

DIRECTORS REPORT
June 22, 2015

This is my 182nd monthly report since I became Director in April 2000. Since it is my final report, I want to take a different, more personal approach and call it:

Highlights from 35 Years at Carmel Clay Public Library

A believer in the “Bloom Where You’re Planted” philosophy, I have been privileged to enjoy a multifaceted career, staying in one place while the community and library changed, offering multiple opportunities for personal and professional growth.

I started working for the Carmel Public Library part-time in 1980 at the 515 E. Main Street building, at a time when Carmel was beginning to grow rapidly. In 1980 the library building was eight years old, built to replace the original Carnegie library that had served the community for 58 years. The “new” building was 17,000 square feet, with a staff of about six, and served a population of 32,606 (Carmel and Clay Township).

Every staff member was a jack-of-all-trades, sharing responsibility for everything from answering the phone to checking out books to answering reference questions. Only two of the six staff members were full-time. Two high school students served as pages, working after school and weekends to re-shelve the books.

In 1982, with Jackie Nytes as Director, we began using OCLC, an international bibliographic utility, to catalog the collection. This was our first foray into computer technology, but we still used the card catalog – one in the adult department and one in children’s. The first computer we had was used only for cataloging purposes. It was a huge affair, resembling a beehive.

By 1985 we had outgrown the building, and Parke Randall, with the original architectural firm of Pecksok, Jelliffe, & Randall (plus Nice) was hired to plan the expansion. We doubled the space to 34,000 square feet, using every available square foot of real estate. The land restriction created a design challenge, causing some of the rooms to be oddly shaped. The Director’s office, for example, looked like a modified a triangle.

When we expanded the building, we introduced our first online catalog. We kept the card catalog around for a while but no longer filed or pulled cards, so the information soon became outdated. Patrons and some staff mourned the loss of the card catalog for years.

The computer room built to house the automated system had subflooring and was environmentally controlled to protect the equipment – monstrous machines with large, unwieldy disks that required several hours each night to back up the data.

Another significant first in the mid 1980’s was an Interlocal Cooperation Agreement with Carmel Clay Schools. A shared computer system gave public library patrons and school students and personnel online access to a system wide catalog. This was a revolutionary development that lasted until we built the new library in 1999.

The Library Foundation was established in the late 1980s as an alternative source of funding to supplement the library's meager budget. In 1989 we received our first County Option Income Tax distribution of \$113,443. COIT revenue continued to grow until in 2014 we received almost \$3 million. It's safe to say that COIT revenue was a game changer, easing the financial restrictions that had plagued the library since 1973 when a property tax freeze went into effect.

Also in the late 1980s, with Patricia Allen as Director, desktop computers were introduced to streamline staff work functions. We started using WordPerfect and Lotus 123, long before Microsoft took over. We've used e-mail for so long, I can't remember when we started; but it must have been around this time. Until recently, we still used a typewriter for a few tasks such as budget documents and miscellaneous forms; but when a new staff member mentioned, to our chagrin, that she had never used a typewriter, we decided it was time to let the last one go.

In January 1988, we introduced Sunday hours just during the school year. When we moved into the current building in 1999, we began staying open on Sunday year-round. Sunday has always been our busiest day of the week, but we've had patrons request extended hours on other days as well. In response, several years ago we added two hours to the Friday schedule, staying open until 7:00 p.m. We've been open 70 hours per week ever since.

As the library grew in size and sophistication, we started creating specialized positions and hiring staff to manage new services: audiovisual services and computer technology in the 1980s; young adult services, computer technology, communications and development, and human resources in the 1990s. We're poised to create other positions to meet new needs of the 21st century.

Overseeing the demise of LP albums in the 1980s, we started acquiring new audiovisual formats. Audio cassettes and VHS video tapes appeared and over time were replaced by CDs, DVDs and BluRay. Downloadable audio and eBooks were introduced, dramatically changing the way we experience books and reading. Streaming audio and video services are more recent additions in a trend that shows no signs of slowing down.

Population grew by leaps and bounds in the 1990s. Under Director John Fuchs, demand for library resources taxed our ability to meet patron expectations in the 515 E. Main Street facility. Soon we were having serious discussions about another expansion. Given the physical restraint of the existing property, it was eventually decided to build a brand new facility. A community survey told us we needed to stay within walking distance of the high school. Fortunately the school corporation owned the property we eventually purchased and we were able to build the library we have today.

Planning for the future, and knowing the challenge of financing bricks-and-mortar buildings, it was decided we should invest in only one facility rather than build branches. Anticipating a build out population of 85,000 by the year 2020, the library was designed to be a legacy building by architect Jeffrey Scherer of the Minneapolis firm Meyer Scherer & Rockcastle.

We opened to the public on May 2, 1999, having tripled the size of the previous library and doubling the number of staff. In addition to being a state-of-the-art facility, the new building offered two new amenities: a gift shop operated by the Friends of the Library and a café leased by an outside vendor. In 2006 the gift shop became a book store of gently used books, managed and operated by Friends volunteers. The café continues to be managed by an outside vendor.

As the library grew, so did my responsibilities. I served as the first Technical Services Manager, adding the title of System Administrator along the way. For a time I supervised Technical Services, Computer Services, and Circulation Services. In the early 1990's I was named Assistant Director, with responsibility for all support service departments as well as building and grounds. I was appointed Director in 2000 and another series of opportunities opened up.

In the 16 years since we opened our newest building, we have operated under several different strategic plans, making a number of improvements along the way, many of them technology related. A few that have transformed the way the library functions are:

- Web-based Internet service
- Wireless technology
- RFID technology for circulation

It's impossible to overestimate the significance of these time saving and service enhancing technologies.

During this same time period, we re-established the Library Foundation, hired the first Foundation Director, and watched the Foundation mature and grow to what it is today. In the process, we have developed long lasting relationships with many individuals who are passionate supporters of the library. What started as a dream a few decades ago has become a reality.

In the past few years we expanded our reach to serve patrons beyond our walls. In 2010, for example, we initiated reciprocal borrowing with the four other library systems in Hamilton County. Hamilton County residents are able to borrow materials from any of the public libraries in the County, with CCPL providing 70% of the items that are checked out under this program.

Other examples of new outreach services are:

- Providing programs for children offsite at places like the Monon Community Center, Pilgrim Lutheran Church, and West Park
- Installing a remote drop box west of U.S. 31 for patrons to return library materials
- Launching our mobile library, *ccpl2go*, to be a library branch on wheels, serving the community in a whole new way

Since my first day with the library, I have worked with exceptional people from whom I have learned much and with whom I have shared a lifetime of memorable experiences. I have been blessed and am truly thankful for the support and encouragement I've received throughout my career. Now it's time for me to move into a different role and for the library to have new leadership and fresh ideas. With our exceptionally talented staff, committed Boards, and an engaged community, I feel certain that a bright future awaits the Carmel Clay Public Library.

1980 population was 32,606; circulation was 245,170;
1990 population was 43,007; circulation was 503,388;
2000 population was 64,709; circulation was 1,197,921;
2010 population was 83,293; circulation was 1,800,301
Current estimate is ~ 86,000 and growing; 2014 circulation was 2,104,255