

PROFILES: *Doralyn Joanne Hickey, 1929-1987: An Appreciation*

By Roger L. Loyd

Her academic pedigree goes thus: Bachelor of Arts, Rice University (1951); Master of Arts, Presbyterian School of Christian Education (1953); Master of Library Science, Rutgers University (1957); Doctor of Philosophy (Religion), Duke University (1962). To one who did not know Professor Hickey, these achievements might not seem out of the ordinary. But the career path she pursued was truly extraordinary, and (among many other achievements) greatly assisted the fledgling American Theological Library Association.

Doralyn Hickey had “too damned good a mind to waste on the church,” according to her mathematics professor at Rice in a letter of recommendation to the Assembly Training School of the Presbyterian Church in the United States in Richmond, Virginia (later the Presbyterian School for Christian Education).¹ But Hickey’s Presbyterian commitments manifested themselves throughout her life, despite the learned professor’s opinion.

Hickey’s work as a member of library staffs included student work (including cataloging) at Rice University, as a student assistant at PSCE, and then at Duke University in two capacities, while she pursued the PhD: first, as an assistant descriptive cataloger in the Duke library, then as assistant librarian in the Divinity School library from 1954-1956. There, according to her brother, she developed “a sometimes stormy, lifelong friendship with Donn Michael Farris, librarian of the Divinity School, who hired her and encouraged her to make librarianship a career.”²

She went on to Rutgers for library school, then worked again at the Rice library, but returned to Duke to finish her doctoral work, with Prof. H. Shelton Smith as her major advisor. Her dissertation³ traced the career and influence of an important Presbyterian pastor in the South, Benjamin Morgan Palmer (1818-1902).

Hickey’s career then turned toward library education. She became a member of the faculty of the School of Library Science at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill (1962-74), then Director/Dean of the Library School, University of Wisconsin—Milwaukee (1974-77), and finally joined the faculty of the School of Library and Information Sciences, North Texas State University (1977-1987).

In 1973, Hickey was awarded the Margaret Mann Citation by the ALA ALCTS Cataloging and Classification Section for outstanding professional achievement in cataloging or classification.

So how did such a distinguished teacher and leader become important to the history of ATLA? While she was working at Duke, she and Donn Michael Farris began a discussion about the need for a newsletter for ATLA; in 1953, Farris was appointed by the ATLA Board as the newsletter’s editor. He later recruited Hickey to write a column, known as “Some ‘Standard’ Words,” which she did from 1976-82, bringing her encyclopedic knowledge

¹ Damon D. Hickey, “Doralyn Joanne Hickey, 1929-1987: A Brother Librarian’s Perspective,” *Cataloging & Classification Quarterly* 25:2-3 (1998), 159. Librarians and others seeking fuller information on Doralyn Hickey would be well advised to begin with this important article, though it is currently behind a paywall at http://dx.doi.org/10.1300/J104v25n2_12.

² Damon D. Hickey, 160.

³ Doralyn Joanne Hickey, “Benjamin Morgan Palmer: Churchman of the Old South.” PhD diss., Duke University, 1962.

of cataloging and classification into easy reach of theological librarians. This was the period at which Dr Hickey was a member of the international committee of librarians that produced the *Anglo American Cataloguing Rules* (2nd edition; ALA, 1978).

In Farris' obituary of Hickey, he noted her other contributions to ATLA: Chair of the Committee on Cataloging and Classification (1964-67), Chair of the Committee on Systems and Standards (1973-74), member of the ATS-ATLA Task Force on a Strategy for Seminary Librarians and Learning Material Centers for the 1970s (1972-73), and member of the Board of Directors (1976-79)—until that time, she was the only non-practicing librarian ever elected to the ATLA Board.

Farris ended his obituary with a touching paragraph about their relationship:

Finally, the time has come for the Editor to say his public farewell to Doralyn. ... She produced, without assistance, all six of the five-year indices which have appeared with the Newsletter and have made the Newsletter a reference work on the ATLA, as well as a serial news source. In 1978, she was Co-editor, with Jerry D. Campbell, of volume 25, Special Issue, of the Newsletter which honored the Editor upon the completion of twenty-five years in that post. Each of us, indeed, is unique. But some of us are more dramatically and memorably unique than others. Doralyn was such a one. The Editor's life has not given him a more memorable friend – or a more devoted one.⁴

But equally important to the American Theological Library Association is Dr. Hickey's work in teaching librarians—including theological librarians—for 25 years. When she was offered a faculty position at UNC in 1962, the acting dean, Carlyle Frarey, promised that she would be able to teach courses in theological librarianship, as well as in cataloging and technical services. She carried that tradition on in her work at NTSU, including teaching a course on philosophical and religious librarianship in which I had an interesting double role, since it was held at Bridwell Library at SMU in Dallas, where I was associate librarian. I was a student in the class but also helped arrange the materials for the course, under Hickey's supervision. Among the students (later theological librarians) who benefited from her teaching and wise counsel were Jerry D. Campbell, Sara M. Myers, Christine M. Wenderoth, H. Eugene McLeod, Cecil R. White, and myself.

Many of the above-named librarians have talked to me about their memories of Doralyn Hickey. I believe it is the consensus of the group that she was very demanding, very thorough, one who did not accept poor work, but also that she would go out of her way to mentor and encourage her students.

Though she was not a theological librarian, the story of one of her doctoral students at NTSU, Lois N. Upham, illustrates Doralyn Hickey's impact:

She told me early on in my program that she expected me to produce a good dissertation, not like so many of the ones I was running across during so many of my literature searches. She said that she wanted it to be a dissertation that I could be proud of, and of course, I wanted *her* to be proud of it too. ... Doralyn wrote a lot of things to me over the years, but her signature on my dissertation is the example of her writing of which I am the proudest.⁵

Active in the Presbyterian church all of her life, Hickey was elected as a commissioner from her presbytery to the

⁴ Donn Michael Farris, "Doralyn J. Hickey, 1929-1987," *ATLA Newsletter* 34:4 (May 16, 1987): 92-93.

⁵ Lois N. Upham, quoted by Damon D. Hickey, 168.

1985 General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), whose union in 1983 (the northern and southern Presbyterian denominations merging) she had supported. Other activities included teaching Sunday school, singing in the choir, teaching in vacation church school, assisting in selection of pastors, and serving on various synod and presbytery committees. A mind too good for the church? Not in her way of thinking.

Doralyn Hickey faced an ongoing off-and-on battle with breast cancer from the early 1980s until her death in 1987, which occurred during a reading week in March. Her funeral was held in the Presbyterian church on Friday, and students who returned to class on the following Monday were shocked to learn of her passing, most not even knowing that she was ill. Professor Rose Mary Magrill, who collaborated with Doralyn Hickey to publish one book,⁶ said of her colleague's passing, "Perhaps we should have offered a memorial service for the students' sake later in the semester, but we just didn't think."

Many other tributes to Doralyn Hickey are discoverable online, including those from the American Library Association, the faculty of the School of Library Science of the University of Wisconsin—Milwaukee, the faculty of the School of Library and Information Science of NTSU (now the University of North Texas), one in the *Texas Library Journal* by her colleagues Donald B. Cleaveland and Margaret Irby Nichols, and the official ATLA memorial by H. Eugene McLeod, published in the 1987 *ATLA Proceedings*. She was, as the American Library Association's tribute so eloquently says, "a truly shining star."⁷

⁶ Rose Mary Magrill and Doralyn J. Hickey, *Acquisitions Management and Collection Development in Libraries* (Chicago American Library Association, 1984). Hickey also authored *Problems in Organizing Library Collections* (New York: R. R. Bowker, 1972), and many articles in general and theological library publications.

⁷ Obituary, *American Libraries*, 18 (June 1987): 536.

