

KEYWORD

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SILSSA newsletter

*PRATT SCHOOL OF INFORMATION AND LIBRARY SCIENCE
STUDENT ASSOCIATION*

Mid-Winter Schmoozing in San Antonio

By Flora A. Rodriguez

On a weekend in January, eighteen fellow MLS students and I went to San Antonio, Texas for a leadership symposium, which coincided with the Midwinter ALA conference. We were put up in the Westin Riverwalk Hotel, a beautiful place where all the meetings were to take place. I

couldn't take advantage of the outdoor pool (too cold!) but did make use of the sauna facilities both evenings, which helped me to wind down. We were wine and dined, but our schedule was also packed with presentations on a variety of subjects such as personal leadership, the mentoring relationship, networking, and a panel discussion on transitioning from library school to a career in academic institutions.

Here is how it came about. The Association of Research Libraries (ARL) has made a commitment to address ethnic diversity issues in its 123 member libraries through its Diversity Program headed by the enthusiastic and capable Jerome Offord Jr. Workshops such as

"Recruitment and Retention: Attracting Underrepresented Populations to Research Libraries" and consulting services for individual libraries are available for interested members. The Program also provides library school students with a Leadership symposium, mentoring, and other resources to help further the career of a student committed to working in ARL member libraries.

I first heard about the ARL scholarship from another student in my Spring 2005 Art Librarianship class. The application process was not as arduous as some others and I was elated when notified that I was one of the nineteen chosen from the approximately forty-five applicants nationwide.

During the symposium we had a discussion on the value of networking. Unknowingly, I had already started to network as soon as I landed in San Antonio. People were taking a shuttle to their hotels and I started to talk about the flatness of the terrain and the warmth of the air with a fellow northeasterner. And of course most of the people being shuttled were librarians on the way to the conference. One



Pratt students Flora A. Rodriguez (left) and Emilyn L. Brown (center) with an unidentified MLS student.

librarian had graduated from Pratt and had been a guest lecturer in Tony White's class; another had grown up in San Francisco near where my mother lives. Yet another was from Boston, and her charming accent never fails to attract comments. Had I had my networking skills honed, I would have asked for business cards or at least remembered their names! Live and learn.

I did make sure to sit at different tables so I could meet as many of my fellow students as possible. ARL Academy Fellows — MLS students from three library schools who will be subject specialists — also attended most of the symposium presentations. They have had previous professional careers and ARL will also help usher them into academic librarianship.

I heard many stories at the dinner table. One participant, whose father was an Armed Forces recruiter, spoke about growing up and being the only African American family in a small town in Kansas. They were such a rarity for the residents that some locals would peek into their windows at night. Just wanted to know what they did at home, I guess. The pressure of being watched

was too great, so they didn't stay very long in that town. A fellow participant gave me a pass into the exhibit portion of the ALA Midwinter conference, which was held down the street in the convention center.

This experience only reinforces my belief that what I get from my fellow students at Pratt is almost as important as the course instruction.

On my way there I ran into yet another Pratt student whose company flies her out to the conference to report on it every year. The exhibit hall was huge, with vendors of all kinds (furniture, archival products, jewelry), publishers of all sizes and nature (children's books, magazines, graphic novels) and of course, library-specific software and service providers such as OCLC, NARA, and Elsevier. There were so many free samples that they even had two post offices so you could mail all your goodies home and not have to lug them around.

I am now chock full of knowledge (or information) and feel very confident about my future. The program will be sending us to Purdue University

in Indiana in April in an effort to attract librarians of color to their institution and I am looking forward to seeing all of my colleagues there again.

This experience only reinforces my belief that what I get from my fellow students at Pratt is almost as important as the course instruction. Where would I be without their advice on what classes and professors to take, what scholarships are available, and all those class presentations, particularly in Professor Bencivengo's class? They have all been so valuable to me that I also try to pass along as much as I can.

The trip was not without its inconveniences: the hotel lost (and then found, fortunately!) my luggage. The schedule did not allow for sightseeing, so I only got to see the Alamo in passing. My roommate, though, did steal away long enough to buy a beautiful pair of cowboy boots. And of course, the weather didn't cooperate and created delays at the airport, which postponed my return home. But I wouldn't have missed it for the world!

More information for this program and the application process can be found at: <http://www.arl.org/diversity/>.

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<http://pratt.edu/~silssa/>

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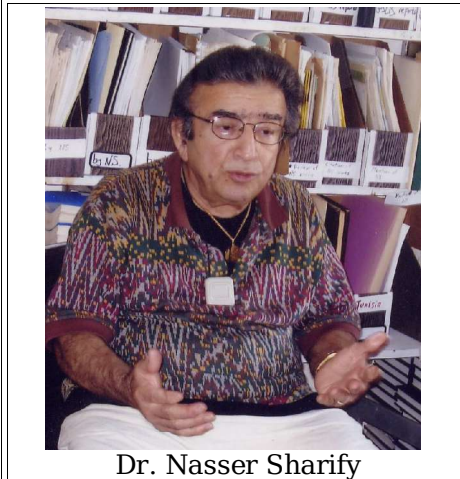
Dr. Sharify's Oral History of Pratt SILS in Progress

By **Lauren McBride**, SILSSA President-elect & **Jessica Nauright**, SILSSA Secretary-elect

Dr. Nasser Sharify, Dean Emeritus and Distinguished Professor of Library and Information Science at Pratt SILS, is currently the subject of an ongoing oral history project that recounts the School's history from the time he began his nearly 20 year tenure as Dean in 1968 to the present. Dr. Sharify, who just celebrated his 80th birthday this past October, currently gives a course in collection management in the spring semester and in the second summer session. All told, Dr. Sharify has served Pratt for 38 years.

Dr. Sharify is an internationally-known educator in the field of library and information science. He was educated in Tehran and at Columbia University, where he earned a masters and a doctorate in library science. As a young poet of 22, he was invited to work in New Delhi for All-India Radio as a broadcaster and a poet-in-residence. As Director General of Education in Iran he was in charge of national, public, and school libraries. He served UNESCO in Paris as program specialist in its library development programs for five years. While on the faculty of the University of Pittsburgh in 1963, he founded the International Library

Information Center. In 1972, as a UNESCO consultant, he helped to create the School of Information Science in Morocco. His career has always had an international focus. As Pratt's dean, he developed a curriculum for and a concentration in international librarianship. Dr. Sharify's enormous output of articles, reviews, research papers, books, and reports representing his long career as an educator and consultant are currently in



Dr. Nasser Sharify

the process of being transferred to Stanford University's Hoover Institution on War, Revolution, and Peace. The audio and video recordings of his oral history interviews, as well as complete transcripts of each interview, will be archived as well.

Dr. Sharify feels very strongly that no institution can have a bright future unless its life is enriched by its past. He himself has written a history of the Pratt library school, dating back to 1890. Since 1968, Dr. Sharify has collected careful and detailed records of all past student and alumni publications, correspondence,

minutes, and articles by and about Pratt faculty. The archiving/oral history project began in Fall 2005 when former graduate assistant and recent Pratt SILS alumni, Christen Tarantino, began organizing Dr. Sharify's massive collection, and recorded over four hours of audio and video. As of Fall 2006, graduate assistant Jessica Nauright is expanding that project and has begun preparing and organizing new materials to be archived. One of the most valuable aspects of the collection is its focus on the evolution of Pratt SILS's curriculum. Dr. Sharify believes that the curriculum must continue to evolve to meet the needs of future Pratt students and for that reason it should return to the international character he developed during his tenure as the dean. He is delighted that Dean Giannini shares his interest in the international aspects of librarianship and will continue to strengthen this vital dimension of the school's curriculum.

The Sharify archive and oral history is ongoing, as new documents and media continue to surface. Dr. Sharify recently met with the President of Pratt, asking him to support the creation of a Pratt archive under the supervision of Dean Giannini, and he is confident that Pratt will soon have its own archive. At that time he will be happy to share his archival materials with Pratt. Dr. Sharify would also like to thank both Dean Giannini and Vinette Thomas for their continued support with this project.

8 Questions for Professor David Walczyk

Interview by
Gayle Snible,
SILSSA Secretary

Professor David Walczyk joined Pratt as an Assistant Professor in Fall 2005. He received a Doctor of Education in Communication and Education from Columbia University in 2004. Topics of interest to Dr. Walczyk include human-computer interaction (HCI), the cultural values associated with interactive media, technology-induced economic growth, and the formulation of national science and technology public policy recommendations. In Spring 2006, Dr. Walczyk taught LIS 654 Information Technologies and LIS 697 Information Architecture. His website is at <http://pratt.edu/~dwalczyk>.

What are your top 3 favorite reference sources, and why?

I'm highly interdisciplinary so I tend to start with Google Scholar and go from there.

What are your top 3 interests/issues in information science?

First, interdisciplinary and university-industry collaboration in ILS education. Second, the effects of popular information and communication



Dr. Walczyk is a pragmatist and social constructivist

technologies (e.g., wikis and PDAs) on ILS contexts. Third, bringing the media ecology perspective into ILS education.

What do you consider your biggest professional success?

As a Science and Technology Policy Fellow at the United States National Academy of Sciences in Washington D.C., I helped create the research and policy field of Information Technology and Creative Practices. Also, I was a lead member of the Information Technology Solutions and Strategy group at General Electric Global Research.

What organizations are you affiliated with?

ASIS&T (the American Society for Information Science and Technology), ACM (Association for Computing Machinery), and the Media Ecology Association (MEA).

What projects are you currently working on?

I am an applied researcher interested in interrelationships. Presently, inter-school and university-industry collaborations within ILS schools, mapping the work of McLuhan to Schumpeter's principle of technology-induced creative destruction, and, with Dr. Rabina, documenting librarians' perception of RFID (Radio Frequency Identification).

What is your teaching philosophy?

I'm a pragmatist and social constructivist who strongly believes everyone is highly creative and must be capable of critical thinking. I am interested in questions, not answers. Students are assessed on their ability to do what they want to do within the constraints, frameworks, and language I provide to them.

Do you have any hobbies?

This year, making red wine and improving my spelling. Long-term, I am a diehard Red Sox fan and maintain a keen interest in higher education leadership (historical and otherwise).

Do you have any advice for library school students?

Read philosophy and psychology, but don't get lost in them.

Featured Library of the Month: The newly renovated Morgan Library and Museum

by **Karyn Hinkle**, SILSSA Treasurer

WHERE

225 Madison Avenue at 36th Street. 4, 5, 6, or 7 trains to 42nd St. / Grand Central Station. The library is open Tues. - Thurs. 10:30 - 5; Fri. 10:30 - 9; Sat. 10 - 6; Sun. 11 - 6. Admission is \$12 for adults; \$8 for students; free on Fridays from 7 - 9 pm.

WHY

The most important reason to visit the Morgan Library this summer is because it just reopened to the public on April 29, 2006, after a multi-million-dollar renovation and expansion project by the hot, hot architect

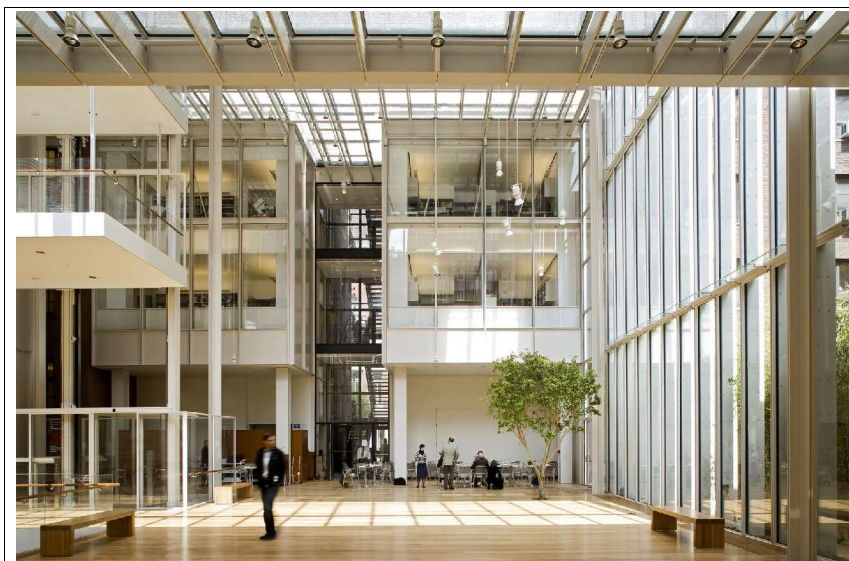
Renzo Piano. Full disclosure: I have not yet visited the new space myself, but the press about the reopening and the accompanying publicity photos reveal an absolutely stunning complex of buildings. I'm hoping lots of SILS students will visit and update me on the new glass structure and on the Italian-style courtyard that connects it to the older McKim, Mead & White library building and the other historical buildings that comprise the museum institution.

There is much to behold at the Morgan Library, especially since the collection has so recently been closed to accommodate the renovations. There are collections of library books and museum objects to consider during a visit. Both were amassed in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries by the extremely wealthy banker Pierpont Morgan and were added to after his son J. P. Morgan made the collections public. The visual art objects

encompass Renaissance paintings and Chinese porcelain and much in between; the library holdings include many of the world's finest illuminated manuscripts, three Gutenberg bibles, and papers and manuscripts by dozens of important writers from Edgar Allen Poe to Vladimir Nabokov, to name but a few stand-outs.

DON'T MISS

One thing I'm most excited to experience during the reopening is the curatorial lecture series *Ten Decades, Ten Treasures*, for which the Morgan's curators were invited to create their own personal top ten lists of items in the Morgan Library collection. The curators will discuss their lists in a series of public lectures: a complete list of dates, cost, and other details can be found on the Morgan Library's website, www.themorgan.org.



Photography by Michel Denancé

Pratt Students Tour the NYPL Andrew Heiskell Braille & Talking Book Library

by **Lauren McBride**, SILSSA President-elect

On Thursday, March 2, 2006, a group of Pratt students participated in the first of two organized SILSSA tours of The New York Public Library's Andrew Heiskell Braille and Talking Book Library. Head Librarian Robert (Bob) McBrien graciously led the tour, which I organized.

The tour began at 5:45 pm with an introduction to the library over some coffee, tea, and cookies. McBrien discussed the mission of the library, its patrons, collections, and services and what to expect on the tour. The students passed around different books in the collection including a Braille children's book, a large print book, an audio book, and special playback equipment. He answered our questions about the New York Public Library and the Andrew Heiskell Library and shared some of the rewarding aspects of a career as a public service librarian.

The 75-minute tour led the group through five floors of the library, starting with the mail room, where hundreds of audio tapes are shipped out and returned to eligible patrons daily via the United States Postal Service. Next, the tour moved on to see the fully equipped recording studio, where Pratt student and Andrew Heiskell

librarian Susan Mosakowski explained how an audio tape is made. Mosakowski works with high profile volunteer voice-over talent, directors, and editors to create approximately forty audio books per year. As the tour progressed, we had the opportunity to see adaptive technology including computers and printers that transferred regular text into Braille print, closed-circuit television magnifiers (CCTVs) that can enlarge print up to 60 times its original size, and the Kurzweil reader, a device that converts printed text into synthetic speech. The group met some additional members of the library staff and learned about their roles at the library. The tour ended in the children's room, where students could see some of their favorite childhood books adapted to Braille or large print. We were given take-home folders filled with information.

The Andrew Heiskell Library strongly encourages Pratt library students to tour the facility. With its close proximity to the Pratt SILS campus - only a short walk to 20th Street, between 5th and 6th Avenue - this could be an ideal tour or site visit opportunity for students who have an interest in either public service or adaptive technologies. For information on the Andrew Heiskell Library or to schedule your own personalized tour, call the library at 212-206-5400.



Andrew Heiskell Head Librarian Robert McBrien (center) with Pratt SILS students (l-r) Alexandra Nader, Lauren McBride, Alicia Conklin, and Liz Larson.

Publicity for The New York Public Library

by **Gayle Snible**, SILSSA Secretary

My position is Associate Manager, Public Relations at The New York Public Library (NYPL). I've worked in public relations for the last five years of my career, and I've been at NYPL for the last nine months. I'm a publicist working on getting my Masters in Library and Information Science. When I graduate, I will be the only person in public relations at NYPL with a MLIS.

This has its pros and cons. The pros include a certain amount of respect from the librarians I work with at NYPL (they know I'm working on becoming a librarian). This has been a decent-sized pro in an organizational networking kind-of way. I also feel more connected to departments that publicists don't often work with. I get excited talking library policy with any of the executives; I really enjoy sitting in on branch programming meetings; and a two-hour meeting about a fine amnesty and subsequent fine increase was fascinating to me.

The cons include wondering if it was worth it — going to school part-time for three years — to remain a publicist. I'm not getting to use my cataloging knowledge, and I probably won't soon get the opportunity to

work with the cataloging staff. I hear about great projects that the Library is working on, and don't really ever get to get my hands dirty with them, even though many of them appeal to my librarian self.

As a publicist, my job is to get coverage for NYPL in media outlets. I deal with the press: daily newspapers, TV stations, magazines, radio stations, and neighborhood weeklies. I write press releases. I call media on the phone and try to sell them — figuratively, not literally — story ideas. I also handle incoming media requests; examples include: trafficking images for stories, coordinating interview requests from media, accompanying press on informational tours of our Library locations, getting answers to questions about library policy, and much more.

Since the Library provides a free public service and receives a significant amount of government funding, many of my press contacts feel that they represent the public. Why is it taking so long for a renovated branch to reopen? Why can't homeless people use our computers for Internet access? (Short and definitive

answer: They can.) Why can't I have unlimited filming time in the Rose Main Reading Room?

Though it can be stressful to deal with the press, most of the time it's not stressful at all (just hectic). It's great to work with the wide variety of librarians that I interact with daily. The library personnel that I regularly work with include branch librarians and staff, curators of special collections, librarians who organize programs, government relations staff, and library directors.

I'll graduate from Pratt with my MLIS and most likely stay in the same position I am in now. Although having completed the MLIS will impress some people, it won't directly correlate with my PR skills. Will I be a librarian who gets (great) publicity for the New York Public Library, or will I be a publicist who has a side knowledge base of librarianship? The answer depends on what spin I put on it.



Photo: Ed Snible



**Pratt SILS students volunteered for
Pratt Institute's
America Reads / Counts "Read Out"
in April.**

Photos: Michelle Dollinger



Keyword congratulates the new SILSSA officers!

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