
Remembering Gail Schlachter

*Correspondence concerning this column should be addressed to **Barry Trott**, RUSQ Editor, 7770 Croaker Rd., Williamsburg, VA, 23188; email: btrott@wrl.org.*

Gail Schlachter served as editor of *RUSQ* from 1997–2000, as editor of reference book reviews in *RQ* (*RUSQ*'s previous title) from 1977–88, and as president of RUSA, 1988–89. It was with great sorrow that we heard of Gail's all too early death in April of 2015. Gail was a passionate and tireless advocate for libraries and for reference publishing, and her commitment to both of these areas inspired and influenced many in the profession, including me. Gail took great delight in mentoring those new to librarianship as well as in discussing with anyone how to better serve our users. What I will miss most about Gail though is her smile, and how it lit up any meeting or program session when I would see her at ALA, regardless of how early in the morning or late at night it was, or how busy she must have been, for she was always busy. I learned from Gail that taking joy in your work is the best way to enjoy that work, to inspire colleagues, and to accomplish great things. The memories below come from some of Gail's colleagues in the library and publishing worlds.—*Editor*

I first met Gail in New York at the 1980 ALA Annual Conference. During the next annual conference we talked at length about reference reviewing. Starting with the 1982 Midwinter she and I always had dinner together. It was my responsibility to select the restaurant, a process that depended upon concierges to tell me which restaurants had the best chocolate desserts. They would tell me about other foods, but the standard by which Gail judged a restaurant was that it served at least two decadent chocolate desserts. We always ordered and shared both.

During our January 2014 dinner in Philadelphia she received a phone call informing her she had been elected to the ALA executive board. She was sure that call would deliver different news. I had assured her that she would be elected because she offered the range of experience and knowledge as well as her keen intellect that would make her a significant contributor to the EB. She wanted to serve because, in addition to all she had given to that point, she had even more to give to ALA.

She was a justifiably proud but never boastful mother, evident when she introduced me to her children while they were in their teens, years before their very significant professional achievements. Sandy, Eric, and their children have much to mourn and much more to celebrate in Gail's life and her love for them.

We librarians develop long-term friendships we would never have had but for our involvement in ALA. I have lost the best of my ALA friends and one of my best friends ever. Our profession and her many friends in the library,

publishing, and education realms have lost the contributions she would have shared with us had she been with us longer.

All of us will ever remember and miss her warm welcoming smile.—*Jim Rettig*

I first met Gail Schlachter at the ALA Annual Conference in Chicago 2005. Xrefer, Ltd. (which would eventually become Credo Reference) was just stepping forward into the limelight. Previously we were considered to be an interesting little reference product for public libraries with mostly British “ready reference” content. But we’d just signed a distribution deal with Thomson/Gale. At that ALA I was appearing on the RUSA President’s Panel along with Jimmy Wales of Wikipedia and speakers from Thomson, Library of Congress, and others. And we’d just received our first invitation to attend the Independent Reference Publishers Group, which was then an invitation-only group of reference publishers specifically independent of the behemoths like Elsevier and Thomson.

I ended up sitting next to Gail at the meeting and we immediately connected. She stayed after the meeting to look at a model I’d developed to show how uses of reference information served very different needs depending on the user’s goals and state of mind. She immediately challenged me to learn more about the body of work that had been developed over the past many decades on the “reference interview.” It put me on a path to significantly improve our model. I asked her the following week to join Xrefer’s Corporate Advisory Board and she accepted my invitation.

Over the years I got to know Gail I learned more and more about her publishing business, Reference Services Press. Reference Services Press produces the very best set of directories for students looking for scholarship, grants, and fellowships for further study. They produce directories aimed at high school students planning for college, and college students looking for opportunities for advanced study. Countless numbers of people have benefited from these directories, not only students who found ways to seek new educational opportunities but also organizations and foundations have been able to reach particular populations of students that they seek to serve. Gail was justifiably proud of her publishing business. It was probably five years ago that she gave me a full description of the operation based near her home which was then in Sacramento. There was an executive office. There was a marketing office with books and a computer for planning out marketing campaigns. There was a finance office for handling billing and accounting. There was a customer support room where all customer requests and issues were sorted out. There was an editorial office. And, of course, a shipping and fulfillment office where orders were finally shipped out (or sent electronically). This is fairly typical of a well-organized small publisher.

What was remarkable in Gail’s case is that Gail was the only employee of Reference Services Press. When she was planning out marketing campaigns she did so in the Marketing Office. When she was doing the books, she’d move to

the finance office. To process customer orders she’d move to the shipping/fulfillment office. Before his health failed him her husband Stuart was sometimes a part-time staffer in her company. I can imagine that they would have meetings in the conference room.

I knew that someday I’d have to go to Sacramento to see this for myself. In September of 2012 my wife and I were in San Francisco for our son’s wedding. Gail offered to drive into SF to meet me, but I insisted. Gloria drove to Sacramento so that we could see this remarkable company and remarkable woman who ran it.—*John G. Dove*

An ALA friend says: “ALA Conference is like Brigadoon. It is a small town that happens twice a year, and then disappears until the next time.” How true that is for me—having attended close to one hundred conferences. And, like the inhabitants of most small towns, there were friends I bonded with almost immediately . . . Gail Schlachter was a “Brigadoon” friend. Oh yes, we occasionally ran into each other at another library conference. And yes, we always meant to get together outside of conference, but only managed that once or twice. As we both became more involved, busier and busier (probably my fault mostly), we rarely even found time for a drink in later years. Nevertheless the connection was there. There were smiles (hers was always radiant), hugs, and a quick catch-up—husbands, friends, children, business, ALA politics.

The first time we met we talked for hours. We were both from similar cultural backroads, divorced, transitioning from work in a library setting to publishing. We were young, active, and passionate librarians—convinced of our profession’s power to make a difference. The conversations got shorter as we both founded businesses, became more enmeshed in ALA, and took on greater time obligations—but it never stopped. Neither did the smiles or the hugs. And we both talked fast! We called each other “mentors” because advice was free-flowing, one librarian/publisher/businesswoman to another.

I have many fond memories of Gail, personal and professional. What I remember most is her unstinting encouragement. One example took place at the California Library Association debate for ALA President. This was the first of several debates with my opponent, Patrick O’Brien. I was very nervous. Gail rehearsed me, she cautioned; “Let your passion shine through—be a *great* ALA President—let them see that.” I believed her and calmed down. She sat in the front row and smiled her glorious smile at me during the entire debate.

When Gail asked me to speak at her RASD (Reference and Adult Services Division, now RUSA) President’s Program about Technology and the Future of Libraries. I asked, “why me?” Gail had arranged to show Steve Jobs on video, and for others to demonstrate innovative technologies. I was the only “live” speaker. Gail said, “I want an overview, a perceptive look at the human and societal implications.” When the time came and I arrived to speak I found that the room had all the

FROM THE EDITOR

bells and whistles available in the late 80s—but there was no microphone or podium for me! The people in charge said it was too late. I panicked, but Gail, with her sweet smile, and her determined “don’t take no for an answer” attitude, had the podium delivered in time for my speech! That speech, which Gail inspired, led to articles in *Library Journal* and the *Whole Earth Review*.

A wise friend told me that when someone close to you dies you lose not only that person, but that person’s view of you. Very selfishly, I miss both terribly.—*Patricia Glass Schuman*

When I think of my experiences with Gail Schlachter, I realize how lucky I am to have so many. They are all of course very positive, memorable, and make me smile. From the very first time we met in her role as a co-convenor of the ALA Councilor forums, Gail’s genuine warmth was evident. She was a very special person who made you feel special. I admit I was not sure why she thought I was so great, but she did and she shared it with me frequently. That had a way of bringing out the best in you. Gail did that for all of us I think, bringing out the best in us. When I ran for ALA President, I approached Gail about being my campaign treasurer. She was thrilled! In fact I’m pretty sure that is the exact word she used—and if you knew Gail like so many of us knew Gail, you know the bright and enthusiastic way she said it. Every interaction with Gail was a joyful one. The last time I saw her on April 19, 2015 at the conclusion of the ALA Executive Board meeting was no different. She flashed her sunlit smile, told me how proud she was of me and the great job I was doing as ALA President, and she gave me a big hug. We are all so fortunate that Gail not only had such a positive outlook on life but that she shared that positivity with anyone and everyone. Gail taught us all how to live through hard work, respect for others, and a love of life. I cannot thank her enough for all she did to be an outstanding librarian, publisher, colleague, mentor, and friend. I will cherish the joy she brought to the profession and to me personally for the rest of my life. Thank you Gail for being uniquely Gail.—*Courtney Young*

From across the room she was a diminutive, pixie-like figure, at first not particularly prepossessing. But as you approached her—she was invariably talking to someone—you would be struck by her animation, particularly her smile and her easy laugh. And without intimidating you, well maybe just a bit intimidating as you joined the conversation, you quickly became aware of her tremendous commitment to (and involvement in) the library profession.

Gail and I went back as colleagues and friends almost to the beginning of our professional lives as librarians. We served on committees together, discussed professional and personal issues over an endless number meals at conference (you quickly learned to never get between Gail and chocolate dessert), and both served on (as it was then called) the RASD board. But mainly Gail was for me and many others an encouraging example and mentor. I began as *RQ*’s (now *RUSQ*)

book review editor under her leadership as editor-in-chief. When I needed to publish a book for promotion to associate professor, she explained manuscript submission procedures and smoothed the way for me at ABC-CLIO where she was working at the time. Through service as RASD president she encouraged me and others to see this role as both viable and important to the work of the division and we followed in her footsteps. One of my happiest ALA moments was as RASD President introducing her as President of Reference Services Press (a company she founded and ran) to present her company’s substantial annual award at Conference for best *RUSQ* article. Few of us would think to make such a tangible contribution to the advancement of professional librarianship.

The news of her passing was not just a surprise and a deep sadness. It was as if a sudden rent had been made in the fabric of my own personal and professional identity. Gail was one of those rare good people who make an outsized contribution to the world and it is hard for me to imagine the library profession without her. I, and many, many others, will miss her ideas, her energy, her encouragement, her friendship and above all her cheerful, “we can do this” attitude.—*David Kohl*

How do I capture the essence of Gail? The words that come to mind are courage, determination, empathy, sparkle, thoughtfulness, passion, and dedication. Gail personified those qualities for everyone whose life she touched. I first met Gail as we served together, many years ago, on the Committee on Education. I knew no one on that committee, but Gail’s warmth and magical smile brought me into the group and started our decades-long friendship. I witnessed firsthand Gail’s amazing ability to get to the core of an issue, listen intently to every individual who offered a perspective, and honor different points of view while guiding a group to consensus.

Gail’s leadership from the heart was expressed in every commitment she made in ALA. Certainly we saw her leadership when she was president of RUSA and editor of *RUSQ*. When she was elected to ALA Council, she went beyond her participation as a member to become an active (and voluntary) mentor for new councilors, welcoming them with her smile and guiding them through the maze of Council responsibilities.

A year and a half ago, Gail stepped up to a more public leadership role when she was elected as an executive board member. What a joy it was to serve with her, starting from our shared delight when her daughter, Sandy Hirsch, surprised her by coming to the inauguration to escort her. Gail’s experience and wisdom were invaluable to our executive board conversations and decision making. She always knew just the right question to ask or the perfect comment to make to move our conversations forward.

Yes, Gail was the consummate professional. But what I cherished the most was her generous spirit and her true friendship. She dealt matter-of-factly and privately with her own personal challenges, including her own health issues,

while focusing on support for others. Gail took the time to ask each one of us about our lives; she embraced and bolstered us with her empathy and her smile.

I do not like to contemplate a world without Gail Schlachter. I know, however, that she has left a piece of her essence in my heart. I will be forever grateful.—*Barbara Stripling*

I first met Gail Schlachter, in person, during the 2009 ALA Annual Conference as members of EMIERT. I recall finally being able to meet her after she so kindly, along with Em Claire Knowles, assistant dean for student affairs at Simmons College, welcomed me my first week at UC Davis with a warm telephone call. They previously worked at the Peter J. Shields Library and shared useful institutional history and career advice. To say I was overwhelmed when I arrived at Davis in November 2005, as I transitioned from public to academic librarianship, would be an understatement and so those phone calls remain so meaningful in my life.

At the time I did not immediately connect Gail's name and immense work to her excellent and indispensable series of financial aid book titles. Only after sometime did I do so and remained in contact. I regret that I did not meet with her sooner—as I should have—for the next several years and all the more so given that she always made the time to speak to me whenever I had a question—or several, as was often the case.

All this didn't matter when we finally met in 2009 and bonded over the aftermath of a cancelled EMIERT panel titled Perspectives on Islam: Beyond the Stereotyping. That panel was to have provided insight and serve as a forum for discussion on the Islam of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Space constraints prevent me from providing readers with a full accounting of the events that led to that panel's cancelation but the key things I'll always remember from that series of events were Gail's insights that while librarians seek to be objective, it is impossible to avoid controversy over some issues. It is part of our mission as librarians, she shared, to teach the skills of critical evaluation, including an ability to assess the sources and reliability of information. Libraries cannot, force individuals to be informed, but they can provide the means when the individual is ready.

While these insights were not new, per se, coming as they did from Gail made me recast them in a new light. The time also allowed me to get to know Gail better as a friend, mentor, ALA councilor, and closer to home as a fellow founding member of a REFORMA chapter that I had the honor of establishing and maintaining in, large part, due to Gail's financial stewardship and commitment to diversity. I feel honored to have known Gail, and will always be grateful for the professional and social time we shared.—*Roberto C. Delgadillo*

I was saddened by the death of Gail Schlachter, especially since she was my role model for almost three decades. I looked up to her and always wanted to follow in her footsteps. I was able to do so in several ways. Like Gail, I served

as President of the Reference and User Services Association, as editor of *Reference & User Services Quarterly*, and was a recipient of the Isadore Gilbert Mudge Award. Coincidentally, I also served as a Councilor-at-Large on ALA council, overlapping with Gail's tenure on Council. I will never forget how Gail helped to orient me to the work of Council. None of these achievements would have been possible without Gail's enthusiastic support and constant guidance. I will miss her dearly and intend to pay tribute to her by mentoring other professional colleagues.—*Diane Zabel*

I had the privilege of working with Gail Schlachter when she served as *RUSQ* editor from 1997 to 2000. Under her leadership, she facilitated the change in the journal's name from *RQ* to *Reference and User Services Quarterly*, and brought a new design and format to the journal. Gail worked closely with *RUSQ* columnists, referees, editorial board members, member leaders, and staff to make sure that every issue met the needs of the RUSA membership. Gail was steadfast in her commitment and encouragement of research in the field of reference and adult services. She served as a mentor to scores of researchers and gave willingly of her time and expertise. For me, Gail represented the best of the profession. Her enthusiasm and her passion for what libraries and librarians can do for individuals and communities will be greatly missed. I'll also miss seeing her welcoming smile at conference and hearing her latest developments. Gail touched so many lives, all the budding authors she encouraged and the hundreds of ALA and RUSA members she supported. We are all the better for having known her.—*Cathleen Bourdon*

Gail served two consecutive two-year terms on the ALA Publishing Committee, which sets the framework within which ALA and the ALA publishing department operates. She was appointed Chair of the Committee in each of the two years of her second term. The chair is appointed by the president-elect for a one-year term, which means Gail was chosen by two presidents to serve in that capacity—a rare circumstance.

She was tireless (if not indefatigable) in her commitment to the committee's potential for outreach. At Midwinter, the publishing committee convenes a joint session with the publication committee chairs of ALA divisions and units. Appreciating the potential of this cross-unit outreach opportunity, not only did she issue an appealing written invitation, but she also called each chair or executive director to encourage participation.

She was also instrumental in setting the groundwork for the revision of the Publishing Department Strategic Plan, which was initiated by Ernie DiMattia when her second term ended and she had to move off the committee per policy. Even then, she was selected to participate in the member panels Ernie convened to engage the environmental scan.

Along with the sense of immediate contribution she seemed to provide in all her engagements there were also so

FROM THE EDITOR

many acts of kindness. Before she moved off the committee she developed a simple but detailed (six-page) overview of the responsibilities of the chair so that her successors would not have to fret over their responsibilities and timelines. Another of her many, many legacies.

Among her many, many awards and honors, Gail was also a successful entrepreneur in reference publishing and carved out a niche that provided financial aid resources, often for underserved communities. Her company, Reference Services Press, also sponsored the RUSA Reference Press Service Award for the most outstanding article published that year in *RUSQ*.

Consequently, it should come as no surprise that Gail was the ultimate multi-tasker. Nor should it come as a surprise that she was ever efficient and frugal in the administration of her affairs. So: no secretaries, home office, etc. As a result, our phone calls were often accompanied by a chorus of door bells, postal carriers, service professionals, and barking dogs. Laddie is now the official Pub Committee mascot.

Gail never expected anything but the best—and before anyone realized it, pretty much always got it.—*Don Chatham*

It is with such a heavy heart that I write this remembrance of Gail Schlachter. She was such a positive influence for our profession that it hardly seems possible she is gone. I was very fortunate to know Gail for years, through our service together on ALA Council. But I actually knew her more socially through ALA, via mutual friends and colleagues. Gail was such a wonderful and inspirational colleague and friend—she was a role model as well as a mentor to many. Most recently, at the 2015 Midwinter Meeting, I was re-impressed with her ability to communicate respectfully and powerfully when a very contentious issue came before council. After she spoke on the floor of council, I remember thinking, “if only I could speak that clearly and effectively.” I was thrilled along with her when she was recently elected to ALA executive board. I remember her saying in her candidate speech that serving on executive board was the last professional goal she had. I am so glad she reached that goal! As I look back on our friendship, I am extremely grateful for the time we spent together, especially at this most recent conference. Gail, her daughter Sandy, and I were staying in the same hotel and would see one another in the breakfast room each morning. We talked about family, about ALA and council, and I absorbed her beautiful outlook on life. How I will miss her.—*Karen Downing*

Gail Schlachter was a strong supporter of RUSA, serving in many capacities, including as president, as editor of *RUSQ* and as a strong supporter of the RUSA awards, funding the Reference Service Press Award. She won many awards herself over her long career, most importantly two of RUSA's major awards, the Isadore Gilbert Mudge Award and the Louis Shores Award for excellence in reviewing.¹ Her biography at the Reference Service Press website shows a long career serving libraries and library users,² but her influence extended so much farther.

To many of her RUSA and ALA colleagues, Gail was a mentor, providing gentle suggestions and great advice. As I looked at the many tributes on Facebook, comments connected to her son's blog posts,³ remembrances on the ALA Council electronic discussion list, and in other places, I was struck by the characterizations of Gail and how much these characterizations from a variety of sources were similar. Words like “intelligence,” “energy,” “open-minded,” “smiles” and “humor” were used again and again to describe Gail's approach to life. Comments extolling her as warm, kind, inspirational, welcoming, making others feel special, wise, supportive, and generous described her approach to her friends and colleagues.

What was clear in all the anecdotes I have heard and read was that Gail saw herself as both friend and mentor. She shared her thoughts and ideas with a smile and perhaps a joke, helping both newcomers and colleagues she had known for years. She epitomized the definition of the word “mentor.” My favorite definition of the word describes a mentor as “wise and trusted . . . an influential senior sponsor or supporter.”⁴

I was lucky enough to be on the receiving end of some of her warmth when I served as vice president and president of RUSA. When I became vice-president of RUSA, Gail made a point of coming over to me at the awards reception and introducing herself, offering anything I needed. She continued to stop and talk with me at conferences through my past-presidential year in Las Vegas last year. Gail made sure I knew she would answer questions and made me always feel comfortable asking. She did not hesitate to provide comments and advice, but never come across as judgmental. Sometimes she asked me questions. I did not know Gail until she stopped to talk to me, but she made me feel as though I were part of a wonderful group of RUSA officers through the years. She fostered a real feeling of belonging.

What Gail Schlachter gave me were lessons on how to be a mentor. Here is what I learned:

- Don't be shy; initiate a conversation.
- Establish trust.
- Don't butt in.
- Maintain interest over time.
- Don't pass judgment, but provide a listening ear.
- Smile and laugh. Life is fun!

Rest in peace, Gail. Your example will continue to shine and you have taught us all how to pay it forward.—*Mary Pagliero Popp*

It seemed to me that Gail was always around. Ever since I started going to ALA and became involved in RUSA, Gail was always there. She was at every conference and frequently attended the same meetings that I attended. I cannot remember when the two of us first met, but it must have been in some forum related to reference books. Gail was a reference book publisher and I became a reference book reviewer. We

bonded over our mutual desire to provide good information sources to libraries and librarians—she from the vendor side and me from the user side. She was never afraid to take chances—first by leaving the stability of academic libraries to work for a publisher (ABC-CLIO) and then by leaving that publisher to establish her own firm, which she named Reference Service Press. That she was successful at every step along the way is no surprise to anyone who knew her.

Gail's accolades and achievements are very well known, including the Isadore Gilbert Mudge Award, RUSA's highest honor, in 1992. Her company, Reference Service Press, was known for publishing guides to scholarship and financial aid resources that targeted underserved groups, including minorities, women, veterans, and people with disabilities. While this approach gave Gail and her company a very successful niche in the reference publishing market, her products also helped thousands of students find and obtain the financial aid that helped get them through college. In this way, Gail made helping others her core business. Here in California, she combined her interests in reference and financial aid by funding a scholarship to help educate future reference librarians. For over twenty years, she worked with the California Library Association to fund the Reference Service Press Fellowship that provides funds to a library school student interested in reference service. I had the honor to serve on the selection committee on a couple of occasions and it was a joy to read the applications and to select a student who would benefit from the scholarship funds. Whenever scheduling allowed, Gail would personally attend the CLA Awards ceremony to present the award to the student.

My favorite personal memory of Gail is one that highlights how caring and supportive she was. One day I came back to my office and the dreaded red light on my phone was on, indicating that someone had left me a message. Dutifully, I called in and was surprised and pleased to hear Gail's voice on the recording. She said that she had just read a short piece that I had published in the December 2006 *Against the Grain* about the "Top Ten Library Innovations in Library History." Her message told me that before she read it she knew that any such article had to be self-indulgent and could not possibly ever select the appropriate achievements. It went on to say that after reading it, she loved it and agreed with every word. I have published many things throughout my career, but no praise has ever been higher to me than hearing Gail explain to my voice mail why she loved that particular article. I saved that message for years and would go back and listen to it whenever I needed a pick-me-up. To me, that message defined Gail—taking the time to give unsolicited but very welcomed praise and advice to a colleague.

Unfortunately, that message is gone now—a victim of a routine software upgrade in 2013 that wiped out all of our stored messages. And even more unfortunately, Gail is also gone now—a victim of a routine medical procedure that wiped out one of the best librarians of our generation. Yet Gail's spirit will continue to live on—in the students who benefit from her scholarship books and in those who enter

our profession having been funded by her fellowship. And I think that is how Gail would have wanted it—to know that she continues to help others and to make a difference.
—David Tyckoson

I first met Gail at a RUSA Past President's breakfast. She sat down next to me, introduced herself, and started to provide play-by-play for a conversation about the leaders of RUSA a decade ago about which I was clearly at sea. As I have been thinking of her since I got news of her passing, I have decided this is perhaps the best story to capture Gail's character. She was extraordinarily generous, so very smart, and devoted to the job of being a librarian. I had heard about her long before I met her. She was legend in RUSA. She served as President, won both the Isadore Gilbert Mudge Award and the Louis Shores Award, and was the founder and funder of the heralded Reference Services Press Award. I am certain that there are endless stories to illustrate the wonder that was Gail and plenty of ways to remember her. I will remember her kindness and the image of her as a whirlwind striding down a conference hall, smiling at so many people she knew as she passed them, a hand out here to pat a shoulder, a hug there in a rush to keep going, always with her arms outstretched to the person she was walking toward. That was Gail. Connected, at home, and continually making sure everyone else was as well.—Neal Wyatt

It is a great honor to be invited to participate in this memorial to my best friend, Gail Schlachter. She was a person of many dimensions, many skills, many attributes, so I could write about many different aspects of her character and life. For this context, however, it seems most appropriate to write about Gail as a librarian.

I first met Gail in January 1964 when we were both graduate students in American history at the University of Wisconsin. She decided, however, not to continue on for a doctoral degree. I have often speculated about what Gail would have done if she had continued her study for a career as an historian. I have no doubt that her intellectual prowess, her diligence in pursuit of truth, her skill as a researcher, and her commitment to excellence in anything she undertook would have made her an outstanding historian. She enjoyed history, but it was not her passion. She enrolled in a master's program at the School of Library Science, and there she found her calling, her role in life. History's loss was librarianship's gain.

Gail eventually earned a doctorate in library science at the University of Minnesota, the first offered by that school. She could have had a career as a professor of library science or a library administrator, but she preferred the independence that owning her own company, Reference Service Press, offered. From the mid-1980s onward, she earned a living as a publisher of directories of financial aid and was not actively employed as a librarian. Never once during those three decades, however, did Gail ever stop thinking of herself as a librarian first and a publisher second. Her record within

FROM THE EDITOR

the American Library Association is well known. She served in several leadership roles for the ALA and won two of its major awards. Although she faced complaints that she was not really a librarian, she won election to the ALA council and then the executive board. Days before her death, after she returned from a meeting of the executive board, I asked her if she had enjoyed the meeting. She confided to me that it had been a great experience. She loved that position and regarded election to it as the most important accomplishment of her life. She won honors and awards for other activities, but librarianship remained the great love of her professional life.—*David Weber*

References

1. "Isadore Gilbert Mudge Award," Reference and User Services Association, accessed June 3, 2015, www.ala.org/rusa/awards/mudge; "Louis Shores Award" Reference and User Services Association, accessed June 3, 2015, www.ala.org/rusa/awards/shores.
2. "Gail Schlachter: Biographical Information," Reference Services Press, accessed June 3, 2015, www.rspfunding.com/GailSchlachter.html.
3. Eric Goldman, "Selected Remembrances of Gail Schlachter Hauser (1943–2015)," *Goldman's Observations* (blog), May 14, 2015, <http://blog.ericgoldman.org/personal/archives/2015/05/selected-remembrances-of-gail-schlachter-hauser-1943-2015.html>.
4. Dictionary.com Unabridged, s.v., "mentor," accessed June 3, 2015, <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/mentor>.