RON BROWN (1914 - 2002)

It is with sadness that we have learned of the death of Mr Ron Brown on 14 December in his eighty-ninth year. He grew up in the Stroud area of Gloucestershire in England, worked at Rhodes University, and held the post of University Librarian in Pietermaritzburg between the years 1962 and 1973. Those who worked with him have memories that are a mixture of affection and profound respect.

Ron Brown was a librarian of great distinction and a remarkable leader of what was, during the '60s, a small but very hard working staff. During his time, the Pietermaritzburg Library became autonomous and was able to develop its distinctive character and service orientation, which all his successors have sought to maintain. Working with Ron was a life-shaping experience. Humane and affirming, with an engaging sense of humour, he won the unswerving loyalty of his staff, while at the same time expecting from them the highest standards of efficiency and dedication. He was a versatile, practical librarian who worked alongside each staff member in turn to encourage and teach them good principles of librarianship. He was well educated and extremely knowledgeable in many subject fields, co-operating with the academic staff and ensuring that the library's very limited budget was spent in a balanced and expedient way. One of his special projects was the Nataliana collection, which he built up systematically and imaginatively. He personally supervised the rationalization of the journals when the Agriculture faculty was taken over by the University during the last few months before his retirement and participated actively in the South African Library Association, supporting library co-operation at national and local levels.

Above all, Ron Brown was a visionary. He started the Library Bulletin and compiled it with flair for 11 years. He foresaw new library methods and services, kept abreast of subject developments and anticipated the needs of research in the University. He worked closely with the architects to ensure that the present Library building, built in 1964, was practical and flexible. His foresight was vindicated by the fact that it was able to accommodate expanding collections, new services, a bigger staff and more users until 1990 when the top floor was added. In his final, pre-retirement report Ron Brown predicted the need for audio-visual services, computerization, improved inter-library co-operation, focused user education and transformation, all of which were achieved in the years that followed.

After his retirement he kept abreast of the Library's activities, commenting with regularity and interest on news from the Bulletin and Annual Reports. He last visited the library in August 1995 when he and his wife Win attended a staff lunch. With characteristic enthusiasm and eloquence he commended the expanded building, new services and the enhanced staff complement.

If working lives are judged by their legacies, Ron Brown can now rest well content. For those who joined the staff after he left, his imprint was ever-present: a tradition of pragmatic, hands-on working methods, excellent relations with academic staff and students based on mutual respect, and the courage to exercise judgement, imagination and initiative and act in the best interests of the users. Viewed from the twenty-first century, he may appear a somewhat old-fashioned figure, the scholarly librarian who was interested in publishing and knew how to catalogue and classify his material. But his death provides a timely reminder that the traditional values he espoused within the profession are as relevant today as they were in his era.

Colleen Vietzen and Christopher Merrett
INDEXES AND ABSTRACTS

Change of access to selected electronic indexes and abstracts
Recently, several indexes and abstracts to which the Library subscribes have been made available online instead of via Novell Application Launcher (NAL). They are:

- African Health Anthology
- African Studies
- AIDSsearch
- CABI (Commonwealth Agricultural Bureau Abstracts)
- ERIC see AskERIC
- Philosopher's Index
- Water Resources Worldwide
- Wildlife and Ecology Studies Worldwide

These are all accessible from the alphabetical list of online indexes on the Library website at http://www.library.unp.ac.za/id28.htm

Details of how many simultaneous users may access the indexes are available there as well.

In the near future several other indexes and abstracts will be made accessible online instead of via NAL. They are:

- Library and Information Science Abstracts (LISA)
- PsychInfo

When online access becomes available, notices will appear on the NEW page of the Library website at http://www.library.unp.ac.za/id100.htm

Please remember: If the Library pays a subscription for an online indexing or abstracting journal, it will only be accessible to staff and registered students using the campus LAN with their Internet browser set to the UNP proxy server.

THEOLOGICAL CLUSTER
LIBRARY NEWS

The Lutheran House of Studies Library has relocated to its new building. The new library has been named the Lutheran Theological Institute Library and was officially opened on the 2 January 2003. The Maphumulo Lutheran Seminary has amalgamated with the Lutheran Theological Institute. This has resulted in the moving of the Maphumulo library collection to the Lutheran Theological Institute Library. The Maphumulo students have also relocated to Pietermaritzburg and many will be attending courses run at the School of Theology.

Besides the Maphumulo collection, the Lutheran Theological Institute recently acquired the library of the Marang Theological Seminary. The Lutheran Theological Institute Library has steadily grown over the years since it was founded in 1973. The new library is staffed by Inge Scribe and the librarian from Maphumulo, Algernon Coercius. The UNP Library wishes the library staff of the Lutheran Theological Institute all the best for the future in their new library.

LIBRARY ORIENTATION

First-years
Two very successful Library sessions were included in the first-year orientation this year. Altogether 604 prospective first-year students visited the Library on two afternoons of the Orientation Week. They were welcomed by Subject Librarians, shown the 15-minute video introducing the Library and then all the groups were taken on a tour of the Library by their mentors.

Training in the use of the Library catalogue was NOT included in the session so we appeal to all lecturers to remind their first-year students to come to the Main Library foyer where they can book a 45-minute session to learn how to use OPAC. These sessions will be held three times a day on Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays. Those who missed seeing the Library video can book to see it on Mondays and Tuesdays. Details of times are available on the booking sheets in the foyer of the Main Library.

Other years
Subject Librarians in the Main and Life Sciences Libraries have already run 17 sessions on the use of Library resources for 271 postgraduate students this year. If you have not arranged training for your postgraduate and other students, please contact your Subject Librarian as soon as possible. The Multimedia Classroom (MMC), where we run many of these sessions on Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays, is already heavily booked but we will do our best to accommodate your students.

URGENT BOOKS

Because the University’s budget has not yet been finalized, a small amount has been put into all book votes to enable urgent books to be ordered.

Please route your orders through your Library liaison person or Subject Librarian (see the table on the next page).
STAFF NEWS

University Librarian
Deputy University Librarian Carol Brammage will continue to be Acting University Librarian until the end of 2003.

Academic news
Studying part-time while employed full-time is never easy so we would like to congratulate all those members of the Library’s staff who passed exams in 2002:

Shadia Alli  Jillian Clark  Carol Davids  Rose Kühn  Jabu Nene  Nicky Pitout  Jillian Viljoen

In addition we would like to congratulate those who have recently completed Master’s degrees:

- Ruth Hoskins - Master of Information Studies
  Mini thesis title: *Information and Communication Technology (ICT) knowledge and skills of subject librarians at the university libraries of KwaZulu-Natal.*
- Praversh Sukram - Master of Business Administration
  Mini-thesis title: *Customer care at the University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg: an investigation into services received by students from support departments during registration.*

Arrivals and departures
We welcome Sara Mitha who will be joining the Life Sciences Library at the beginning of March as the Subject Librarian for a range of subjects (see the table below). She comes to this Library from E G Malherbe Library on the Durban campus.

We also welcome Sashni Chetty who will be working temporarily in ILL.

We are very sorry to have said goodbye to Kwenza Mdlalose (Life Sciences Library Issue Desk) at the end of last year and to be saying goodbye to Linda Axford who is emigrating to Australia with her family. She has worked in the Library for nine years and will leave at the end of February. Library and academic staff will all miss her gentle, calm and efficient presence in Acquisitions.

Subject Librarians
Because Carol Brammage is Acting University Librarian and Annette Andersson and Bongiwe Nyide have left, there has been some reshuffling of subject portfolios which is reflected in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Portfolio</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jenny Aitchison</td>
<td>Centre for Visual Arts, Classics, Drama Studies, Gender Studies, Information Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vivien Langley</td>
<td>Biochemistry, Biology, Botany, Centre for Plant Growth and Development, Entomology, Genetics, Molecular Genetics, Zoology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Renee Damonse</td>
<td>Educational Psychology, Psychology, Sociology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ruth Hoskins</td>
<td>Afrikaans and Nederlands, Philosophy, Religious Studies, Theological Studies, Unilever Ethics Centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rosemary Kühn</td>
<td>CENGOPO, Chemistry, Law, Physics, Political Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nthabiseng Mosala</td>
<td>Adult Education, Education, Computer Science, Mathematics, Statistics and Biometry, Zulu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Praversh Sukram</td>
<td>Accountancy, Applied Language Studies, Business Administration, Economics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To be appointed</td>
<td>English, French, German, History, Media and Communication</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

BOOK REVIEW
This academic commentary covers the entire corpus of Scripture in a single volume. Many commentators have argued that this is one of the finest Biblical commentaries available. Named after the premier Scripture scholar of the patristic period, St. Jerome, it is an update of the Jerome Biblical commentary of more than a quarter century ago.

St. Jerome (ca. 347-419/20) is known first and foremost for his translations and revisions of the Biblical books, the Vulgate, which became the accepted text in the Latin west. He is thus viewed as a major bridging figure in the transition to the Middle Ages in the west. Although his reputation grew above all from his work on the Vulgate, his scriptural commentaries and translations have also been a substantial influence.

The new Jerome Biblical commentary is encyclopaedic in its examination of the prevailing theories of Biblical criticism and highlights what scholars think about the development of particular books of the Bible. Although the commentary tells the reader a lot about the theological ideas associated with particular texts, it is the text, not the theology, which is of principal interest to the authors.

Some might say that the late Raymond Brown, Joseph Fitzmyer and Roland Murphy represent the very best of Catholic critical scholarship.

The commentary has a Roman Catholic perspective and often provides critical insights into how the Roman Catholic Church has interpreted Scripture. For this reason, the reader is often left without the contrasting Protestant and Orthodox perspectives.

Another interesting thing about the book is that it is really well written and is therefore a must for any serious scholar of the Bible. The volume is loaded with articles and commentary that illuminate, stimulate, and prompt more extensive research. Many of the articles are professionally erudite and scholarly. The tone is nevertheless accessible to the serious scholar. It is also good reading not only for the serious scholar of Christian Scripture but also for readers interested in Christianity and the Bible as profound world literature.

The volume consists of two parts. Part I deals with the Old Testament (the essays on the Pentateuch and Genesis are very good). Part II concerns itself with the New Testament and includes topical articles such as “Canonicity”. The article on “Hermeneutics” written by Raymond Brown is a frank declaration regarding the nature and intent of the scholarship.

This commentary fills a much-needed niche among Biblical commentaries and is a fine compendium of authoritative Biblical scholarship. It is a wonderful resource book for any academic scholar.

Related Reading


Ruth Hoskins