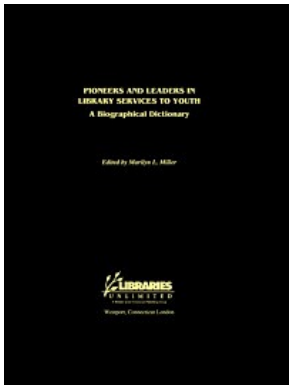
Cover


PIONEERS AND LEADERS IN
LIBRARY SERVICES TO YOUTH
A Biographical Dictionary
Edited by Marilyn L. Miller
LIBRARIES
UNLIMITED

Pioneers and Leaders in Library Services to Youth

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A Biographical Dictionary

Edited by Marilyn L.Miller

Westport, Connecticut-London

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data
Pioneers and leaders in library services to youth:a biographical dictionary/edited by Marilyn L.Miller.
p. cm.
Includes bibliographical references and index.
ISBN 1-59158-028-5 (alk. Paper)
1. Children's librarians—United States—Biography—Dictionaries. 2. Young adult services Librarians—United States—Biography—Dictionaries. I.Miller, Marilyn L. (Marilyn Lea), 1930–
Z720.A4P56 2003
027.6′26′092—dc21 2003050656
[B]

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data is available.

Library of Congress Catalog Card Number: 2003050656

ISBN: 1-59158-028-5

First published in 2003
Libraries Unlimited, Inc., 88 Post Road West, Westport, CT 06881
A Member of the Greenwood Publishing Group, Inc.
www.lu.com

Printed in the United States of America

The paper used in this book complies with the Permanent Paper Standard issued by the National Information Standards Organization (Z39.48–1984).
10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Dedicated to the memory of those
who developed the models for creative
and dynamic library service for the
nation's youth.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This collection was inspired from the belief that library service to youth deserves a more dynamic representation in library history and biography. Where better to begin correcting this imbalance than by presenting the biographies of those that established and developed a strong foundation in this area of library service.

I would like to thank the Advisory Committee who wholeheartedly supported the premise. All worked diligently to provide guidelines for the selection of biographees to be included, reviewed essays, and responded quickly and thoughtfully to questions and issues that arose in the preparation of the work. My thanks to the network of librarians across the country who submitted the names of those who should be remembered for their commitment to carving out a vital role in library development for library service to children and young adults. Thanks to those who agreed to do the necessary research and writing of the essays. Research on some of the selected subjects was difficult because of the scarcity of bibliographic information. Perhaps this collection will inspire contemporary leaders to record events in their career and to contribute to scholarship in the field so that subsequent supplements will be easier to develop. Thanks, also, to the several graduate students at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro who assisted by performing the myriad tasks involved in developing a publication of this nature. Their efforts are unsung but remembered. I would also like to thank the editors at Libraries Unlimited for their help and support with putting this project together.

Last, but not least, my heartfelt thanks to Marjorie Jones, skillful and thoughtful editor and friend who assisted greatly and graciously in the preparation of the manuscript.

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PREFACE

These biographical essays celebrate public and school library service to children and young adults through the professional lives and contributions of some of its pioneers and leaders.

The collection was inspired by *The Dictionary of American Library Biography* (Libraries Unlimited 1978), a compilation of essays about the "people, who, in the eyes of the American library history community, made significant contributions to the development of libraries and the library profession in the United States." Only a few of those included in that volume were chosen because of their contributions to youth library services. Therefore, this volume devoted only to that field is important for a more complete history of library development in the twentieth century.

Public library service to children spread rapidly across the country in the 1920s and 1930s and is acknowledged widely in the profession for its contributions to literacy efforts in the nation and for its acceptance by the American public. Many educators advocated for school libraries in the late 19th and earth 20th centuries. Standards for school library development had been completed by the late 1920s, but the major impetus for the growth of school libraries began in the mid-1950s.

The leaders recognized in this collection also include many whose contributions supported the work of professional youth librarians: children's book editors who worked hand in hand with librarians to develop and sustain quality children's and young adult literature to entertain, educate, inspire, and comfort young readers and some early reviewers of literature for children. Without all of these people, library service to the young would not have reached the creative and productive maturation that it has.

Another reason for the creation of this biographical collection is the fact that library service to children at the turn of a new century faces critical problems: the overpowering acceptance of technology by the young; recruiting and staffing problems; low salaries in public libraries; the diminishing opportunities for young services specialization in library schools; and, the geographical inequities in access to library education. All these are serious issues to be addressed by the library profession as a whole. We need this record of the foundations and development of the profession from which these issues will be addressed.

This collection includes 57 original essays and 40 reprints that appeared in the 1978 DALB and its two supplements, 1990 and 2002, with the permission of Libraries Unlimited. Asterisks are used following the reprinted sketches: * indicates DALB, 1978; ** indicates DALB Supplement 1990; and *** indicates DALB Supplement 2002. With a few exceptions, the biographical sketches begin with information on the subject's family background and education. The remainder of each sketch covers the subject's professional career and contributions. Each essay concludes with a bibliography consisting of biographical listings, and obituaries, books and articles by and about the biographee, and primary source collections, if known.

History

In 1987, David Loertscher, then an editor with Libraries Unlimited, responded favorably to the proposal of a collection of biographical essays of youth services leaders and encouraged its development. A working advisory committee of five people knowledgeable about the history of the development of youth library services was appointed: O.Mell Busbin, Professor of Library Science, Appalachian State University, Gale Eaton, Assistant Professor of Library and Information Studies, University of Rhode Island, Lillian N.Gerhardt, Editor-in-Chief, *School Library Journal,* Amy Kellman, Coordinator of Children's Services, Carnegie Public Library, Pittsburgh, and Peggy Sullivan, Dean and Professor, College of Professional Studies, Northern Illinois University. The committee assisted in the selection of subjects for the collection, recommended potential authors for each biographee, and reviewed submitted essays.

Selection Criteria

Letters inviting nominations were sent to nearly 100 practitioners and youth library specialists in library schools. They were asked to identify deceased leaders in library service who had made outstanding contributions to the development of library service for children and young adults by employing more than one of the following criteria.

- Provided leadership in the development of library service to youth at the regional or national level.
- Demonstrated leadership in professional associations.
- Initiated innovative approaches to the development of library service to youth.
- Influenced the practice of librarianship: teaching, writing, speaking, publishing, promotion of materials.
- Achieved success in legislative efforts to support library service to youth.
- Gave major support as philanthropists to the development of library service to youth.

The Advisory Committee reviewed 75 nominations and selected those that met at least three or more of the criteria. While the Advisory Committee was most interested in those whose work had national significance, it was obvious that some of the nominees should be recognized for major contributions to their region's school library development.

No selection process is perfect. Some possible subjects are not here because writers could not locate information about them. There are often special problems in doing research on women: many did not write memoirs; few kept or donated papers to universities; and, too often their obituaries failed to mention their career achievements.

AHLERS, ELEANOR E. (1911–1997)

Eleanor E.Ahlers was born May 16, 1911 at the Seattle General Hospital in Seattle, Washington, to Francis Richard Ahlers and Elizabeth Frances Ahlers. She began her university career at the University of Washington, where she received a Bachelor of Arts in French in 1932. After graduation, she was an English and Foreign Languages teacher in South Bend, Washington, from 1932–1936. She later moved to Mt. Vernon, Washington, to assume a position as teacher-librarian from 1936–1942.

Her interest in librarianship was nourished with a B.L.S. from the University of Denver in 1942. Over the next decade, she began a noteworthy career as a school librarian, beginning with a high school position in Everett, Washington, from 1942–1953, and ultimately moving to a more senior position as supervisor of school libraries from 1952–1953. She continued her interest in school librarianship and education with course work at the University of California during the summer of 1948.

A combination of practical experience and a passion for school librarianship led Ahlers to a new position as assistant professor of Library Science at the School of Education at the University of Oregon from 1953–1957. While Ahlers had previously taught teacher-librarian courses at the University of Wyoming during the summers of 1945 and 1946, as well as at San Jose State College during the summers of 1947 and 1952, her acceptance of the assistant professor position would be her first full-time university teaching position.

She later returned to the University of Washington and received an M.A. in Curriculum Studies in 1957. After many years as an educator at many different levels, Ahlers accepted a position with the American Association of School Libraries as Executive Secretary from 1957–1961. This was a significant alteration to her familiar experience as a teacher-librarian and educator and provided an opportunity to learn more administrative and managerial skills that would become invaluable in the near future.

Former director of the University of Washington School of Librarianship Peter Hiatt reminisces that:

> One of my early objectives was to develop communications among all types of library leaders, not just for the impact that might have for the improvement of libraries in the state, but to keep me, and through me, the faculty alert to the real needs of the profession in the state. Eleanor started me off by identifying key school library/media leaders. Soon leaders of college, community college, public, school, special, and university libraries began meeting for bi-monthly lunches. I was amazed to find that Eleanor was correct when she told me that she would be very surprised if any of the librarians from the non-K-12 community knew the school librarians. I was pleased when each of these librarians found how much they could contribute from their different experiences and background. But this is just another proof that Eleanor Ahlers was far more than a school/media librarian. Eleanor was *a Librarian.* (Interview with J.Horodyski, 2000)

Ahlers was well known throughout the Pacific Northwest for her work and contribution to the role of teacherlibrarian through her position as Supervisor of Library Services at the Washington Department of Public Instruction in Olympia from 1961–1966. It was at the Department of Public Instruction that she edited "Notes from Everywhere for Washington School Librarians," recognized as a valuable contribution to the profession within the state. Ahlers's significant publications focused on the neglected area of the role and competencies of the school district library supervisor. Her longstanding career as both an educator and an administrator culminated with a teaching position (associate professor) in school librarianship at the University of Washington from 1966–1970, and then as professor from 1970–1976. Mae Benne recounts that:

> Eleanor was a valued colleague on the faculty, because she never shunned responsibility and could always be counted on during a crisis. She remained calm, analyzed the situation, and offered a logical course of action for discussion and resolution. These qualities also made her an excellent mentor for her students, many of whom often wandered back for advice in dealing with problems in their own professional lives. (Interview with J.Horodyski 2000)

Ahlers shared a commitment to the study of the relationship between school libraries and curriculum and general principles of librarianship throughout her professional career. This may be best expressed by

Ahlers's master's thesis, "A Study of Library Services in Fifty-four Oregon High Schools which Have Utilized the Evaluative Criteria of the Cooperative Study of Secondary-School Standards." Much of her work concentrated on administering school library media centers, young adult literature, and library materials for teachers. Ahlers wrote more than 25 articles and contributed to other publications as both an editor and reviewer. Besides participating in numerous research projects as both a member and director, she consulted with school districts in various areas in Washington State. Her research took her to more than 35 speaking engagements throughout the United States and Canada, strengthening her role as a leader in school librarianship.

Eleanor Ahlers demonstrated an understanding and involvement in our profession as a librarian broadly interested in library collections and services including, but not limited to, school/media librarianship. Upon retirement she said to Peter Hiatt:

> Peter, you were one of only a few of my colleagues who always considered me and referred to me as a 'librarian' and not a 'school librarian.' (Interview with J.Horodyski 2000)

Eleanor fought continuously for improved school library/media collections, services, and full librarian involvement in curriculum development, not only in Washington, but nationally. During her years in Washington, she was thoroughly involved in library development, working with state and school administrative leaders to create higher standards and stronger enforcement of both school library/media standards and requirements for school library/media professionals. "She was relentless, but always a lady—a powerful combination in her case especially." (Interview with J.Horodyski 2000)

Besides being intensely involved with her teaching responsibilities, Ahlers also engaged in many supplementary activities related to school librarianship. She was an active member of many professional organizations, including the Washington State Association of School Librarians, of which she was president from 1950–1951. This leadership role was repeated years later when she served as president of the American Association of School Librarians from 1966–1967. Ahlers also had other leadership positions with the ALA dating back to the early 1950s (e.g., Council, 1962–1965). She was also active in the Association of American Library Schools, the Washington Association of Educational Communication and Technology (formerly WDAVI), and the Pacific Northwest Library Association.

Regardless of which group Eleanor was involved with, she often became its leader, or major advisor, because her abilities were so apparent. On a lighter note, Eleanor knew all the out-of-the-way restaurants in the state that served excellent pies. She also delighted in reminding the faculty that she was the only one who had been "born and raised in Seattle." (Interview with J.Horodyski 2000)

Eleanor Ahlers remained in Seattle after her retirement, choosing to live in the region where she had spent the majority of her professional and academic career. She received many honors during her career, including entries in *Who's Who in America, Who's Who in the West, Who's Who of American Women,* an honorary membership in the Washington State Association of School Librarianship, and the creation of "The Eleanor Ahlers Scholarship" in 1976 in her honor by the (now named) Washington Library Media Association. Eleanor Ahlers died on November 24, 1997 in Seattle at the age of 86.

Bibliographic listings and obituaries—[Obituary]. *School Library Journal* 22 (February 1997); [Obituary]. *Columns: The University of Washington Alumni Magazine* (March 1997); *Biographical Directory of Librarians in the United States and Canada,* 5th ed.; *Who's Who in Library and Information Services; Marquis Who's Who in America,* 47th ed. Primary sources and archival materials—Ahlers's papers, "Papers, 1932–1976," are held at the University of Washington.

—KEN HAYCOCK

ANDRUS, GERTRUDE ELIZABETH (1879–1974)

Gertrude Andrus was born in Buffalo, New York, in 1879. An assistant in the Buffalo Public Library from 1900 to 1901, she entered the Training School for Children' s Librarians in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, in 1902, graduating in 1904. Frances Jenkins Olcott [q.v.], founder and first director of the school, was also chief of the children's department at the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh from 1898 to 1911. Andrus worked as a children' s librarian at Carnegie under Olcott from 1903 to 1908, becoming head of the Children's Room.

Her training and work experience at Carnegie led Andrus to her next job. In a letter dated June 15, 1908, Judson Jennings of the Seattle Public Library indicated that he wanted the "best children's librarian available." He had already consulted Olcott and was now offering the position to Andrus. On August 24, 1908, she began work as superintendent of children's services in Seattle, Washington.

When Andrus arrived in Seattle, books and services for children were provided by the central library and four branches. By 1915, another five branches had been added, most staffed by children's librarians. Branch librarians submitted monthly reports to Andrus, who compiled one report for the Head Librarian. Andrus also prepared a more in-depth report once a year to be included in the official Annual Report of the Seattle Public Library.

The monthly and annual reports submitted by Andrus provide a record of children's services in the library in their listing of daily activities. Circulation changes are meticulously noted, along with speculation about possible reasons for declines or increases. Story hour attendance and a list of stories told are reported. Discipline problems are often described. The librarians discuss clubs, such as Boy Scouts or Junior Red Cross, that met at or were sponsored by the public library. A careful record is kept of school work—number of schools visited, lessons taught or books loaned, stories told, borrowers registered. The latest changes in the appearance of the childrens' rooms are described, from which pictures replaced those already on the walls to how books or shelving were rearranged. In all the reports, the writers generally share anecdotes about the children they served. A picture emerges of an active, thriving children's department that is dedicated to children.

The monthly reports also give evidence of Andrus's administrative ability. For example, in December 1913, she said that the only way to keep circulation gains steady at the West Seattle branch was to employ an experienced children's librarian. By December 1912, a standard form was devised and used monthly by branch librarians and the central library to report circulation, attendance, and other children's statistics. The librarians were given the opportunity to travel outside the library, such as a visit to the Juvenile Court Detention Home in April 1913, to gain a better understanding of the children they served. In 1917, several children's librarians traveled to Portland, Oregon, to attend the lectures of Gudrun Thorne-Thomsen, the renowned storyteller. Andrus was both using the information sent to her monthly and providing learning opportunities for her personnel.

Outreach activities were an important part of children's services for Andrus. A librarian might visit a home to obtain a parent's signature for a child's library card, to collect overdue books, or to discuss a discipline problem. One important summer activity was library service to children at playgrounds. Introduced to this concept in Pittsburgh, Andrus opened the first playground library in Seattle in July 1909, and by the summer of 1912, there were six playground libraries. In 1915, a postcard was sent to each child who participated in the 1913 program in an effort to increase playground circulation and attendance. However, by July 1919, Andrus recorded that playground work was less than ever, and by 1923 the practice was discontinued. Nonetheless, the service had worked well for its time, and the program received national publicity when Andrus spoke about playground libraries at the American Library Association Conference in 1911.

Throughout her years at the Seattle Public Library, Andrus spoke publicly about children's literature, reading guidance, and the role of the children's librarian. She wrote: "The ignorance evidenced by the general. public of the work of the library is appalling. A really sy stematic effort ought to be made to get library speakers before various clubs and organizations…." (Monthly report, October 1915).

Andrus's monthly reports frequently list from 3 to 14 community groups she visited, ranging from Parent-Teacher Associations to mothers' clubs to church or mission groups to the Central Council of Social Agencies. By 1915, other children's librarians under her direction had begun to give talks and serve in the community to explain the role of children's library services.

Under Andrus's leadership, the branch children's departments tried new things from time to time. At the

University branch in February 1912, the children were encouraged to review books they had read, and their comments were posted. In February 1915, a film on Paul Revere's ride was incorporated into story hours and was reported to be a success. In 1918, two children's librarians worked with local movie houses to coordinate books and appropriate viewing for children. This willingness to experiment undoubtedly helped to create a vital, enthusiastic library program.

The Seattle Public Library worked closely with schools, both public and private, from as early as 1904 until 1955. In 1910, a school division was established as part of the Children's Department. Under Andrus, children's librarians visited schools, led storytelling there, and taught library use to students in the public library. A special collection was maintained to check out books to classrooms and deposit basic reference works in principals' offices. Education books and special materials were kept in the teachers' room at the main library. This school service was the accepted norm during those years, and public libraries all over the country provided similar types of services. Although Andrus did support and encourage such activities, other types of services to children apparently drew more of her interest and attention. For instance, in October 1917, all but two of the Seattle children's librarians attended the Washington Education Association meeting in Tacoma and "were deeply bored." But Andrus concluded that because the teachers had been impressed by their presence, the trip was worthwhile. In June 1919, new personnel were placed in charge of the school division. Their report for July indicated that the division needed massive reorganization. Andrus seemed to devote less time to the school division, although she did apparently support the theory behind and importance of the work.

Early records indicate that Andrus was sincerely concerned with and dedicated to sharing quality literature with children. For example, the emphasis behind storytelling was on using stories to lead listeners to books, to the library, and to a more personal relationship with childrens' librarians so they could provide better service.

In an early attempt to promote quality books for children, Andrus founded a Boys' Reading Circle. The object was: "to attract the boys to the library, to establish friendly relations between the boys and the children's librarian and to stimulate an interest in good reading" (Monthly report, January 1909). To increase attendance, signs were placed in locations such as mail carrier rooms, department stores, and other places frequented by working boys. In April 1909, Andrus also spoke at a meeting of the Newboys' Union in an effort to attract more members. The next monthly report suggested that such activity resulted in some encouraging signs and that the boys working at Frederick and Nelson's Department Store were reading Stevenson's *Treasure Island.*

At the same time, the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer ran* two articles: "Seeks for the Charm of the Cheap Lurid Novel" (April 8, 1909) and "Lurid Covers to Lure the Boys" (April 11, 1909). The articles noted Andrus's efforts to identify elements of the nickel novels that appealed to the boys:

> We continue to be "high-brow" but we will carry any book for which there is popular demand, such as "Pollyanna" and the "Oz" books. We do not urge these books but we sell them when they are asked for. We decline to carry the cheaper grade of series…. On this platform we have stood firm (p. 177).

Andrus stayed at the department store until 1940, when pension considerations sent her back to the Seattle Public Library as superintendent of work with children. She resumed the same types of activities she had left in 1919. Her annual reports speak of talking to civic groups, conducting story hours, working with schools, and celebrating book week. Work with playground libraries had been replaced by a summer reading club that enjoyed good participation. She remained at the public library until her retirement in July 1946.

Although she did not write widely, Andrus was active in the profession of children's librarianship in two other ways. One was the American Library Association (ALA), which she joined in 1911. By 1912, she was a member of the Nominating Committee of the Children's Services Section, becoming its chair from 1915 to 1916. She was elected to a five-year term on the ALA Council in 1916. Twice she was a speaker at ALA conferences. In 1911, she discussed playground libraries and in 1920 she talked about her experiences in setting up the children's book shop at Frederick and Nelson's.

The second area of her involvement was in library education. In 1912, Andrus gave a series of lectures at the Indiana Summer Library School. She spoke from her own experiences as she discussed boys' clubs, girls' clubs, story hours, playground libraries, working with schools, and other pertinent topics. As early as 1913, Andrus spoke to students in library training classes at the University of Washington. From 1916 to 1919, she is listed as teaching the class "Work with Children and Schools."

Gertrude Andrus was a caring person dedicated to providing quality books to children. An only child, she brought her mother to live with her in Seattle. Andrus was a dedicated career woman, not interested in housekeeping activities but in such pursuits as leading the book discussion group for a Seattle working girls club. Former employees remember working *with* Andrus, not *for* her. With a friend, she promoted and improved their retirement home library. More than 15 years after her death, friends remember her warmly.

In her study of the children' s department of the Seattle Public Library, Brass identifies the period from 1891 to 1919 as the "years of rapid growth, when the guidelines for service were laid down and first implemented" (p. 3). She credits Gertrude Andrus for the knowledge and deter

mination that contributed to this foundation, while acknowledging the important contributions of the children's librarians and library administrators who worked with her. These early years represent Andrus's greatest contribution to the field of youth services. Her work at Frederick and Nelson' s and her later years at the Seattle Public Library supported her career achievements, but they cannot surpass her early contributions.

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—CAROL DOLL

ARBUTHNOT, WAY HILL (1884–1969)

On August 27, 1884, May Hill was born to Frank and Mary Elizabeth Seville Hill in Mason City, Iowa. She received her baccalaureate degree from the University of Chicago in 1922 and her master's degree from Columbia University in 1924. On December 17, 1932, she married Charles C.Arbuthnot, head of the Economics Department of Western Reserve University.

May Hill Arbuthnot's contributions to teacher education and the study of children's literature were diverse. In 1961, Western Reserve University (now Case Western Reserve) conferred upon her the degree of Doctor of Humane Letters, honoring her as teacher, scholar, writer, and lecturer. She held memberships in Phi Delta Kappa, Pi Lambda Theta, and Delta Kappa Gamma.

She began her career at Superior (Minnesota) State College in 1912, where she was a training teacher. In 1918, she joined the faculty of the Ethical Culture School in New York City. From that position, she went in 1922 to Cleveland, Ohio, as principal of the Cleveland Kindergarten-Primary Training School. Five years later, under her direction and leadership, the Training School became a part of the School of Education at Western Reserve University. During her years in Cleveland, she also established the first nursery schools in both the city and the state of Ohio, and in 1929, she opened the University Nursery School on the campus of Western Reserve. This nursery school became a successful model of a laboratory for teachers, doctors, nurses, parents, and others concerned with child development. Arbuthnot retired in 1950 from active teaching but devoted the next few years to writing and lecturing about literature for children.

In the later years of her life, many honors were bestowed upon her. In 1959, the Women's National Book Association honored her for distinguished achievement in the world of books with the Constance Lindsay Skinner Award. In 1964, the Catholic Library Association awarded her its Regina Medal in formal recognition of her "continued distinguished contribution to the field of Children's Literature." Three months before her death on October 2, 1969, Scott, Foresman and Company, publisher of most of her books about children's literature, and the Children's Services Division of the American Library Association announced an honor lectureship to be presented in her name. The May Hill Arbuthnot Honor Lectureship allows for the annual selection of an outstanding author, critic, librarian, historian, or teacher of children's literature to prepare a paper "which shall be a significant contribution to the field of children's literature." In her acknowledgment of the honor, she stated the philosophy that kept her a popular speaker about children's literature, "I am a strong believer in the efficacy of direct speech, the spoken word. For poetry, it is the only way and for more people than we bookish ones like to admit, it is the best way. That is, a forthright vigorous lecture can set fire to a piece of literature that had failed to come to life from the printed page."

Her contributions in the fields of childhood education and children's literature were substantial. Thousands of American children learned to read from the "Basic Curriculum Readers" which she co-authored with William S. Gray of the University of Chicago. Most of these children probably remember them as the "Dick and Jane" books.

Many more thousands of children benefited indirectly from her enthusiasm for and knowledge of children's literature. Her classes in children's literature were popular, she was a sought-after speaker throughout the country, and for years she was review editor, first for *Childhood Education* and later for *Elementary English.*

Perhaps the most widely known of her books is *Children and Books,* first published in 1947 (5th ed., rev. by Zena Sutherland, 1977). In this text for children's literature courses, she brought together her deep concern for the healthy complete development of children, her love of good books, and her belief that good books can assist children in meeting their developmental needs. The philosophy throughout this book is that teachers, librarians, and parents can and should influence children to "a joyous appropriation and use of worthwhile books."

She enlivened her philosophy further in a series of anthologies that attempted to bring together by literary genre excellent examples of fine literature and good advice on its selection and use with children. These anthologies include: *Time for Poetry* (rev. 1968 with Sheldon L. Root), *Time for Fairy Tales* (rev. 1961), *Time for True Tales and Almost True* (1953), *Time for Biography,* with Dorothy M.Broderick (1968), *Time for Stories of the Past and Present,* with Dorothy M.Broderick (1969), *Time for New Magic,* with Mark Taylor (1971), *Time for Old Magic* (1970), and *Time for Discovery,* with Evelyn Wenzel (1971). A bibliography, *Children's Books Too Good to Miss,* now in its sixth edition (1971), *Children's Reading in the Home* (1969), and the general *Arbuthnot Anthology of Children's Literature* (rev. 1976 by Zena Sutherland), have all been

used widely in college courses and by other adults concerned with children's reading.

Friends valued her for her enthusiasm, honesty, integrity, and curiosity about all of life's experiences. Her drive and commitment belied her small stature; Dorothy Broderick wrote of her after her death,

> She was a great lady, and in the words of today's generation "she was tough." She worked with and for children all her life, but escaped the malady of herself becoming childish. She never stopped growing. She was tiny physically, a giant in every other way…. If there was one single reason over all others for loving her, it was this: she felt strongly and she thought clearly. When it came to important things, she never let her feelings keep her from thinking tough. Call it what you will: integrity or intellectual honesty. She had it.

May Hill Arbuthnot often expressed her belief in the importance of libraries and librarians to children. More important, however, she provided leadership in urging adults to assume their responsibilities to see that good books were placed in the hands of children. Her philosophy and her high standards for children's literature were important in the years when American book publishing for children became so prolific. An apt assessment of her contribution is provided by Zena Sutherland in her preface to the fourth edition of *Children and Books* (1972):

It would be impossible to express adequately the gratitude I feel to May Hill Arbuthnot. Everyone who works toward the goal of bringing to children the undying pleasure of a love for books knows that hers was a permanent contribution to children's literature. Her knowledge, her enthusiasm, her practical common sense, and her boundless imagination have guided countless parents, teachers, librarians, and students. All of these qualities are evident in *Children and Books,* and it has been a joy and a challenge to adapt her work to today's needs. Her death brought an abrupt end to plans to work together, but May Hill Arbuthnot is still with us in her books, a wise and blithe spirit.

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—MARILYN MILLER

BAKER, AUGUSTA BRAXSTON (1911–1998)

Born in Baltimore on April 1, 1911, both of Baker's parents were schoolteachers who enjoyed reading and were dedicated to learning. Her mother taught her to read before she entered school. Baker was an only child named for her grandmother, Augusta Fax, who grew up as a slave on a plantation near Baltimore. Because her mother worked in the main house, the young slave Augusta received special treatment and was taught to read and write in the plantation school. "My grandmother took care of me during the day while my parents worked. She was a wonderful storyteller, and I was constantly harassing her to read to me." (*Wilson Library Bulletin* [WLB] article) "She told me the old English tales and, of course, Br'er Rabbit stories, but not with dialect. As an only child I was entertained for hours with her wonderful stories." *(Horn Book)* Her love for stories would be carried throughout her life.

When she entered the University of Pittsburgh at 16 years old, everyone assumed that Baker would follow her parents and grandmother by becoming a teacher. There she met James Baker, and in 1929, they were married. Baker was a graduate student in social work, studying on a scholarship from the Urban League. When the League sent him to New York State to develop the Albany Interracial Council, Baker enrolled in the Albany State Teachers College, now known as State University of New York (SUNY).

It was there that Baker had her first encounter with open discrimination. Part of the curriculum was practice teaching at the Milne School, an experimental school run by the college. Baker's college application was originally denied because no blacks were allowed at the prestigious school, which proposed to admit her only if she would agree to do her practice teaching in a segregated school off-campus.

"Lo and behold, in steps none other than Eleanor Roosevelt, who was at that time on the Urban League Board while Franklin D.Roosevelt was governor of New York. She was instrumental in getting me into the Milne School." (*Horn Book* May/June 1995) "When I transferred to SUNY, it was very prejudiced times. Mrs. Roosevelt had to use her influence to get me into the college. It didn't want any black students, but it also didn't want to go against the Governor's wife. So I got in." (*WLB,* May 1986)

Once she was admitted to the program, Baker was treated like any other student but took a divergent path when she discovered that she didn't like teaching. "I discovered I loved books," she wrote, "but I didn't love teaching." She earned an education degree and became the first black to graduate with a master's degree in librarianship from the college.

In 1937, Baker began her library career with the New York Public Library (NYPL); one that would span 36 years. At that time, there were only eight or ten black librarians in the entire system. She was hired by Anne Carroll Moore [q.v.], the doyenne of children's services in public libraries, as an assistant children's librarian at the 135th Street Branch (later renamed the Countee Cullen Branch) in the heart of Harlem.

Storytelling was part of the in-service training provided by the library and great emphasis was placed on its importance in working with children. Under the training of Mary Gould Davis [q.v.], Baker perfected her technique and discovered the stories that suited her style and would become her signature—folktales from Haiti and Africa. She became a spellbinding storyteller who enchanted audiences of children *and* adults. Her reputation as a master storyteller spread, and she presented workshops across the country and co-authored a book with Ellin Greene titled *Storytelling: Art and Technique* (Bowker, 2d ed., 1977) that is still the most useful handbook on the art form today.

During her 16 years at the Countee Cullen Branch, Baker became aware of a lack of positive images of black children in the books that were being published for children. The branch housed a sizeable collection of black history books, but she found few that would instill pride in, or encourage children to read about, black culture. So she began to collect the few worthwhile books that were available. "I tried to get libraries to buy accurate books about blacks, pestered black writers to write for children and looked for illustrators who would draw true representations of blacks." *(WLB)*

Baker became well known for her work in establishing a collection at Countee Cullen of children' s books relating to the black experience called the James Weldon Johnson collection. A bibliography of the pioneering collection was published in 1946 titled: "Books about Negro Life for Children." Baker's introduction stated:

> It is the purpose of this list to bring together books for children that give an unbiased, accurate, well-rounded picture of Negro life in all parts of the world. Language, theme, and illustration

have been scrutinized with this aim in mind, and choices made accordingly.

The recommended list and its ensuing revisions became a benchmark across the country. Retitled in 1971 as *The Black Experience in Children's Books,* it continues to be published by the NYPL. The criteria that Baker set forth is described in her words:

> The depiction of a black person is exceptionally important in books for children. An artist can portray a black child—black skin, natural hair and flat features—and make him a stereotype and caricature. The black child who sees the picture which ridicules his face may be deeply hurt, feel defeated, or become resentful and rebellious. The white child who sees the stereotyped presentation of the black person begins to feel superior and to accept this distorted picture or type.

Applying those criteria played a role in invalidating one of the most controversial children's books, *Little Black Sambo,* by Helen Bannerman. First published in 1900 in England, it was initially considered a positive image for black children. However, in the 1950s, controversy erupted over the stereotyped illustrations, the degrading names, and the exaggerated dialect. Baker's standards were a key factor in the rise of consciousness about the book.

Her credibility and credentials as a persistent and convincing advocate for the improvement of children's literature about black people was established early in her career. "She talked to editors, authors, and publishers about the need for better books about black life, enlisting the help of interracial organizations in the cause. In so doing, Baker helped to advance the idea that books can help children of different cultures and traditions understand and respect one another while instilling pride in their own cultural traditions." (*Black Women in America,* 1969)

Baker made her own contributions to children's literature by editing three books. Two were collections of folktales from around the world: *The Talking Tree and Other Stories* (Lippincott, 1955) and *The Golden Lynx and Other Tales* (Lippincott, 1960). She believed that folklore created an awareness of the brotherhood of man. She also served as Editor-in-Chief for *Young Years, Best Loved Stories and Poems for Little Children* (Parents' Magazine Press, 1960).

When Baker was named Assistant Coordinator of Children's Services and Supervisor of Storytelling at the NYPL in 1953, she became the first black librarian appointed to a high administrative position in the library. In 1961 she was promoted to Coordinator of Children's Services and made history by becoming the first black coordinator of children's services in a public library.

"The board of trustees spent a great deal of time deciding on the person for the position," she recalled. "They knew it was time but had to be sure that I was the right person because the coordinator would represent the library by speaking all over the country." *(WLB)*

Baker's interests were not limited to print. During her 13 years as coordinator, she expanded the NYPL's children's collection to include records and tapes, started weekly radio and television broadcasts, and served as a consultant and bibliographer for the television program "Sesame Street."

In the case of one young filmmaker, Baker's advice and consultation helped Morton Schindel create a whole new medium of children's films made iconographically from children's books. He developed a company called Weston Woods, which was the first major audiovisual business to produce films and filmstrips solely for children, based on excellent books. Schindel credits Baker and her counsel with the growth of quality children's films, which also encouraged publishers to issue paperback editions of the books that were turned into audiovisual formats.

Publishers constantly sought her opinions, approval, and guidance. The social climate in the country, her advocacy for ethnically representative children's books, and her perspective on children's literature gave her a unique and esteemed place in the field.

Baker's pursuit of excellence through books for children and in storytelling was not confined to New York City or state. She became active in the American Library Association (ALA), holding important offices. She served as president of the Children's Services Division, now called Association for Library Service to Children (ALSC), and was elected to the ALA Council and the Executive Board. She chaired the Newbery-Caldecott Awards Committee.

She was in much demand as a teacher, speaker, and presenter, teaching at Rutgers University, the University of Nevada, and for over a decade at Columbia University's library school as an instructor in storytelling courses. Other credits include attending two White House Conferences on Children as a library delegate, serving as a consultant for the Australian Library Association on children's library services, and organizing children's services for the Trinidad Public Library in Port-of-Spain, Trinidad.

When Baker retired from the NYPL in 1974, it did not represent the conclusion of a long and distinguished career. She continued to give workshops and seminars for fellow librarians and taught children's librarianship. In 1980, she became the first storyteller-in-residence at the University of South Carolina's College of Library and Information Science. The position was the first of its kind in any university. Her name was synonymous with "Master Storyteller" and she shared her love of stories with hundreds of students. In 1987, she was further honored by the creation of an annual storytelling festival called "A(ugusta) Baker's Dozen," sponsored by the University of South Carolina, Richland County Public

Library, and the South Carolina State Library. She retired for the second time in 1994.

Baker received many awards and nationwide recognition for her lifelong contributions. In 1953, she became the first recipient of the E.P.Dutton-John Macrae Award (ALA) for advanced study in the field of work with children and young people. Her project was to assess the role of books in intercultural education and survey libraries around the country. Other awards were: Parents Magazine Medal Award (1966); the ALA Grolier Award (1968); the Women's National Book Association, Constance Lindsay Skinner Award (1971); the Distinguished Alumni Award from the State University of New York at Albany (1975); the Clarence Day Award (1975); honorary membership in the American Library Association (1976); an honorary doctorate from St. John's University (1980); the Catholic Library Association's Regina Medal (1981); and the ALSC (ALA) Distinguished Service Award (1993), the second person to receive the honor. From the very beginning, Baker established a presence

in the library profession. Her outstanding career was multifaceted, reaching publishers, authors, television producers, media creators, and storytellers. Her credentials and commitment were instrumental in shaping and setting directions for the publication of books for and about black children long before the term "multicultural" was conceived and became a standard.

Augusta Baker was an extraordinary librarian, who became a renowned storyteller and a major influence in the publication of children's books reflecting the black experience. Her enthusiasm and conviction for providing the best for children was contagious, and she made a significant impact nationally and internationally. When she retired, Baker said, "I' ve just spent my life doing what I love to do." She left a legacy that laid a foundation for excellence in providing services to children.

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—JULIE CUMMINS

BATCHELDER, MILDRED LEONA (1901–1998)

Mildred Leona Batchelder was born September 7, 1901, in Lynn, Massachusetts, to George Prescott Batchelder, a businessman, and Blanche Ranger Tuttle Batchelder, a schoolteacher. Stimulated by her mother's love of literature and music, she and her two younger sisters read voraciously and enjoyed live theatre in nearby Boston. Many trips to their family camp in the salt marshes fostered her lifelong love of nature and environmental conservation.

Although Mildred was small and often sick as a child, she excelled at Lynn Classical High School, and maintained a stoical strength in the face of physical problems encountered throughout her life. While she held herself to proper Victorian standards, she was also lively, curious, and vivacious. Only 17 when she entered Mt. Holyoke College during World War I, her friends saw her as outgoing, somewhat immature, and very bright.

Graduating in 1922 with an A.B. in economics, and minors in English literature, Greek, and History, she soon set out for the New York State Library School in Albany. The Library School, as it was known, founded by Melvil Dewey at Columbia College, continued its high standards in Albany. There Batchelder absorbed the philosophies of some of the most influential instructors of the day: Brooklyn Public Library's head of children's work, Clara Whitehall Hunt [q.v.]; Mary Hall [q.v.], pioneer school librarian; and her practice work supervisor, Effie L.Power [q.v.], of the Cleveland Public Library. Her internship in Cleveland, Ohio, introduced her to fascinating children's librarians who knew their books and how to share them. Batchelder returned to Albany convinced that she would give her life to library service for children.

When no one offered her a job at the end of her first year, she completed a second year at the Library School, and was awarded a Bachelor of Library Science degree in 1924.

During an astonishingly productive 42-year career, Batchelder held four major positions. In her first post, 23-year-old Mildred, with no experience, become Supervisor of Children's Services in Omaha, Nebraska, a job that included the main library, four branches, and 32 grade schools! In Omaha she developed a training class for her staff, published a periodical on buying books for children, and used her personal savings to take staff members with her to her second American Library Association (ALA) conference in Atlantic City, New Jersey.

Eager to learn everything she could about her chosen field from its most outstanding practitioners, during the summers of 1925 and 1926, she initiated meetings with the internationally respected head of the Toronto Boys and Girls House, Lillian Smith [q.v.]. Batchelder valued and propagated Smith's disdain for the mediocre in both collections and services. By age 25, Batchelder had already shown the unusual independence and initiative, the commitment to excellence, and the proactive professionalism that would characterize her entire career.

After three years of building the staff, collections, and services in Omaha, she looked for wider opportunities, at first abroad, and, finally, in a newly created position of children's librarian at the Minnesota State Teacher's College in St. Cloud. The position offered Batchelder chances to share her enthusiasm for good children's literature with teachers-in-training. She published articles urging that a course in children's literature be included in the curriculum for teachers. Her shock at the lack of training for school librarians at St. Cloud exacerbated basic disagreements with her boss, and she was fired.

In 1928, Batchelder moved to Evanston, Illinois, an intellectually stimulating suburb of Chicago, which became her home for the rest of her life. At the modern Haven Middle School in Evanston, she found a progressive climate, which let her make the library the center of the school, a novel concept in 1928. At that time, Haven School was also an evening branch library for the community, and Batchelder cooperated eagerly with public librarians, beginning a lifelong interest in school/public library cooperation. She educated teachers, parents, and student assistants in children's literature. In 1930, she published an article titled, "The Principal and the School Library." She saw the library as the unifying force in the school, and in spite of opposition from public librarians, pushed schools to fund their own libraries.

By 1930, Batchelder had developed several important contacts at the nearby headquarters of the ALA in Chicago. She wrote a pioneer, 30-page public relations booklet for the association called, "The Significance of School Libraries," which featured educators, parent-teacher associations, and even politicians.

During the early 1930s, Batchelder taught summer school at the University of Indiana and at Syracuse University. She served as a chairman of the ALA's School Library section at the 1933 ALA conference in Chicago. Soon she was appointed to their executive committee and designed the section's conference program

for the 1934 ALA conference in Montreal. She was now launched on a course of high-level professional service through the ALA.

Batchelder joined the ALA staff in 1936 as its first school library specialist. Within a year, she became chief of the School and Children's Library Division, effectively combining her experiences in both public and school libraries. For the next 15 years, under various titles, and several reorganizations, she served both groups. Because the ALA children's section was already so well established, Batchelder chose at first to focus on the fledgling school library group. She gathered statistical information on U.S. elementary school libraries and found that fewer than half even had library rooms, and only a tiny proportion had trained librarians. Immediately she contacted and mobilized the best school library leaders and shared their expertise with schools across the country. Very soon she was promoted to be the first executive secretary of the ALA's divisions for children's and young adult services.

During her first years at the ALA, Batchelder visited scores of public and school librarians, attended conferences in major cities and rural areas, and worked with University of Chicago professors Carleton Joeckel and young Jesse Shera on related adult and rural education projects. She answered thousands of letters, many of them requesting complex information. A few months after she started her job at the ALA, her supervisor wrote, "How well Miss Batchelder already knows people and movements… many librarians are passing on their most difficult questions, with a feeling, evidently of relief, that there is now someone at Headquarters to answer them."

Batchelder saw the ALA as the perfect forum for her far-reaching vision of library services to children. The profession needed a strong leader who could translate the idealistic pioneer vision of people like Anne Carroll Moore [q.v.] and Lillian Smith [q.v.] into countrywide service to children, standards for materials and facilities, adequate funding, and improved education. Such a leader would have to cope with rapidly expanding and periodically rebellious groups of librarians, have the strength to resist mediocrity, the courage to share the excitement and responsibility with fellow librarians, and the foresight to envision a radically larger picture of service.

Batchelder was such a leader. She saw her job at the ALA as an opportunity to assess grassroots needs, bring back ideas and solutions, and mobilize libraries and other agencies serving children into action. Although her relentless and passionate determination seemed formidable to some, the melding of her strong character and the needs of the profession at that time forever affected the direction of library services to children and young people in the United States and around the world.

During this period, the inadequacy of library service for Negro children was a national issue. The ALA board had been aware of racial discrimination in library matters since the 1920s, but had declined to take a stand. Although a Victorian by birth, Batchelder was surprisingly outspoken on race relations and the rights of women and children. While at Haven school, she had been incensed by patronizing books about Negroes and had worked with Quaker Edith Moon to encourage librarians to remove and discard them. Now at the ALA, she faced the enormous and complex task of bringing library services to Negro children.

She was outraged by the blatant prejudice against people of color, such as the incident when keynote speaker Charlemae Rollins [q.v.] was forced, because of her color, to use the freight elevator in a southern hotel during an annual conference. She immediately contacted a national anti-discrimination group, and, with them made an investigative trip to the South to assess the situation. Eventually, the ALA made conference contracts dependent on "full equality," which resulted in no ALA meetings being held in the South for 20 years.

In 1939, Batchelder joined library leaders such as Carl Milam and Herbert Putnam to forecast the "Library of Tomorrow." From the context of few and poorly staffed school libraries, she accurately predicted the emergence of school library systems, centralized technical services, teacher-librarian collaboration on curriculum, and multi-type library cooperation.

Batchelder conceptualized her ideals and then devoted all her energies to make them real. Enthusiasm and the power of persuasion empowered her beliefs and deeds. Nothing stood in her way: not the constant physical pain she endured from a crippling form of arthritis, not colleagues who sometimes fought her high standards and authoritarian style, not institutional racism, and not the sluggish bureaucracies that could bring her temper to the boiling point. She dreamed big dreams, then identified and persuaded people around the world to help her realize them, thus creating an international community of individuals and agencies zealously committed to promoting books and reading for children.

Batchelder saw children's books as powerful avenues to peace, creativity, maturity, and to informed decisionmaking in a democracy. Her mission was to spread the word to every national agency involved with children, and to entice, cajole, and even shame librarians to fight for this global vision.

In 1937, seeing a chance to spread the word about libraries for children, Batchelder launched one of her earliest international efforts. She proposed a survey of Central American libraries. Literature for children in these countries turned out to be scant; often only textbooks were available. She believed that the best children's books of all countries should be available to the children of all countries. The Latin American Project, as it came to be known, was her first recorded involvement in the encouragement of international understanding through the translation of children's books.

Despite her strong belief that all librarians working with children should unify under the same organizational