

Get to Know . . . Julia Stewart

Megan Graewingholt

Many readers may recognize Julia from her role as author of the “Get to Know” column, writing articles on GODORT members and their work in Documents to the People since 2008. Reflecting on her work, Julia reported that the best aspect of writing the “Get to Know . . .” column was meeting the amazing people in the library community and learning from their research projects. Having experience in a number of industries, from working in a publishing house to being a high school teacher, Julia believes that librarians are the most supportive community of professionals. “While we all work with government information, there’s a lot of people doing a lot of different things,” says Stewart. If there was a new or emerging trend, like digitization, interviewing colleagues provided an opportunity to reach out and learn from other professionals in the field.

As a librarian at Southern Methodist University (SMU), Julia served a diverse campus of 12,000 students, including undergraduate users in public policy and political science, law school students, and the surrounding community. Julia noted that like many in the profession, her role in government documents has grown over the years. As a faculty member, she began as a reference librarian and left as a research librarian, emphasizing that changes are always happening within government documents librarianship. “The more you outreach to people, the more collection use grows. We’re always looking for ways to highlight great parts of our collections and connect to the community,” says Stewart. From celebrating Constitution Day to partnering with faculty across campus for election events or debates, she consistently served as a resource to help students become more informed on the issues.

On the subject of collection weeding, Julia notes, “While it sometimes feels like the collection is slipping through your fingers, there are always documents you connect with.” Julia’s favorite print documents were the Statistical Abstract, making sure to get out a ruler to examine the various data tables. She also loved looking at historical census tracks, pulling out folded maps by neighborhood to explore local Texas towns. She recalls many fun Constitution Days using teachable items like the Civics and Citizenship Toolkit and the Civics Flashcards for the Naturalization Test.

Since leaving SMU Libraries, Julia has relocated to Tulsa, Oklahoma, to be closer to family members and to start her next career adventure: working as an enumerator for the 2020 Census. As a government information professional who worked



Julia Stewart, former social science and government documents research librarian at Southern Methodist University Libraries, is ready for the next adventure in her professional life. After being in an academic library for fifteen years, she now moves on to an exciting new role assisting with the 2020 Census.

frequently with census material, she is very excited to be on the front lines, knocking on doors, verifying addresses, and becoming more familiar with the Tulsa community at the track level. While it may seem like very detailed work that won’t be finalized for some time, Julia knows firsthand how essential this process is for building a foundation for future scholars and for her community. “I know how to use the census, but this will give me a bigger appreciation for how the data is collected. While the census gets picked on, you can do so much with the data and it can really tell you a lot about your community.” During her training, Julia learned about the history of the census and the importance of giving a good impression. In what is arguably the most important census in recent memory, this eight-week adventure will make Julia an important part of Tulsa history.

Once her census work has concluded, she hopes to explore local opportunities and possibly enter into archival work in Tulsa. There are several archival and public history projects underway in Tulsa at the moment, from the creation of the Bob Dylan Archive to the hundred-year anniversary of the Tulsa Race Massacre in 1921. Since her previous library work was primarily in a public services role, she would love to engage in the archival side and explore the fundamentals of developing and showcasing collections. Julia notes, “It’s a great thing about Tulsa that there is so much unique, independent, and fun places.” Julia aims to use her skills, in both government documents and census experience, to help contribute to the

museums, libraries, and organizations that make her community an amazing place to live.

In recognition of her contributions in service to *DttP* and the government documents professional community, it is wonderful to finally get to know Julia herself. Wishing her all the best as she explores this new chapter in her life and career.

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