was always somebody to dance with. But then there was a period when there were more men. More of us became directors and there weren’t as many men. And so they would have a dance and there was nobody to dance with. And I think that someone said, “Gee, we don’t want banquets like this any more because the women have to
dance with each other.” So they changed that whole style. And maybe that was after that New York meeting. The New York meeting was fun. They had a great dance there. I guess I remember the New York meeting the most because that’s where I met Art Broering.

M: Oh, that’s right, you mentioned that.

B: That was my best meeting. (laughter) The last night of the meeting, it was a tradition that Louise Darling had a party. We used to have...The biomed-ers group and Louise used to host it. I think it was the last night after the banquet.

M: These were all people who had ever worked with her?

B: Went to biomed, yes. And now they’ve changed when they do it. They do it on Mondays I think now. But at the time it was after the banquet. So I was at the banquet, and of course everybody got invited to Louise’s suite for the party. And I went to that because naturally I was one of the interns. Art [Broering] was there and he walked in.

B: Had he already met with you?

M: Well, we had met earlier that day about a grant application. That was it. We had just met about the grant. I didn’t know him. We sat at long tables at the banquet, so he was at the same table, but not real close. And then at Louise’s party we got to talking, and then Louise said she looked up and saw the two of us leaving. (laughter) She said she just knew something was going to happen. And, about three months later I called her and I said we were getting married. When I told her, she said, “I’m not surprised. I’m not surprised.”

M: Well, do you have anything else you want to comment on, or we can move on to other organizations?

B: Yes.

M: I just picked out a couple of organizations, but you certainly can talk about others. One was -- is now ACMI and the other would be AMIA.

B: Oh, well, ACMI, the American College of Medical Informatics, is a college of maybe about 100 members, but it’s....

(end of tape 3 side b)
(tape 4 side a)

M: We had just started a new topic, talking about other organizations that you were active in and we were just starting to talk about AMIA and ACMI.
B: Okay. So, I have been a member of AMIA. They conducted most of their meetings in Washington, DC. It used to be called SCAMI, Symposium for Computer Applications in Medicine or something like that. [editor: SCAMC, Symposium on Computer Applications in Medical Care] I started making presentations at their meetings when we got the computer at Georgetown and we were designing the various library components of our automated systems. I got involved with that group by making presentations in library computers, and then got involved with their education committee because we were trying to design educational software for the medical students. Since they met in Washington it was really easy for me to go to their meetings, write papers, submit posters, and join some of their committees. And so I joined their committees. And then lo and behold, when I became PI of IAIMS at Georgetown, is when I had even more to talk about and more presentations to make. So the IAIMS program really brought me to the forefront of the AMIA group. And MiniMEDline did, too, by the way, because I almost got an award from them. I can’t remember what it was but I competed with QMR. I don’t know if you know the QMR system and QMR got the award instead of MiniMEDline. They asked me if I would run for the board, as secretary of the board. So I became the executive secretary for the AMIA Board and I served in that role for two years. And while I was becoming active with them, then every year you can nominate different people to become a member of the American College of Medical Informatics [ACMI], and so in 1988, I don’t know to this day who nominated me, because you never know who nominates you, but I was nominated to become a member of the College. I became Fellow in 1989. Then shortly after I was in ACMI, I was elected to be a board member of ACMI as well. So I served as board member and then I was treasurer of ACMI. So those are some of the official roles that I played with those two associations. ACMI started to have retreats, symposia on various subjects. I don’t think I missed one. I really liked them and am looking forward the next one. They’re going to have it in La Jolla in 2001 in February, so I’m going to go to it. But when I became president of MLA, I had to drop out of a lot of AMIA activities. So I belonged to their internet committee and their education committee, but I’m not doing all the things that I used to do. But, I know the group really well. And through that, I started teaching in the AAMC Information Technology Conferences that are held every year in Aspen, Colorado, that are chaired by Tony Gorry. So I did that for at least six years, maybe longer. I made presentations on the library aspects of information technology at the medical center. I think the person that’s doing them now is Sherilyne Fuller, because she has a very dynamic program going on in Washington. It was great because I had an opportunity to be a colleague of many of these physicians and nurses that are into medical and nursing informatics, and some dentists, too. It brought me right into the computer arena. And of course, a lot of the librarians are doing it now too, they’re very much involved with AMIA.

M: What about SLA? I know that you got the Winifred Sewell Award just recently.

B: Yes.

M: And then a professional award?
B: Yes, I received a Professional award in 1987, and that was for the IAIMS Program. I think it was for the IAIMS and for the library system. I don’t know who nominated me for that either, but it’s a great award. SLA had a wonderful award presentation and they give it to one person every year, the Professional award. So you’re elected by a committee. The meeting was held in Philadelphia and I remember John Timor, who was the head of the Thomas Jefferson [University] Library. He was at the meeting when I received my award. And it was a great honor because the only other award that I had received was the Brad Rogers [Information Technology] Award that I received from MLA in 1986. This was the first award that I received outside of MLA, you know. And I was just thrilled because I couldn’t quite understand why the SLA librarians wanted to give this to me, but it was great.

M: Were you a member of SLA?

B: Oh, I always have been, yes. I belong to SLA, ALA, MLA, and ASIS, although they just wrote to me and told me I didn’t pay enough on my dues, I shortchanged them by $20. I don’t know if I can keep all of them up because I also have AMIA and then ACMI has dues as well. And then I just joined the California Library Association, because I wanted to just get to know the people here.

M: The California Library Association rather than the chapter?

B: Well, I belong to the chapters, too. Yes, I joined the chapters, the Medical Library Group of Southern California, and also the San Diego SLA Chapter, and I’m the archivist for the SLA San Diego Chapter. It’s a very active group. We have a lot of really good meetings, and that’s convenient for me. Being archivist is a little bit of work, but...

M: But it is fun.

B: Yes. So I do a lot of volunteer work with the local groups here. And just recently I did something for the Athenian Music and Art Library here in La Jolla. They were having a book sale last week and I helped to put together a lot of things for the book sale. I also went through some of the things that I have. You may have noticed that there aren’t a lot of books in my house. You walk into many librarians’ homes and you’re going to find bookshelves everywhere, floor to ceiling. There’s a reason for that. When I left California in 1971 to get married, I couldn’t take everything with me, and I left a lot of things with my mother, stored in the garage, and my mother was one of these people that if you didn’t come back for it in two years, she sold it. So she sold a lot of my books. But I also decided that I couldn’t take the books with me, and they’re very heavy. But I didn’t need to take them with me because we’re in a new world now, you know, paperbacks are just great. I buy everything in paperbacks that I get my hands on if I need it, and you can discard it or give it away. And as a librarian, I decided that there would be nowhere in this world that I would ever live that I wouldn’t know how to get an interlibrary loan if I needed it,
(laughter) or how to get to a library. So I don’t keep a lot of books, just some core things that I need. And ever since I decided to do that, I was just relieved of this great burden of having to pack big heavy boxes of books. However, I am now packing lots of boxes of videotapes, because I started to do a lot of video programs and I have boxes and boxes full of videos that I produced. I wanted to keep those for awhile. Of course, they’re a lot lighter than books.

M: Yes. Well, you can donate them to some library sometime.

B: So if you want to talk about idiosyncrasies, I guess that’s one of mine, I don’t keep books, and I buy paperbacks and I throw them away. And now of course with e-books, they say you can put the e-books on your laptop and just take your laptop. And you can have four or five books on your laptop and take them with you on vacation, and then when you come back, you just eject the disk.

M: I don’t know if that’ll work or not.

B: Now, I haven’t quite gotten myself ready to sit down by the pool with my laptop reading a book, but who knows. (laughter)

M: Well, I think we’ve talked about almost everything. We talked about what you were doing with your consulting firm earlier. Is there anything else that you want to add before I ask you the big global questions?

B: Well, you know, you mentioned the Winifred Sewell Award, and I think I should talk a little bit about that because that was a really complete surprise. And that was when I was in the Biological Science Division. I try to make it to their annual meeting. Winifred Sewell taught at the library school in Maryland, and for a long, long time has been a person that I admire. And in fact I...To this day, I can’t figure out how she keeps on going. I mean, I’m ready to call it quits and she’s...

M: She comes to all of our meetings at MAC [Mid-Atlantic Chapter].

B: Absolutely fantastic lady. And when they called and told me that I was going to get the Winifred Sewell Award, I mean, you can imagine how I felt. I was so thrilled. That’s one of the greatest things that could have every happen to me to, you know, get the Winifred Sewell Award. And there was a little monetary prize that went with it. And so I thought, well, I’ll go the SLA meeting and Winifred will present me with the award, but she wasn’t there. The reason she wasn’t there was because she was elected president of the Pharmaceutical Association or something like that.

M: This was last year!

B: Right. And she became president and of course couldn’t come to the SLA meeting then. She went to MLA this last year and I saw her at the fellows meeting.
M: How old will Winn be?

B: Oh, I don’t know, but I saw her at the fellows meeting. I mean, that’s a fantastic reason not to be able to go to the SLA meeting. And she just keeps on going. She’s like that battery.

M: The bunny. (laughter)

B: The bunny that just keeps on going and going and going. She’s fabulous.

M: She’s an incredibly bright woman.

B: And when I went to SLA this year I was only there for two days, and so unfortunately I wasn’t there the day they presented it to Joanne Marshall, because Joanne Marshall now is the second one to receive the award. She and I have that in common.

M: They mentioned that at MLA, I think, that she was going to be receiving that.

B: Yes. So I have that in common with Joanne and with North Carolina. Joanne was on the board with me when I was president of MLA. A very supportive, very bright person, and very good librarian.

M: Well, I like to end these oral history interviews with some very general reflection type questions, and you may have something to say or you may not. I find it kind of a message for people who are coming up in the profession. I think it’s nice to have someone give us some words, who’s done a lot and done a lot of things. And first of all I wanted to ask you who you think were the people that influenced you in your career. You’ve mentioned people like Louise, but they don’t have to be librarians. And also, if you have any people that you feel that you were an important influence on.

B: Well, certainly in the early part of my career, Louise Darling, absolutely. She set the stage for us to grow and develop. Later on, I really should tell you my mother.

M: Okay, that’s good.

B: My mother just really enjoyed everything I did, and whenever I’d tell her I had a new achievement or whatever, she’s always said, “That’s great, that’s great.” And when I told her that I hadn’t even had time to study for my exams when I was getting the master’s in history, and I called to tell her I had passed, and I was so thrilled because five other fellows that were in the program with me flunked. I was really thrilled I passed. And I called her and she said, “Well, so what else is new? You always pass.” But she kind of expected you to do well, so she expected me to do well. I think she really influenced a lot of the things that I did. In the early development of my career, to go forward and try things out, I think Art Broering...We had a very nice marriage, and Greg understands that, too, now. With his role at NLM, not that he did anything
to help me, but I think he was very supportive of why I would spend so much time on MLA committees and that kind of thing, to reach out even further and to explore new ideas with Nina Matheson. There wasn’t a lunch that we didn’t have where we just brainstormed on everything under the sun, and it was just really great. In fact, we had lunch together. Now it’s been maybe five years since we did. When we got together last, it was at the Sheraton Hotel in Washington, and she said, “Well, as usual, Naomi, here we are again talking way off in the future.” She’s just one of those people that could bring out the best in you, if there’s something there. So I think those are the people. For developing the Bulletin, I think Susan Crawford deserves a lot of credit. She really helped me a lot. She’s been a very supportive person.

M: Do you have any people that you think that you influenced that you can think of?

B: Yes, I should add that many of the people that I worked for, my bosses, were always really satisfied with my work, and I had good relationships with them. So if I hadn’t had those kinds of people, I probably wouldn’t have been able to design some of the things that I did. I have felt that it’s really important to get the young librarians involved in MLA. So I try to encourage librarians that worked with us to go to some meetings. We couldn’t always afford to send everybody to the national meeting, but at least the local meetings and to become members of MLA. So I did a lot of that, in most of the libraries that I worked in. A few times I had the honor and the privilege to speak at a number of library schools, and I’ve been able to talk to them about following a career in librarianship, and in medical librarianship. A few people have come to me later and said, “Oh, you gave this presentation when I was a student at school and I decided to explore medical libraries, and here I am.” Because I’ve run into them at a meeting, a lot of new, young librarians. One of the physicians at Georgetown--whose daughter was a teacher, and she was unhappy with teaching--he talked to me one day because I was a patient in the next room. And he said, “Would you talk to my daughter?” And I said, “Sure, send her over.” So she came over to see me one day, and the next day she enrolled in library school and she is great. And I’ve been following her career. She came to work for us at Georgetown when she got the degree, and later she left Georgetown and is now at GW. I have her in mind, I’m going to recommend her for another job, somewhere that I heard about. From time to time, I hear about good jobs. I submit people’s names. A lot of times you don’t know whether they’re interested in doing that, but you have to do it. Some of the people that left our library at Georgetown and went on to bigger and better things, I still have great relationships with them. Two of them went to the commercial world, and I still see them at a lot of the conferences--at the trade shows, they call them. And they’re making big bucks, (laughter) and they started in our place. So it was kind of neat. I mean, you have to take pride, a certain amount of pride in that, being able to get people involved, and get people on committees, and support somebody to become an officer. I knew we had to do a lot of handholding and cultivating to get some of these people to run for president and run for board. When I was chairman of the nominating committee, I had to do a lot of talking and a lot of convincing to get
Michael Holman and Jim Shedlock to agree to put their name in. But it was good to do that, and you know, just help them.

M: This next one I think is easy. (laughter) How would you most like to be remembered by the library community?

B: I think that’s hard.

M: You think that’s hard? Well, maybe it just sounded easy to me, not to talk about myself but to talk about you. And perhaps a slightly different take on that is what do you think are your most important contributions?

B: Well, since I just got these questions and I was looking at them this morning briefly, I guess where I’m coming from today is reflecting on what I’ve done in my career. I try to establish high goals for myself and high principles. So having high principles and integrity in the way you do things, and in the way you manage, and the way you treat people, is very important. And being a library director for so long, one of the things that I always felt that I needed to do was to be fair. And I had been in library situations in my past where certain people were in favor, but other people were not, and there wasn’t always fairness. I have never done that. I’ve always felt that you had to be fair with everybody, but you had to reward people for their achievements. And if somebody does well, they get the rewards, and if somebody does not do well, they are not ever on my list. (laughter) And I believe in that because the people that are hard workers, and the people that have talents and skills, they deserve to have those things developed, and they deserve to get the rewards that go with that. Maybe it’s because you asked me about what were my contributions. I think being a hard worker, maybe instilling that in people that worked with me, and being an achiever, helped me to set a model for the staff. People always knew that if they worked for me, they were going to work hard, but they were going to feel good at the end of the day. I give people a long leash, but I really expect them to do the best that they possibly can. So I think maybe establishing that. Now, my biggest contributions, well, I think we’ve gone over a few of those. I’m not sure I can put them in words now. Maybe adapting technology, helping people to develop so that they could utilize the resources that we have. Those are things that were global. I could sit and talk about how I designed this and I designed that, and I wrote this book, and that kind of thing. Those are nice, but I’m not sure how long those last.

M: I thought that you might say that you weren’t ever afraid to try new things.

B: Well, that, too. I jumped in the pool without knowing how to swim. In fact, Nancy Lorenzi told me once that...I was doing the IAIMS program and we were talking one day, because she was in the IAIMS program too, and I said, “I’m really having a hard time with this group.” And she said, “Well, Naomi, you jumped in the pool and you’re swimming with sharks.”
M: Oh, yes. (laughter) That’s from the business world I think. You’ve mentioned how important staying up with technology and getting ahead of the Internet is. So do you have some special ideas you want to say about where is librarianship, medical librarianship headed in the future? What have we learned from the past? What issues do we have to be careful to address?

B: Well, if there’s anything to be learned from the past it’s that everything is going to keep on changing, and that we’re going to progress more and more. And we should examine the opportunities as they present themselves so that we can keep growing with them. But you always have to have that goal and that sense of mission, and what is the purpose of all this. And the purpose must be to serve the public, and to give the people what they need. And the people could be the professionals or it could be the students or the researchers, or the public, the patients and their families, the consumers. But keeping that goal in mind and what may be best for them, not what is best for me, and what is best to get me my next big job, but how can I serve this group of people better. You’d be amazed how that comes back to you tenfold. And not being afraid of the technologies and just doing it. You know, just doing it, climbing on board and trying it out. And the things that don’t work, they’ll go by the wayside. We’re not always going to make the right decisions. I didn’t tell you about all my mistakes. (laughter)

M: The next book. (laughter) But it’s interesting that people don’t remember them. I mean, they seem to become incidental, I guess. I think you’ve already answered my next question was what advice would you give to people coming into the field today, when you said, “Just do it.” Do you have anything else you wanted to add to that?

B: Well, I think I may have missed another part of that question you asked me earlier. I should make a statement about that. You asked me what things we were going to have to do in the future, and what were some of the things that we needed to pay attention to. I think database development is going to be something that is very important to our profession, getting involved and designing some of the databases. And especially now since so many of the vendors and the publishers are beginning to recognize that the librarians do have this talent to offer, and they’re hiring so many of them. So, I think because of that we’re going to see databases that are better developed and more integrated. The whole issue of integration of all the multiple databases, and finding a way to simplify access, are other things in which we need to get ourselves involved. I know the NLM now has their big gateway and they’re trying to bring all the databases together and integrate them. And I think it’s just wonderful. I served on an Institute of Medicine committee where we reviewed the toxicology databases of the NLM, and we kept saying in that report and in those meetings: integrate, integrate them, integrate them, because they weren’t being used that much. This was ten years ago and now they are finally integrated.

M: All of them, those great Grateful Med databases.
B: And that's just the beginning. I think there's going to be many other things like that. There really truly is a role for the librarians in the commercial world, and in federal agencies, and big programs. And protecting the public on the copyright issues that are coming up, protecting public access because of copyright issues. I can understand that the music profession, and the movie profession, and authors of fiction, writers, have to protect themselves in a way, because that's the way they earn their livelihood, but we need to protect the public that doesn't have access to health information. I think that's got to be a big mission for librarians. Now you asked me about advice for new librarians, and I said it a few minutes ago. I think one is just to explore all the avenues that come across and see where you can fit in. Try out different parts of library work, which I did. I did reference, I did acquisitions, I did cataloging, I did AVs, I did computers, I did history of medicine, because that rounds you out and you become much more knowledgeable, and therefore, you can give more. Once you acquire knowledge, nobody ever takes it away from you. So seek knowledge, seek information for yourself, and that just becomes part of you. People will come to you for the information that you have. (laughter) Now I wish I could sell it, but... follow your dreams. I dreamt of having a computer so I could do the MEDLINE searches. So if you have an idea, follow your dreams and set your goals, and you'll fulfill them, and you'll feel good about what you do. One of the greatest things I think of being a librarian is that I've never done the same thing twice. I think you can appreciate that because you work in reference, every question is different. If I had gone into the history profession and become a history professor....It's repetitive.

(end of tape 4 side a)
(tape 4 side b is blank)

Editor: Since this interview, Naomi Broering received the Marcia C. Noyes Award in 2003 and was Chair of CAPHIS until 2004. In 2006 she was one of the top 10 finalists for the NCLIS Award, presented at NLM in May 2006.

Content added or clarified since the interview is printed in brackets. [ ]
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None

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EDUCATION

B.A., Soc. Sci. (cum laude) California State Univ. at Long Beach 1960
M.A., History California State Univ. at Long Beach 1963
Doctoral Studies, History (ABD) UCLA, Graduate School 1964
Postgrad Fellowship, NIH UCLA Biomedical Library 1967
Law School (night classes) Univ. of West LA 1970
Govt. Management (night classes) George Washington University (CGS) 1973

FACULTY APPOINTMENTS

Research Professor, School of Library & Information Studies, Texas Women's University, 1996 to Present
Adjunct Professor, Department of Family & Community Medicine, Baylor College of Medicine, 1997-2000
Adjunct Professor, Department of Health Informatics, Univ. of Texas Houston-Health Science Ctr, 1998
Adjunct Professor of Library Science, University of Texas – Houston Medical School 1997
Adjunct Professor of Library & Information Science, Catholic University & Georgetown University, 1983

EMPLOYMENT

10/99 to Present
EDITOR, Friends of the National Library of Medicine Update, Electronic Publication, Washington, D.C.
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, Broering/Chauncey Consulting, (Library and Management Services) La Jolla, CA.

10/96 to 10/99
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR and DIRECTOR, NNLM SCR-RML
Texas Medical Center Library
Houston, TX

12/75 to 10/96
DIRECTOR, BIOMEDICAL INFORMATION RESOURCES CENTER
and MEDICAL CENTER LIBRARIAN
ASSOCIATE MEDICAL CENTER LIBRARIAN 7/75 to 2/78
Dahlgren Memorial Library
Georgetown University Medical Center
Washington, D.C.

11/72 to 7/75
STAFF ASSISTANT, MANPOWER GRANTS
CHIEF, READERS SERVICE, MEDICAL LIBRARY
Veterans Administration
Washington, D.C.

2/72 to 11/72
ASSISTANT LIBRARIAN
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Walter Reed General Hospital
Washington, D.C.

1968 to 1971
CHIEF LIBRARIAN
Children's Hospital of Los Angeles
University of Southern California School of Medicine
Los Angeles, California

1967 to 1968
ACQUISITIONS AND REFERENCE LIBRARIAN
Norris Medical Library
University of Southern California School of Medicine
Los Angeles, California

1966 to 1967
NIH FELLOWSHIP POSTGRAD. IN BIOMEDICAL LIBRARIANSHIP
Biomedical Library
University of California at Los Angeles
Los Angeles, California

INFORMATICS SYSTEMS

Director & PI of IAIMS Program, Georgetown University Medical Center, 1985-1996
Developed LIS: Georgetown University Library Information System 1980 - 1996.
Biosynthesis & Knowledge Network 1987 - 1996.
Medical Facts File/Faculty Publications 1989 - 1996.

HONORS AND AWARDS

Special Libraries Association, Winifred Sewell Award, 1999
American Medical Informatics Assoc., Secretary & Board of Directors, 1994-96
Vicennial Award for Distinguished Service, Georgetown University, November 18, 1995
Fellow & Distinguished Member, Acad. Health Information Professionals, Medical Library Assn, 1990
Fellow, American College of Medical Informatics, 1989
Professional Award, Special Libraries Association, 1987
Frank B. Rogers Information Advancement Award, Medical Library Assn, 1986
Medical Librarian II, Certified, Medical Library Association, 1974, 1982, 1988
Performance Award, Veterans Administration, 1973
Commendation, USC School of Medicine, Dept. of Psychiatry, 1968
NIH Fellowship, National Library of Medicine (postgraduate training), 1966
Pi Gamma Mu – Social Science Honor Society, 1961
Gamma Theta Upsilon, National Geography Honorary Fraternity, 1961
Dean's List, 1955-60, Teaching Assistant, 1964-65

SOCIETY MEMBERSHIPS

American College of Medical Informatics (Fellow)
American Medical Informatics Association
Medical Library Association (Fellow & Distinguished Member)
American Library Association
Special Libraries Association
Health Information Management Systems Soc.
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Association of Health Sciences Library Directors, AAMC
Mid-Atlantic Chapter, Medical Library Association
American Society for Information Sciences
South Central Chapter, Medical Library Association
DC Health Sciences Information Network

EDITORSHIPS

Friends of the NLM Update, Editor, 1999 to present
Thermology Journal, Editorial Board Member, 1985-1989
Update, Computers in Medicine, Associate Editor, 1984-1985
MLA News Chair, Governmental Relations Committee & Editor of "Capital Notes," 1977-1980
Faculty Publications Bulletin, Founding Editor, Georgetown University Medical Center, 1977-1996

SPECIAL NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITIES

Special Committee Memberships

International Congress of Medical Librarianship, Prog Cmtte, Medical Informatics, London, July, 2000
Texas Infrastructure Fund, Health Information Access, Chairman, Austin, TX 1998-1999.
Regional Medical Library Program, NN/LM, Director, So Central Region, Houston, TX 1996-1999.
National Academy of Sciences, Institute of Medicine (IOM), Committee Member, Planning Meeting to Advise the National Library of Medicine (NLM) Toxicology and Environmental Health Information Program. Chairman: Donald R. Mattison, MD, November 21, 1994.
Committee Report - "Expanding Clinician Use of the NLM's Toxicology and Environmental Health Information Program" NAS, 10 M, December 1994.

International Activities and Presentations

PacMedTech Symposium, PACMEDTEK, Session Moderator and Presenter, "Creating a Virtual Library for the Future" Honolulu, HI August 17-21, 1998
BIRME International Conference on Health Sciences Librarianship, Rio DeJaneiro, Brazil, October, 1996.
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MLA Representative to CNILA - Copyright Committee, 1983.
MLA Nominating Committee, Medical School Section, Chairman, 1983.
MLA Representative to Coalition for Health Funding, 1979-1983.
MLA Legislation Committee, 1977-1979 (Chairman).
NLM Regional Advisory Council, RML Program IV, 1978 (Chairman).
MLA Ad Hoc Committee-Status Economic Interest of Health Sciences Libraries 1975-1978.
Committee, Graduate Nursing Program, Georgetown University, 1977.
Education Committee, RML IV, 1977.
Recruitment Committee, Medical Library Group of Southern California, MLA, 1971.
Archivist, Medical Library Group of Southern California, MLA, 1971.
Career Committee, Medical Library Group of Southern California, MLA, 1969.

POST GRADUATE EDUCATION ACTIVITIES

Lecture Series, University of North Texas, Library & Information Science, Careers in Medical Librarianship, January 1998.
Medical Student and Resident Orientation to Information Access, Baylor College of Medicine, August-September 1997, 1998.
Computers in Health Care Conference, Educational Seminar, Chairman and Speaker, Georgetown University Medical Center, 1990-1996. (7 conferences)
Lecture, University of Hawaii, Graduate School of Library & Information Science, BioMedical Databases, August 1995.
Conference on Health Sciences Education. N.Y. Academy of Medicine, Seminar, Changes in Medical Education, New York, June 14, 1994.
Medical College of Virginia, National Library Week Symposium, The IAIMS Knowledge Network, Richmond, VA, April 21, 1994.
Veterans Administration Hospital. Regional Education Center, Tutorial, Minneapolis, "IAIMS and the Virtual Library," Minneapolis, MN, April 13, 1994.
Searching Genetics Databases and Gene Sequence Mapping, Basic Sciences Graduate Training Seminar, Georgetown University Medical Center, November 18, 1992.
Workshop Presenter to College Faculty in Biological Sciences, No. Virginia Community College,
NAOMI C. BROERING

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Automating the Library, Seminar for Professional Librarians, Georgetown University Medical Center, 1980, 1985, 1986.


Georgetown University - Library Computer Courses, for Medical Students, Residents & Nursing Graduate & Under Graduate Students, 1989-present.

Georgetown University - Continuing Medical Education, Medical Informatics 1986-1990.


Georgetown University, School of Dentistry, Neuroanatomy Course, Library Research, 1979.

Catholic University, Graduate School of Library & Information Science, Lecture Series, 1978-1979.


Education Committee - Field Testing of MeSH Text, 1976.


GRANTS AND CONTRACTS

Permanent University Fund, University of Texas, Network Enhancement, $395,000, Library $41,013.

Texas Infrastructure Fund, Project Director, Gulf Coast Consortium Discovery Grant, 1999, $43,597.

Texas Infrastructure Fund, Project Director, Internet Connectivity, 1999, $45,000.

Houston Endowment, Principal Investigator, Jesse H. Jones Community Health Information Service, October 1998 $50,000, 1999 $100,000 proposed.

Friends of the TMC Library, Annual Fund Raising Dinner, 1997, $40,000, 1998, $100,000.


Houston Endowment, Inc., Principal Investigator, Knowledge Management Program, December 1997 - December 2000. $1,500,000

M.D. Anderson Foundation, Project Director, Library Improvement, 1997 - 2000. $150,000


"Technology Awareness Day." May 1995 - April 1996. University of Maryland No# - $5,000


"Information Access Librarian Program for the Provision of Library and Information Services to Nursing Health Professionals." October 1994 -September 1995. UMAB P.O. #S00273 $25,110


R197D30030 $178,307
National Home Lib. PI. "Information Resources on Aging Grant." Jan 1, 1988-Dec 31, 1990. NO. #5,500
NLM. PI. "Georgetown Pilot IAIMS." Sep.1985-Sep. 29,1988. 5G08 LM 04392 $1,048,552
USDA Food and Nutrition Information Service. PI. "Directory of Food and Nutrition Programs, Services & Information Sources in the District of Columbia, Maryland, and Virginia." 1979 - 1980.

PUBLICATIONS

*Presentation of the Morris F. Collen Award to Robert S. Ledley, DDS*, JAMIA, May/June 1999 6(3): 118-126.
*1998 Morris F. Collen Award, 20-mins video on Dr. Robert S. Ledley*, American College of Medical Informatics, produced at Baylor College of Medicine, October 1998.
*Naomi Broering at Opening of NLM; Public Library Project." Ward 6, Houston Public Library, 1998.
*"Health Sciences Library of the Future", Houston Academy of Medicine-Texas Medical Center Library, 4-mins video, produced at Baylor College of Medicine, June 1998.
*"The Emergence of Telemedicine", Telehealth Care 1997, 120-mins video produced at Baylor College of Medicine, June 1997.
*"Issues of Emerging Digital Libraries", Telehealth Care 1997, 60-minute video produced at Baylor College of Medicine, June 1997
*"A Year of Progress," Presidential Address, MLA. Proceeding of Annual Meeting, Bulletin of Medical

"Meeting the Challenge." Houston Academy of Medicine-Texas Medical Center Library, 6-minute video produced by University of Texas Houston-Health Science Center, September 1997.


"Providing Consumer Health Information and Community Outreach Services" NC Broering, and Terry Tobias. AMIA March 1996.

"Outreach Activities of Dahlgren Memorial Library." NC Broering, RAC meeting 1996.

"Between the Covers: Looking from the Past to the Year Ahead.", Editorial, Bull Med Libr Assoc, April 1996.

"Interview of Naomi Broering, President" Medical Library Association 20-mins video, 1996.


"MLA -Join the 96 Team: Apply for a Committee Appointment". NC Broering. MLA News. August 1995; 277:1.


"Health Sciences Libraries of the Future." 3-mins attract show, Georgetown University, 1993.


"Educating the Future." IAIMS at Georgetown University 6-mins video, produced at Georgetown University, 1992.


"Creating a Knowledge Network and a Virtual Library." IAIMS at Georgetown Univeristy, 6:30-mins video, Georgetown University, 1991.


"IAIMS Knowledge Network", Part 2. 13 Minute Video of the IAIMS Educational Modules at Georgetown University, May 1990.


"IAIMS Knowledge Network." 29 Minute Video of the IAIMS Project at Georgetown University Medical Center. Dahlgren Memorial Library and Educational Media Department, Jun. 1989


"The IAIMS Knowledge Network." Dahlgren Memorial Library, 13-mins video, Georgetown University, 1989


"The LIS and miniMEDLINE SYSTEM." Dahlgren Memorial Library, 30-mins video produced at Georgetown University 1985


"An Affordable Microcomputer Library Information System Developed by Georgetown University."


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