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People Profile: Nicholas J. Goetzfridt

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gaged in considerable revamping of resources to make the **RFK Library** a respectable collection extending beyond the book stacks to numerous electronic databases and online journals (click on "electronic resources" at www.uog.edu/RFK_Library). Also, resources sharing capabilities provide faculty and students with relatively quick responses to their requests often within a day or two. Today's processing is certainly far quicker and more profoundly influential in the library's service capabilities. This contrasts with the practice of more than a decade ago when multi-part typed forms were mailed to Hawaii or California. This was a kind of Pacific pony express undertaking: "Hope-the-rider-gets-through-the-whales-and-back-with-a-response-before-it's-too-late."

Although the reputation of the **RFK Library** has improved due in part to the accreditation panic blast of money and subsequent consistency of budget allocation, convincing some faculty and especially new faculty fresh from a larger library is still somewhat of a challenge. It is perhaps even an interesting study in the constructive factors of reality. Following the devastation of World War II on Guam, the **University** has grown from a humble teacher training institution to an accredited **University** whose students can transfer credits and degrees to most colleges and universities on the U.S. mainland.

The context in which Guam has evolved in both book and electronic resources occurs in the nebulous influences of a past that is unlike other American regions. The issue of Chamorro self-determination has within it, not only the demands for enabling a people to determine their political status apart from colonialism, but also to select from the milieu of American values and identity that are never far away. Chamorros have historically adapted and readapted to a number of American influences for over one hundred years in addition to other cultures and societies which have made Guam their home. Chamorros, themselves, hold different opinions on the issue of self-determination. In a public sense of a communally felt context, support for the idea of self-determination is inevitable, at the least, and speaks to the quiet conflicts into which the American library slipped.

Micronesia, with nine distinctive languages, also has interpretative values and different levels of access to information, based on cultural heritage and contemporary needs. The difficult thing in describing the issue of indigenous cultural contexts and the American library anywhere — in an unsupported, underused public library or the **University Library** here — is to avoid the suggestion of inferiority if certain values of American librarianship are not met. For that is the futile ground of colonialism against which all Pacific nations have worked against over the past several decades.

Yet, variants of colonialism remain — American to the north of the equator, British

against the grain people profile

Professor of Library Science, Robert F. Kennedy Memorial Library, University of Guam <ngoetzfr@uog9.uog.edu>

Nicholas J. Goetzfridt

BORN & LIVED: Born Virginia (a town) in northeastern Minnesota.

EARLY LIFE: Lived and went to school in Mountain Iron (Not Iron Mountain), Minnesota on the iron ore range of north eastern Minnesota with a probable goal of being a miner.

FAMILY: Married with two children.

EDUCATION: B.A. (English) **University of Minnesota-Duluth**, 1977; M.A. English (**University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee**) 1981; M.L.S. **University of Wisconsin-Madison**, 1986; Ph.D. **University of Wisconsin-Madison**, 1997.

FIRST JOB: Busboy at a restaurant in Virginia, Minnesota.

PROFESSIONAL CAREER AND ACTIVITIES: University English teacher in Wisconsin 1979-1982, **University of the South Pacific** 1983-1985, librarian and eventually professor at the **University of Guam, RFK Memorial Library** 1987 to present.

IN MY SPARE TIME I LIKE TO: Walk on treadmill or outside, weather and heat permitting, watch movies, play with kids.

FAVORITE BOOKS: *Blood Meridian* - **Cormac McCarthy**, *Steppenwolf* - **Hermann Hesse**; *In Patagonia* - **Bruce Chatwin**, *To Kill a Mockingbird* - **Harper Lee**.

PET PEEVES/WHAT MAKES ME MAD: Racism, greed.

PHILOSOPHY: Death is inevitable so make the part before it count.

MOST MEANINGFUL CAREER ACHIEVEMENT: Achieving humility and perspective in the midst of achievement.

GOAL I HOPE TO ACHIEVE FIVE YEARS FROM NOW: Other than publish two books in progress, uncertain.

HOW/WHERE DO I SEE THE INDUSTRY IN FIVE YEARS:

Somewhat the same as it is now — an intermixing of electronic and print with still a somewhat awestruck perspective toward technology with the library perhaps placed again on its death bed. Electronic readers will try again to upset the market but a large shipments of books will come into the local **Barnes and Noble** store along with a new flavored latte selection.



and French to the south. Hegemony takes on a life and a reality of its own with varying degrees of success and re-adaptation by islanders. Yet many Pacific islanders have, of course, benefited from these structures, using them for their own power and economic struggles like Americans elsewhere. They are also beset in an additional mode of complexity through the conflicts that indigenous communal heritages, oral forms of communication and knowledge and Western standards and influences have wrought. There is no standard to be met, remember, except for those engaged in these processes and the communal environments to which they usually return.

I bring all of this up in mentioning the **RFK Library's** new lease on life for collection development because of this contested context of information that in the epistemological relevance in Micronesian lives is far more likely to be *printed* between the covers of heritage and history and *read* within a resulting social protocol than between the covers of a "book." Again, acculturation to

American influence is strong in various ways and probably more pronounced on the island of Guam than anywhere else in the Western Pacific. Students attend college within a hegemonic and culturally negotiated kaleidoscope of perspectives, expectations, and desires. They learn and they do well for themselves and others. Meanwhile, cultural support systems crack under the strain of adaptation and the search for or the protection of identities. All the while sennits of history and the views of the world that languages and communal values provide remain like enabling vestiges of the past. I wish **Elfreda** had come here. 🌿

Endnotes

1. Nicholas Goetzfridt. "Micronesian Library Service." *Encyclopedia of Library and Information Science*. New York: Marcel Dekker, 2000. Volume 66, Supplement 29. p. 220.