
Library Research in North Carolina

Jinny Y. Davis, editor

One source of library scholarship in North Carolina is the master's paper required at the three accredited library schools at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, North Carolina Central University, and the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. While the master's paper generally does not approach the doctoral dissertation in the level of research skill required or the scope of the topic, completing such a project does instill in the student an understanding of what it means to conceive, research, execute, and document a research project.

Even a quick glance at the lists of master's papers written at these three institutions reveals the wealth of potential topics for further research. A large number of these papers also use libraries in North Carolina as their laboratories for study. Once written, however, most master's papers languish unpublicized at their library schools.

The purpose of this column is to draw attention to master's papers that are worthy of wider attention — papers that were identified by the library faculty at UNC-Chapel Hill and at NCCU as meritorious pieces of scholarship. At UNC-Greensboro, Dr. Marilyn Miller reports that the faculty is restructuring the master's paper process. By requiring a research methodologies course that is closely tied to the writing of a master's paper, they hope to improve the research skills of their students and the quality of the papers produced.

UNC-Chapel Hill's School of Information and Library Science has recognized outstanding master's papers since 1977, when, by a gift of the Rockwell Fund, Dr. Edward Holley was able to establish the Dean's Achievement Award for the best master's paper in any one year. Winners of the award receive a \$100 check and formal recognition in the University's commencement program. Members of the library faculty nominate notable papers, and a faculty committee selects the winners. In the eighties, the award was split into two categories, with winners designated for both a best "general" paper (usually on some area of traditional librarianship), and a best "technical" paper (usually on a topic in the area of information science). Although many M.L.S. graduates have published works based on their master's papers, no comprehensive attempt has been made to keep track of all subsequent publications.

Winners of the Dean's Achievement Award over the last five years, and the titles of their papers, are listed below.

- 1990** Nan Marie McMurray. *Sufficiently Ornate: Librarians and Library Architecture, 1876-1900.*
Andrea Louise Rohrbacher. *Monitoring Adverse Drug Reaction Reports Using Commercial Medical Databases.*



- 1989 Joel Brett Sutton. *MIRA: A Prolog-Based System for Musical Information Retrieval and Analysis*.
Paul Staley Williford. *Study in Gray: Information Needs among Older Adults in Shelby County, Tenn.*
- 1988 Leslie Carol McCall. *Organization of Musical Pedagogical Materials*.
Daniel Gordon Wheeler. *Investments in Brittle Books*.
- 1987 S. Diane Shaw. *A Study of the Collaboration between the Scholar Erasmus of Rotterdam and His Printer Froben at Basel during the Years 1514 to 1527*.
Deborah K. Barreau. *Automated Reserves System for a Special Library*.
- 1986 Susan Elizabeth Bello. *A History of Plans for Cooperative Preservation Efforts Involving Academic Libraries*.
James Timothy Shaw. *Personal Narratives as Sources for the History of the Spanish Civil War*.
David Anthony Day. *An Automated Bibliographic System for 19th-Century Opera Librettos*.

At NCCU's School of Library and Information Sciences, Dean Benjamin Speller reports that the faculty has awarded an Outstanding Research Award since 1976. Winning master's papers are selected for the significance of their topic and the execution of the research methodology. Although no financial stipend is attached, the winners are recognized at a university-wide award day in the spring. NCCU does track publications by its graduates and reports twenty-five articles or papers published in the professional literature by its M.L.S. graduates since the late seventies.

Award-winning master's papers at NCCU over the last five years were:

- 1990 Christopher D. Forney. *The Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome: A Bibliometric Analysis: 1980-1984*.
- 1989 Elizabeth Janet Gardner. *A Study on the Existence of Library Materials Reconsideration Policies and Procedures in Public School Systems of North Carolina*.

- 1988 Margaret P. Brill. *Government Documents as Bibliographic References in the Periodical Literature of International Relations: A Citation Analysis*.
- 1987 Desire E. Volkwijn. *Censorship in Schools: L. B. Woods Updated*.
- 1986 Susan G. Kundin. *A Comparison of the Treatment of Adolescent 'Problem-Concerns' in Formula Romance Fiction and Contemporary Realistic Fiction*.

All the works listed above are available via interlibrary loan. Readers interested in the topics or in seeing examples of good scholarship in North Carolina will want to take a look at them.

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