

IMCPL AND IU SLIS-INDY SYMPOSIUM PARTNERSHIP

by Jean Preer



The expansion of the Indianapolis program of the Indiana University School of Library and Information Science has made possible an array of collaborative efforts and potential partnerships. Since fall 2002, Indiana University's library school has been a single program in two locations with full-time faculty in Bloomington and Indianapolis, and a shared mission and curriculum. Located on the campus of Indiana University Purdue University Indianapolis (IUPUI), SLIS Indy has an urban base in the state capital, affording proximity to an array of libraries. IUPUI as a comprehensive university counts civic engagement among its foremost institutional priorities. Academic programs are encouraged to partner both on campus and in the community.

With the arrival of SLIS in Indianapolis, a natural partnership developed almost immediately between the library school and the Indianapolis-Marion County Public Library. Out of conversations between the school's Executive Associate Dean, Danny Callison, and then library CEO, Ed Szynaka, came the first fruit of that collaboration – a symposium inaugurated in fall 2003. With financial and staff support from both institutions, the symposium is aimed at a diverse audience including library school students, library practitioners, and the general public. The public relations expertise of IMCPL ensures widespread notice of planned events and heightens visibility in the community for both the library and the library school.

The 2003-2004 series has focused on Library Philanthropy, Fundraising, and Friends. This theme was selected for a variety of reasons, the first being that libraries and non-profits of all sorts are interested in increasing their financial and volunteer support. In the current economic climate, public libraries are turning to private sources of funding, and librarians are becoming more accomplished fundraisers.

The series began with a historical perspective provided by Peter Krass, author of the recent biography, *Carnegie*, the first new biography of Andrew Carnegie in three decades. Published by John Wiley and Sons in 2002, Krass's study documents Carnegie's amazing rise

in industry and explores the complexity of his motivation in funding libraries and a myriad of other causes. Krass's talk, "Andrew Carnegie – Ruthless Empire Builder and Pioneering Philanthropist" attracted a large and diverse crowd. Members of the public, from high school age to senior citizens, joined library school students and library professionals for the kickoff event.

A natural outcome of the initial partnership between SLIS and IMCPL has been the growth of additional partnerships as the program series has evolved. Peter Krass's appearance, sponsored by the library and the library school, was offered in cooperation with the IU Center on Philanthropy. Indiana University has been a leader in the development of academic programs focused on philanthropy. The SLIS program in Indianapolis has worked to enhance its offerings related to library fundraising. In summer 2003, new full time faculty member Jean Preer offered a special topics course "Philanthropic Giving for Libraries" which the school hopes to add to its regular course offerings. The course featured librarians engaged in development activities numerous guests from the Indiana philanthropic community. In fall 2004, the school and the center anticipate the start of a joint degree program in which students will complete master's degrees in philanthropic studies and in library and information science.

The second presentation in the 2003-2004 symposium series involved another partner organization, Friends of Indiana Libraries (FOIL). Based at the Indiana State Library, FOIL is a membership organization of individuals and groups dedicated to the support of Indiana libraries. Symposium speaker Sally Gardner Reed is executive director of Friends of Libraries USA (FOLUSA) of which FOIL is a part. On November 22, during her first ever visit to Indianapolis, Sally Reed spoke to two different audiences on "The Power of Friends." Addressing Friday night's assemblage of students and practitioners, she described the perilous state of American libraries as the economy has declined. Reed laid some of the blame on librarians for failing to make the case for libraries in a politically compelling way. She called on friends to move beyond library book

sales to become advocates for libraries in the broader community.

The following morning, Reed pursued the theme of advocacy to a gathering of friends of libraries held in the newly renovated Indiana Authors Room of the Indiana State Library. Her audience included library school students, library directors, trustees, and friends from central Indiana and around the state. Friends, she urged, need to be more engaged in raising support and visibility for their libraries.

On March 26, 2004, Richard Akeroyd presented the third in this year's symposium, "The Impact of the Gates Library Program and the Challenges Ahead." Akeroyd is former director of International Library Initiatives for the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and is now New Mexico State Librarian. Since many have compared Bill Gates's support of technology in libraries with Andrew Carnegie's support of library construction, this presentation will bring the year's program full circle. It will be given in cooperation with the IUPUI Library whose director David Lewis extended the invitation to Richard Akeroyd.

Scholars of civic engagement stress the importance of institutions that reach across traditional boundaries to serve as bridges between various groups in their community. Libraries have long played such a role. In organizing the symposium, IMCPL, SLIS, and partner institutions have extended the reach of their own cooperation to involve other groups and other audiences.

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