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People Profile: Digby Sales

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Profile Encouraged

Digby Sales

Collection Development Manager
Chancellor Oppenheimer Library
University of Cape Town
Rondebosch, South Africa

Born: Born in Cape Town in 1949.

Current residence: Rondebosch, Cape Town.

Education: BA in History from UCT, 1971.

Secondary Teacher's Diploma from UCT, 1972.

Higher Diploma in Library Science from University of South Africa, 1976.

Master of Arts (Librarianship) (by thesis) from UCT, 1981.

Summary of job experiences: I came to working in libraries via teaching and a brief spell in business. Here is a run-down on my career:

1977: Librarian at Johannesburg Public Library

1977-79: Librarian for South African Institute of Race Relations, Johannesburg

1981-88: Cataloguer and then Head of Acquisitions dealing with purchases, gifts and legal deposit of books and serials, at South African Library, Cape Town (now National Library of South Africa (Cape Town))

1988-2000: Head of Book Acquisitions at University of Cape Town Libraries

2000-present: Collection Development Manager at UCT

Family: I have two boys: Donald, 16, and Andre, 14.

Biggest recent surprise: Despite not having done much exercise for many years, I am not as unfit as I thought. After having recently joined the mountain club, I found I could hike for many hours.

Last book read and literary tastes: *Disgrace* by J.M. Coetzee. I read mostly literature from Africa, and the classics.

What I do in my spare time: Hiking in the mountains among the *fynbos*, reading, and watching films. (I am a classifier for the government Film and Publications Board).

What I'd like to be doing seven years from now: I would be on top of my present job that has the potential to be very stimulating. To be able to do the job effectively, the local currency must not have declined to less than R12 to the dollar (presently R8: 1), so the Libraries could still purchase some library material.

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which acquires much of its material by having individuals physically pick up material within Africa.

Collection Development

Collection Development is part of every subject librarian's job description and is co-ordinated by a Collection Development Manager, who approves all orders. Subject areas, rather than departments, are the focus of collection development.

The Library controls the budget, but information on notional amounts is provided to the academic departments. Purchases are based on needs. Requests are encouraged from the academics, but staff, students or librarians can initiate orders. The approval of new journal titles is more difficult because of the problem of an ongoing commitment. The Libraries are faced with annual inflation rates of between 25 and 40 per cent due to the weakness of the South African currency and publishers' price increases.

Budgetary control for the purchase of library materials was removed from the academics in 1998. Journals no longer are circulated, including those which were once housed within small and unofficial departmental collections. These changes have brought dissatisfaction from some academics, particularly those from the Science Faculty,

who have previously worked with highly decentralized resources.

The Future

The major changes in the Libraries – as well as the major physical renovations and building – are part of the overall plan to enhance UCT's ability to be a world-class African university in the 21st century. Past practices have had to change, so that staff and students can have as wide access to material as possible, within the limited materials budget of about \$2.4 million for 2001.

UCT is a very stimulating place to work as the institution tries to deal with transformation and equity issues within a framework of a changing student and staff profile. All of the problems of academic libraries are here. In addition, however, UCT faces a set of problems which are very different: significant devaluation of the currency; providing a first-rate education for a mix of students from different levels of information and language literacy; inability of the public library system to meet the broader information needs of business and the community; and an economic environment in which unemployment runs at 37.3%.

South Africa has made a radical transformation in the 1990s, and UCT and its Libraries are taking the lead in the academic sector in ensuring that first rate education is available to a broad range of the population, as these graduates will be the future leaders of the country.

Adventures in Librarianship: If Rumors Were Mules

by **Ned Kraft** (Order Librarian, Ralph J. Bunche Library, U.S. Department of State) <kraftno@state.gov>

The following text was submitted anonymously. It appears to be a clumsy satire of a column written by our own beloved Katina Strauch. If any of us should happen upon the witless writer of this drivel haunting the dark corners of some convention or other, I would suggest that we simply ignore him. -NK

Wow! Stocks may be falling and our 401K retirement dates may be creeping ever-so-far into the future but my library and publishing-world friends keep moving up and up!

The incredible, tallish, and very-nearly-likable Gary Plush of Niche Enterprise Publishing just informed

me that Niche has quite handily averted bankruptcy by selling itself to **MallMart Inc.**, the retail mega-chain from Milwaukee.

Good job, Gary! And just in the "niche" of time! Gary says that MallMart has given him carte blanche to reorganize Niche into a profitable

publisher, and won't sell off the assets for at least three months!

Our old friend, the oh-so-wonderful Kitty Hamper from Darkmound Uni-

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