
RUSA's Newest Achievement Award

The Gail Schlachter Memorial Research Grant

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The family and friends of Gail Schlachter have endowed a research grant award in her honor and hosted it with the Reference and User Services Association, where Gail served as president from 1988 to 1989. Gail was also the editor for *Reference and User Services Quarterly* from 1997 to 2000 and had an abiding interest in LIS research that started in the early 1970s with her publication *Library Science Dissertations* (which ran from 1925–1972).¹ The Gail Schlachter Memorial Research Grant will be awarded yearly to encourage and enrich the research in library science.

As befits Gail's career, the purpose of this award is to recognize and financially support research by "an individual or collaborative group conducting research into reference or user services whose research projects aim to better understand or answer key questions related to connecting people to resources, information services, and collections."² This focus is at the core of the RUSA mission. As current editor of *RUSQ*, I am excited to see the research that is funded and hope that this grant will enable researchers to undertake larger projects, such as collaborations across institutions, and encourage librarians who have a drive to research but lack encouragement or financial support for it from their employers.

ABOUT THE 2019 GRANT RECIPIENTS

The first grantees for this annual grant award were announced in May of 2019. The first award was presented to a team of librarians at Kansas State University.³ Adriana Gonzalez, Jason Coleman, Ryan Otto, and Joelle Pitts are conducting research focused on the communication between faculty and librarians around journal cancellations and issues in scholarly publishing. In the spring of 2019, the group was inspired by the results of a local survey that gathered faculty input into journal cancellations. Lead researcher Adriana Gonzalez said, "While we were pleased with the overall response to the survey this spring, there were 13 departments from which we didn't receive any responses. We want to know more about why they did not weigh in and what we can do to encourage them to join in these vital discussions."⁴

The Gail Schlachter Grant will support research into the barriers in communication between faculty and librarians around scholarly publishing and library collections. They will conduct a survey, focus groups, and interviews with faculty.

ABOUT GAIL SCHLACHTER

Gail Schlachter was a leader and exceptional mentor in the library profession. She was a librarian, LIS professor, researcher, author, and publisher. She was an energetic and insightful participant in ALA and RUSA, serving as *RUSQ* editor, president of RUSA, and a member of the ALA Executive Board. Along the way, she mentored many librarians.

Gail led a life of innovation and service. In 1975, she compiled and published the *Directory of Internships, Work Experience Programs, and On-the-Job Training*, launching her Reference Services Press, a business responding to information gaps that she discovered during her work as a librarian at the University of Wisconsin. Even after publishing became her full-time job, she identified first and foremost as a librarian. Speaking with Katina Stauch for *Against the Grain* in 1997, Gail said, "Let me start by saying that I still consider myself to be a librarian. At this stage of my career I happen to be a librarian running a publishing company. . . . And, I still have the same passion for reference."⁵

To learn more about Gail's exceptional character and career, I recommend reading "Remembering Gail Schlachter" published in *RUSQ*.⁶

References

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2. "Gail Schlachter Memorial Research Grant Award," Reference and User Services Association, <http://www.ala.org/rusa/rusa-gail-schlachter-memorial-research-grant>.
3. "Adriana Gonzalez and team members, Jason Coleman, Ryan Otto and Joelle Pitts, Selected as winners of Inaugural Gail Schlachter Memorial Research Grant," *RUSA Update*, Reference and User Services Association, May 23, 2019, <https://rusaupdate.org/2019/05/adriana-gonzalez-and-team-members-jason-coleman-ryan-otto-and-joelle-pitts-selected-as-winners-of-inaugural-gail-schlachter-memorial-research-grant/>.
4. Sarah McGreer Hoyt, "Gonzalez-led Research Team Receives Inaugural Gail Schlachter Memorial Research Grant," *K-State Today*, June 24, 2019, <https://www.k-state.edu/today/announcement/?id=53973>.
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6. Barry Trott, "Remembering Gail Schlachter," *Reference and User Services Quarterly* 55, no. 1 (Fall 2015), <https://doi.org/10.5860/rusq.55n1.2>.