

San Francisco Bay Region Chapter Professional Achievement Award, October 11, 2005

At a librarians meeting at UC Berkeley this morning, the chair of our group announced that I'd received the "Librarian of the Year" award from the Bay Region Chapter of SLA. While I certainly enjoyed the congratulations and round of applause that followed, it gave me pause, because one of the most meaningful and significant parts of this award is that it does *not* recognize me for what I did last year. It acknowledges a body of contributions made over many years, involving a wide range of activities, many, many hours of work, and priceless opportunities for collaborating with many, many wonderful people. That's what makes it very special.

Like just about everyone else in this room, I was filled with trepidation when I attended my first chapter dinner meeting. It was the mid-'80s and I had just moved to San Francisco. Walking into that room (on crutches, no less), not knowing anyone, seeing the knots of people happily chatting – I had to repress the urge to flee, something I did on at least two occasions when I was still in Pittsburgh. But, boy, was I glad I stayed. I don't know if it was Marie Tilson or Tim DeWolf or Terry Dean or Elyse Eisner or someone else who came to my rescue, but I was made to feel part of the group and someone who could be a contributor. And ever since that day, I've found the SF Chapter to be an amazing network, resource, and place to belong.

When I was quoted in the current issue of *Bayline* that during my three years as bulletin editor, I was often in tears the night before a deadline, I wasn't kidding. And if I sat down and tallied up all of the hours I've spent on chapter business in the past two decades, I might be tempted to think, "Get a life!" But I know better. I know there was a payoff for every one of the tears, every one of those hours, every one of those fights with SLA Headquarters. My experiences with the SF Chapter allowed me to develop skills that have contributed so much to my professional life.

If I hadn't worked on SLA projects with so many great librarians in special collections at UC, would I have so readily made the leap from the corporate world to academia? If I hadn't had the opportunity to use my degree in writing and develop editing skills, would I be looking forward to seeing my name on a book on engineering resources that will be published this spring? But it hasn't just been my professional life; these experiences have enriched many aspects of my life. If I hadn't polished my public speaking and organizational skills through SLA, would two of my dearest friends have asked me 12 years ago to marry them, giving me not only the pleasure of blessing their marriage but entrée to my role in designing and officiating at unique wedding ceremonies?

Even more importantly, my involvement with this chapter has allowed me to develop special friendships and professional relationships. And to know that it was you, my colleagues, who designated me for this award, is something I really, really value. While I can't possibly recognize all of you who have done so much for me, Richard Geiger, Cris Campbell, Beth Edelstein and Linda Vida, you have been some of the best mentors anyone could ask for; Wess Murdough, Linda Suzuki, Karin Zilla, Mark Mackler and Marlene Vogelsang, you always said "yes" and made me look good; Maggie O'Brien, when I didn't have anything nice to say, you were *always* ready to sit beside me; and Tamara Horacek, thank you for giving me the opportunity to be a mentor, for being a calming influence when I needed one, and for making me proud to be part of this profession and this chapter.

The acknowledgement of contributions made over many years, and the recognition of my peers is what makes receiving the San Francisco Bay Region Chapter for Professional Achievement something that has touched me and something I will always cherish. Thank you very much from the bottom of my heart.