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I Love My Librarian!

2008 Award

Nomination for Iona R. Malanchuk

Associate University Librarian and Head of the Education Library
University of Florida
Gainesville, Florida

Nominator:

Dr. Linda Behar-Horenstein
Gainesville, Florida

1. How long have you known the nominee and how did you come to know him or her?

I first met Iona Malanchuk in 1996 when I assisted the University of Florida's P.K. Yonge Developmental Research School faculty in their efforts to revise and improve the school's K-12 curriculum and faculty/administration communication. When we met, Iona was an Associate University Librarian and Head of the Mead Library, a university library located in the university's lab school. Mead Library is used by university students as well as the K-12 student body of 1100 students. Prior to being asked to assume the leadership and take over as Head of Mead Library, Iona spent the preceding five years as a University of Florida acquisitions librarian in the main library. In that position she was responsible for materials acquisitions and faculty liaison for French literature and language, business, agriculture and education. She was then asked to take over the problems in the Mead Library at the PK Yonge school. P.K. Yonge is a developmental research school affiliated with the College of Education where I am a full professor. Consequently, I have known Iona for over 14 years. I am well aware of the many successful programs and services she implemented while Head of Mead Library from 1986-2002, including the total reorganization of that library and her year-long effort to put the entire collection into the university library's electronic catalog so that the middle and high school students and faculty would have permanent

access to an automated retrieval system and an exceptional number of quality materials and databases. In April 2002 Iona was offered the position of Head of the Education Library where she remains to the present. The Education Library is a two-story facility located within the College of Education complex. I am also aware that Iona came to the University of Florida Libraries as an Associate University Librarian after having spent 13 years as a librarian in both technical and public service positions in the Indiana University Libraries and Western Michigan University Libraries.

2. Please discuss how the nominee has helped you and/or others and made your experience of the library a more positive one. For instance, did the nominee assist you in a research project or enhance your students' learning experience?

Iona has a long history of helping others and making their library experience a more positive one. Her success as a young professional at Indiana University resulted in her being offered a variety of positions which allowed her to gain extensive experience in both the technical and public service areas of a large research library system. She provided reference assistance in both the Swain Hall Math, Physics, Astronomy Library as well as on the main library's reference desk. She accepted an offer to be an original cataloger of the French and English literature collections in the J.K. Lilly Rare Books Library and after that she became Assistant Serials Librarian at Indiana University. She left Indiana and accepted a position as Education Librarian at Western Michigan University where she received tenure and was promoted to the rank of Associate Professor. During those years she taught extensively, spoke at conferences in the US and Canada and she designed, wrote and produced a series of 6 separate instructional media programs on the ERIC research tools that were purchased by and used in many university libraries world-wide. The written comments of students and faculty were so positive and encouraging that she continued to write and develop at point-of-use instructional programs that enabled the user to teach themselves how to search complex indexing/abstracting tools for relevant research information. She accepted an offer to be Assistant Head of the busy Business Library at WMU and in that capacity she developed that branch library's reference and instructional services. She continued to write additional instructional programs for the H.W. Wilson Company on how to use their well-known subject guides and she has been a member of ALA, AASL, ACRL, MLA and AAUP over the years and attended/participated in conferences throughout those years working in the mid-west.

When Iona first came to the University of Florida she was hired to handle the acquisitions of materials for agriculture, business, French literature and language and education as well as act as the liaison to departmental faculty. She was successful in negotiating the transfer of agriculture materials from a reluctant departmental library staff so that they could be added to UF's new, large, centralized science library complex. During those five years in acquisitions, she was also successful in negotiating a sizable discount for UF Libraries from Aux Amateurs, a vendor still used by the University of Florida Libraries for the purchasing of French literature and language materials.

Iona was asked to take over Mead Library at the university's laboratory school. While Head of that library she recataloged the entire collection and added it to the university's automated library system. She instituted a program of weekly storyhours for the primary classes and organized and taught weekly library instruction for grades 3 through 12, teaching the young students how to use UF library's electronic catalog and appropriate databases. She organized annual used book sales in order to fund a visiting award-winning author/illustrator series that resulted in 15 major children's literature authors and illustrators presenting to students, parents, faculty and administrators. The Author Visitation Series was self-supporting within two years. Iona organized annual Book Fairs to be held in the library and with the assistance of a local bookstore. This event was also supported by all ages of students, parents and the faculty. Each fall Iona organized and supervised the Sunshine State Young Readers Award Program for the elementary and middle school divisions. The completion of the annual state library reading program by the P.K. Yonge Developmental Research School students was celebrated at the end of the school year with a sleep-over held in the Mead Library with up to 51 children participating. All of the students who completed the reading program enjoyed free pizza for dinner and breakfast the next morning. The volunteer teachers and parents who assisted as chaperones through the evening were also the individual book discussion leaders that kids were allowed to choose from for the night time activities. Book discussions, book related cross word puzzles and word games organized by Iona comprised the activities well into the night. And lastly, Iona organized a parent-child 6th grade reading club that met at night in the Mead Library, once a month, solely for the purpose of discussing the issues raised in the chosen Newbery award winning title for that month. Iona made a successful presentation to the UF Libraries Tenure Support Group that resulted in tenure-track university librarians who never worked with middle school students before but who gladly responded to Iona's invitation to add some community service to their resumes. They volunteered to work with kids in need of encouragement to read. They

comprised the volunteer adult book discussion group leaders that came prepared to lead Newbery book discussions at each monthly meeting. Not only were the students responsive but the stipulation that one parent was requested to participate with them resulted in many a grateful parent. When a parent could not participate, an older sibling volunteered.

In April 2002 Iona accepted an offer to Head the University of Florida's Education Library located in the large College of Education complex. In this capacity she has directly assisted me and hundreds of the faculty and students who use this facility. She is the Head of a branch library that is open seven days a week and she manages a daytime and evening staff and a weekend staff that can handle reference, reserves, circulation, equipment problems, security matters, etc. Iona regularly teaches library literacy classes for undergraduate and graduate students not only from the College of Education but also from our Fine Arts School, our Agriculture Institute and our Honors Programs. When Iona took over as Head of the Education branch library she developed numerous and valuable outreach programs in support of student and faculty research and instructional needs. She initiated an instructional program that continues to this day and is offered all year round, including during our busy summer semesters. There are course specific, professor-initiated library instruction classes that meet on average for 2 hrs and are taught by either of the two Education librarians. The library classroom that Iona was instrumental in setting up has laptops that allows for hands-on instruction. She teaches classes day or night and on Saturday if requested in order to meet the schedule of undergraduate and graduate classes as well as faculty schedules. Those classes are course-related, subject specific sessions. Iona also initiated library literacy classes in 2002 that became required components of two specialized programs: the 5th yr ProTeach Program and the English Language Institute multi-level classes. Upon arrival in the Education Library Iona soon recognized the need to offer individual and small-group consultations with graduate students and faculty who find the ever changing and ever expanding world of electronic information retrieval to be confusing but critical to their research efforts. Iona developed and promoted one-on-one research consultations for graduate students and faculty and members of all five departments schedule appointments with her for that purpose. My graduate students and other faculty have told me how helpful the consultations have been and so most research faculty advise their students to set up an appointment with Iona early on in their graduate education programs. They are grateful that Iona did not rely on a set program of instruction but takes each of their individual research problems and helps them to first develop their search strategies, revising

those strategies as needed, introducing them to the sometimes confusing pathways into the most relevant research databases. She then leads them to develop and utilize the correct combination of terms so they can successfully duplicate complex searches and find relevant resources in numerous specialized databases on their own.

Iona makes an effort to get input from the College of Education administration, faculty and students.

She has always encouraged faculty and graduate student input regarding new acquisitions for the collection and as a result she regularly receives recommendations for purchase. If she cannot order a requested journal she explains why or suggests another title to be cut and replaced by the new publication. In regard to possible cancellations of subscriptions due to inevitable budget-cutting Iona communicates with the faculty before deselecting titles so that individuals who may be most affected can request an alternative publication to be cut if and when necessary. The response is appreciation for being asked to contribute to the final list of journals to be deselected.

Iona manages a library that is open seven days a week and she attracts a capable, service-minded staff that works days, nights and weekends on our behalf. The Education Library staff maintains a reference desk schedule, an electronic EdRef service, a user-friendly and very helpful website, an orientation and instructional program, an attractive and comfortable library that one enjoys working in for long periods of time. After Iona's arrival over 400 chairs were reupholstered and refinished, including ottomans, and new display areas for new books, new journal issues, and new small-group interaction areas were set up with comfortable armchairs and ottomans. This librarian pays attention to all details. People enjoy lingering in the display areas when the comfort of a footrest and armchair is also readily available. Even the walls are more attractive due to her collecting children's literature posters at ALA and other conferences and then having them mounted and displayed on what had been bare or damaged walls. The numerous display areas throughout the library promote specific collections and education-related themes so that one is always aware of what this library offers in terms of services and collections.

3. How has the library, and the nominee in particular, had an impact on students and faculty and the teaching and learning process? Please be specific.

Developing and maintaining current and easily accessible materials in a variety of formats is critical to our efficient and successful research and instructional needs. Iona continues to select and acquire appropriate

materials for each of the five departments in the College of Education. The acquisition and availability of new materials are highlighted on the library webpage, in the books and periodicals display racks and shown repeatedly in eye-catching thematic display cases. There are over 110 faculty in this college who rely on Iona's collection development expertise while all the while staying within a tight budget.

The availability of relevant collections and expertise seven days a week, year in and year out is part of Iona's management responsibility. This library is one of 9 on the University of Florida campus that serves a student body of over 50,000 students. As a Branch Head Iona is a member of library management committees and task forces that resolve problems and issues relating to staffing budgets, services, instructional outreach, campus and community participation, etc. In addition, she has successfully hired and promoted staff who provide 5-Star Service for all library users. Since it is not unusual for graduate education students to be fully employed professional teachers, principals, superintendants, etc. during the day, their only opportunity to get research assistance oftentimes results in a late Friday afternoon consultation, teaching night classes, or Saturday consultations. Iona has readily scheduled those sessions with them regardless of the day and time needed.

It should be noted that Iona has been actively involved in mentoring students and other library staff looking for a change in responsibility. She has supported and promoted the library profession for decades while working in the academic libraries of several institutions of higher education. She continues to counsel students and staff who have expressed an interest in a professional library career. She has accepted numerous graduate student and librarian interns who asked to work with her specifically for several months or over a year. In addition, she agreed to have foreign educators and librarian interns from Israel, Tanzania, Zambia and Russia working with her for months in order to learn how to organize and manage a branch library that met the needs of a multitude of users. All interns are given training and responsibilities similar to permanent staff once they are capable of handling the responsibility, including some experience with budgeting, acquisitions, serials, cataloging, circulation, instruction, reference and outreach services.

Iona has given presentations to various groups of volunteer university students at the request of the COE's Minority Multicultural Affairs office. As a result of her knowledge of children's literature and work with a multitude of age groups over the years, Iona has presented to numerous groups of minority student volunteers before they begin to work with at-risk children. Her presentations to these university students have centered on literacy

issues, how best to read to children successfully, how to choose age-appropriate materials, how to involve students in book discussions, etc. She has introduced university student volunteers to the award winning children's authors and illustrators represented in the Education Library's children's literature collection. By doing so, she facilitates their successful experience as volunteers in after-school programs throughout the county schools.

Since taking over as Head of the Education Library Iona has not only taught library literacy to hundreds of students in the English Language Institute but she has also volunteered as an English language conversationalist for ELI students enrolled in the University of Florida's intensive English language training programs. She has worked one-on-one with numerous students from Taiwan, the Ivory Coast, Switzerland, Brazil, etc. Her support and involvement with the ELI program began upon her arrival in the Education Library and continues to this day.

It should also be noted that Iona, when Head of the University of Florida's Mead Library, was repeatedly asked to serve on numerous SAC accreditation teams sent into high schools around the state of Florida to evaluate the programs, facilities, faculty and support services offered to enrolled students. As one of 10 – 15 experienced educators on the Accreditation Team, she was frequently Chair of the Media Center evaluation task force and a member of the English dept. task force. The long days examining the various high school's self-evaluation reports coupled with the close observation and daily analysis of instruction, faculty/administration communication, facility use, and the questioning of faculty, students, parents and administrators culminated in lengthy and well-documented evaluative reports. The reports were jointly written by the entire accreditation team of which she was a member numerous times in various cities throughout the state of Florida.

4. How does the nominee make the college, community college, or university a better place? Please be specific.

Iona has managed the development of a current and relevant collection that is well maintained by an educated and trained staff who enjoys working with numerous and diverse people. The Education Library serves people from across the entire University of Florida campus. The concept of the library as place is gaining in popularity so that extended hours at night and on the weekends is most helpful to those in need of a relatively quiet place to work.

Participation on committees, helping to problem-solve issues outside the library and supporting non-library activities are examples of making the

university a better place. Iona has served on the College of Education Dean's Advisory Council and been a member of the College Curriculum Committee. She has accepted invitations to meet with minority students to explain how best to work with children as volunteers in afterschool programs throughout the county schools. She has repeatedly been one of the invited judges of the university's annual Reading Rainbow contest that involves approximately 400 school children from throughout north central Florida. She has been a volunteer English language conversationalist for foreign students attending the University of Florida from Taiwan, Brazil, Switzerland, the Ivory Coast, etc.

By accepting requests to work with her, Iona has helped numerous undergraduates become aware of new career possibilities for their math, journalism or history degrees. She has either accepted as interns or paid staff, former UF graduates from each of the departments mentioned. She has also counseled library paraprofessionals who need/want a new library experience, a new opportunity for career growth and development.

5. How has the individual demonstrated leadership in the campus community or the profession?

Iona was one of the first academic librarians to write and publish self-instructional media programs on the organization and use of complex reference tools that were well reviewed and resulted in purchase by prestigious institutions such as Harvard and Berkeley as well as libraries abroad. After completing the ERIC Index Series of six separate programs in the late 1970's she wrote and published the Wilson Index Series in the early 1980's. Her work in instructional development continues to this day and has affected thousands of students in libraries throughout the U.S.

She has taken time to write and publish articles about the successful programs she has developed so that others may be inspired to do the same. Her recent 14 page chapter, Teaching Information Literacy to ESL Students, appeared in the July 2008 book, An Introduction to Instructional Services in Academic Libraries just published by Routledge. In 2005 she co-authored the article, Academic Librarians and Outreach Beyond the College Campus and in 2006 her article on academic librarians organizing a sixth grade reading club appeared in Young Adult Library Services. She also wrote an article that was distributed state-wide on her experience and that of three other UF librarians who volunteered to work in the Katrina-devastated libraries of New Orleans in support of ALA's Librarians Build Communities Campaign.

She has repeatedly accepted an invitation to help support the annual Read Across America program by volunteering to read to kids enrolled in

the University of Florida's campus preschool. For the last 7 years she has accepted an invitation to judge the annual Reading Rainbow Young Writers' & Illustrators' Contest that is sponsored by the University of Florida's WUFT, the campus National Public TV station. Hundreds of elementary students submit their original, illustrated stories for judging in the annual competition.

Iona has been a five year member of the University of Florida's annual Read A Thon and Edible Book Contest Committee organized to support National Library Week with daily events and fun activities. Participants in the volunteer reading aloud program who gather under a large canopy on the main library's front lawn include community politicians, faculty and students from many different departments, the university president's wife, public librarians, community college librarians and the local high school's culinary arts institute students and teachers. Children from the local schools are invited to the events scheduled for Children's Day with the remaining days primarily geared to adult books and readings. It is an on-going annual event that reaches across the entire community.