

Editor's Note: North Carolina Libraries wishes to use this column to introduce the president of NCLA for the 1989-1991 biennium to the membership. Ms. Baker will begin her column with the next issue.

For those of us in small offices and old buildings, it seems palatial—big, beautiful, bright, and oh-so-new. And yet, it has not always been this way. When Barbara Baker arrived at Durham Technical Community College in September 1984, this learning resources center was only a plan on the drawing board. Now its newness, its functionality, its user-friendliness is another one of the landmarks in Barbara's career as a librarian.

This career—for Barbara as for many among us—was rather unintentional. It originated in the guise of a Girl Scout volunteer at the Caldwell County Public Library in Lenoir. What began as a "quick and easy" way to earn a thirty-hour library aide bar intended to lead to the coveted Girl Scout Curved Bar segued into a "quick and easy" summer job—"much easier than going out and actually looking for one,"—and eventually provided direction out of Western Piedmont Community College where she was a student searching for what she wanted to do with the rest of her life.

As Barbara describes it, "The director of my public library was married to the director of the library at UNC-Asheville, and she suggested that if I would think about librarianship as a career, they would see if they could find a scholarship for me at UNC-A. I agreed. After all, all I had to do was *think* about becoming a librarian, right? But as I worked in the college library at UNC-A, I was given more and more responsibility—and I liked that. My greatest accomplishment was being allowed to drop catalog cards below the rod. It was then I knew: this is my profession."

From UNC-Asheville to UNC-Chapel Hill to become a children's librarian in a public library was only natural—after all, both her mentors would have it no other way! It was a delightful, heady two years. As Barbara describes it, she had all the "greats": Doralyn Hickey for cataloging, Bud

for the 90's

Gambie for selection, *etc. etc.* . . And with this foundation, she rather naively determined her net worth for the world of work: \$10,000 a year—in 1972.

Determining her net worth was easy; realizing it was a bit more difficult. The first job she was offered was in a public library in Virginia for \$7200 a year—hardly \$10,000. And all the others around her were offering similar salaries. But Gaston College was offering a salary of \$9444 for a serials librarian and, after all, she was a product of the community college system, and it was close to \$10,000. "I didn't compromise my net worth much," she grins.

Promoted from serials librarian to technical services librarian, Barbara found Gaston Community College a challenging, gratifying experience. She really did everything in that library—after all, she was the only librarian there every summer, so "I did whatever needed to be done." And it would have been easy to stay. Everyone in North Carolina's community college system is approximately the same age, and there are only fifty eight directors, so advancement opportunities are scarce. It would have been easy to rationalize the comfortable security of her original job.

But in 1984 the directorship at Durham Tech was advertised, and Barbara realized that if she wanted to advance, she was going to have to at least apply. But she was happy in Gastonia, content to stay there forever; so when they called her for an interview, she was philosophical. She told them what she could do and also what she possi-

bly could not. "I was totally honest and without nerves—and they offered me the job anyway. I was flabbergasted! Then I had to decide if I really wanted to come to Durham. After all, all I knew about Durham was Honey's at Guess Road. But I've been here five years and it's home."

When Barbara arrived at Durham Tech as Director of Educational Resources, the Learning Resources Center included the library, production center, and the curriculum telecourse center. Under her direction and immediate supervision, a developmental studies program which focuses on remedial math, English, reading, and study skills has been added. All nineteen of the part-time instructors in this new program, as well as sixteen full-time learning resources center staff and four coordinators, report to her. In her current position as Associate Dean for Educational Resources, she is one of six associate deans in the instructional area of the college who determine the academic direction of Durham Technical Community College.

Barbara sees the gradual administrative direction of her library career as only natural. "Administration is nothing more than organizing things, stating things, and following up. Librarians do these things. We're better prepared for administrative positions than most."

And becoming NCLA president is just another "administrative thing," albeit one she hardly expected. When Mertys Bell and Mary Avery approached her to run, she agreed—after all how do you say 'no' to Ms. Bell?—but only because she really thought that she would not be elected. But she also saw it as a challenge. Barbara had once heard someone state very unequivocally that you can't be NCLA president without a private secretary. "I decided that I would just show them. After all, lots of school librarians don't even have assistants, much less private secretaries! They should have the opportunity to be president just like anyone else."

Fortunately for Barbara and future NCLA presidents and executive board members, whether or not a private secretary is needed to do the job will be a moot issue. One of Barbara's immediate and major challenges is hiring an administrative assistant for NCLA whose office will be in the State Library building in Raleigh and who will handle most of the administrative chores for the association. While everyone sees the need for this position, particularly from the treasurer's point of view, Barbara sees this transition as a particularly sensitive one for the organization. "Giving up power is difficult for people. No matter what you say, when you delegate work, you give up some



Incoming NCLA president Barbara Baker is shown presenting out-going president Patsy Hansel a token of the association's appreciation for her years of service.



1987-89 NCLA Executive Board members from left to right are: seated: Nancy Fogarty, Pauline Myrick, Lauren Williams, Pat Ryckman, Patrice Ebert, Irene Hairston, and Barbara Baker. Standing: Frank Sinclair, Sylvia Sprinkle-Hamlin, Janet Freeman, Frances Bradburn, Howard McGinn, Patsy Hansel, Ray Frankle, Gloria Miller, Cal Shepard, Marti Smith, Harry Tuchmayer, Melanie Collins, Barbara Anderson, Ann Thigpen, and Jerry Thrasher.

power. We're all going to have to be very careful not to just arbitrarily say 'Well, I could do this better,' without looking to see if we really would only be doing it differently. NCLA needs this position, but we must be careful to convey to the membership, especially the executive board, that we still need them as well."

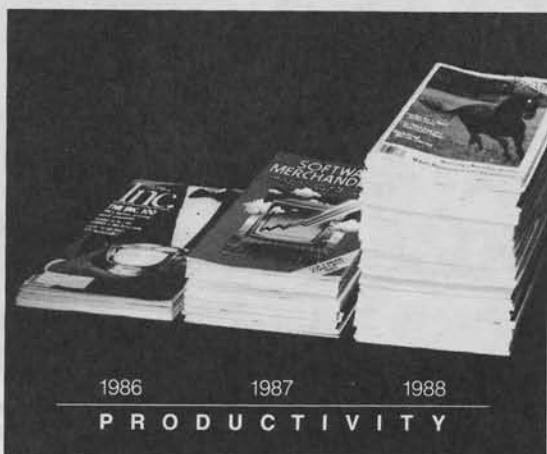
It is this sensitivity to the simultaneous needs of both the association and its members that makes Barbara's two-fold goal for her presidency so natural. "NCLA must continue to develop and move forward, and this can only be done by nurturing leaders for both the organization and, more importantly, for libraries in North Carolina. This nurturing can only succeed if NCLA's current leaders know each other (and their organizational jobs) well, and can appreciate the diversity within North Carolina librarianship. These are the goals for my presidency." And ones we all hope go far beyond Barbara Baker's two-year tenure.

Frances Bryant Bradburn



Outgoing treasurer Nancy Fogarty was presented a gift from NCLA for her time and service to the association for the past four years.

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