

## NANCY CLEMMONS

**Date of Interview: November 15, 2007**

**Interviewer: Sylvia McAphee**

### Summary

Nancy Clemmons started out as an intrigued high school science student who was quite impressed by the “woman who knew how to show her how to use the Chemical Abstracts and was so knowledgeable”. She later taught 7<sup>th</sup> grade science and took notice of the school librarian who had “everything so organized” and helped the students do their science project. She knew she wanted to go to graduate school in something, so a good friend of hers who happened to be a guidance counselor, gave her a copy of the *Occupational Outlook Handbook*. It was in reading this book that she knew librarianship would be the right career path for her. Her first library job was at Samford University. While there, she would use *Index Medicus*, but if someone wanted a Medline search, “she would have to call Lister Hill Library and talk to the searchers”. She was so impressed by their skills she thought it would be great if she could work over there. She went to LSU and finished a one year appointment in government documents. While there, she met Beth Paskoff and she encouraged her to take the medical librarianship certification exam. Jane Lambremont was at the hospital library, and helped her do her very first Medline searches. Kathy Torrente was Nancy’s supervisor whom she described as just wonderful. Nancy thoroughly enjoyed her experiences at Lister Hill Library and exclaimed that “I stayed as long as they’d let me”.

Nancy Clemmons’ first conference was actually here in Charleston in 1982. Her first impression of everyone was how warm and welcoming they were. The candlelight tour of homes and how beautiful they were was also etched on her memory of that very first meeting. One of the most interesting events she recalled within the chapter was when Ada Seltzer gave Ted Srygley a roast on his retirement and did a striptease at the Birmingham meeting in the late ‘80s. At the joint meeting with MAC one year they had a musical revue with dancing that was quite memorable. Nancy described the revue as “the most fabulous production you’ve ever seen”. Coming up with the Southern Chapter logo also proved to be a very hard task. There was a lot of talk on the discussion list and every time they would come up with one symbol that fit one state, it would not fit the other states as well. It took years to come up with a logo that everyone could agree on and support. Nancy always enjoyed serving in various capacities in Southern Chapter’s leadership as well as on the executive committee. She found her times in those capacities very rewarding and gratifying.

Nancy Clemmons named Lucretia McClure, Mark Hodges, Scott Plutchak, Kathy Torrente, Beth Paskoff, Jane Lambremont, and Sarah Brown as the people she felt had contributed to her overall profession development and growth. Nancy said that the best advice she could give a new medical librarian is to volunteer for everything. She said you have to get out there and “try it”. Once you get out there and do a good job, people

will remember and want you to do something else. “There’s just so much variety in librarianship. Just do something, and it leads to other paths, and they are all interesting”.

For a copy of the full transcript, contact the SC/MLA Archivist.

Sylvia McAphee  
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