

KAREN THOMPSON

Date of Interview: November 14, 2007

Interviewer: Laura Kane

Summary

Karen Thompson began her professional career as a junior high school librarian and found out quickly that it was not a good fit. When she got a new job at the Georgia Retardation Center, she realized she needed some kind of focused medical studies. She enrolled in Emory's medical librarianship course taught by Miriam Libbey, and later completed her master's degree there.

Karen's professional positions included serving as the Science Bibliographer at Georgia State University and as a cataloger at Medical College of Georgia. For the last 23 years of her career, she was the Serials Librarian at the University of South Carolina School of Medicine Library. While there, she expanded and coordinated the *Southeastern Medical Periodicals Union List*, known by many as SEMPUL, which helped to streamline interlibrary loan processes region-wide by consolidating the journal holdings of five southern states into a database. Those holdings were loaded into NLM's SERHOLD database.

Karen's first Southern Chapter meeting was in Birmingham, Alabama, where she had to give a speech about the SEMPUL database. She remembers being very nervous, but was pleased at how welcoming the members of the chapter were.

"I remember always having a really good time," she says, "and I remember that it was always so nice to get together and talk with people face-to-face. Whenever I returned home, I always had a renewed sense of the things that were possible."

See the full transcript on the SC/MLA Oral History web page.

Laura Kane
September 10, 2008