

The Perennial Question and a Radical Response: the Student Bibliographer Program in the Vanderbilt Divinity Library

by Eileen Crawford

ABSTRACT: The student bibliographer program at the Vanderbilt Divinity Library has functioned successfully for thirty years. Created in 1979 by the library director, Dorothy Parks Evins, as a cost savings measure, the program has employed Ph.D. students to select materials and to perform other professional level tasks. The essay outlines the origins and development of the program. An appendix includes responses from former student bibliographers to questions regarding how their experience in the Student Bibliographer Program has influenced their professional and academic careers

INTRODUCTION

“How do you stretch the budget to provide adequate material and services for the new academic year?” The question is a common one among academic library directors. In 1979, Dorothy (“Dot”) Parks, the newly appointed Director of Vanderbilt University’s Divinity Library, responded with a bold solution: a professional position in the Divinity Library would be replaced by a team of Ph.D. students.

It was an opportune time to propose such a plan. Dot’s previous position as the reference librarian was vacant. The Divinity faculty was supportive, particularly Jack Forstman, Dean of the Divinity School. Most important, Dot’s life experiences provided her with the creativity and independence to persevere through the inevitable obstacles confronting any new idea that attempts to circumvent established ways of doing things. Dot’s first career was as a missionary, teaching mathematics in Malaysia. There she had learned to make the most of limited resources, and to depend on the collegiality and varied talents of colleagues. Such lessons emboldened her to diverge from the traditional path, and to enter uncharted waters in the early days of her appointment as Library Director.

HISTORY OF THE STUDENT BIBLIOGRAPHER PROGRAM

The first step in the plan was to eliminate the reference position, a decision that would be looked on askance by many library administrators then and now. The reference salary would be used to hire students in the Ph.D. programs as bibliographers, with the additional responsibility of providing reference support in their areas of expertise. The vacated reference salary was enough to fund a significant portion of the ten-hour-per-week compensation for bibliographers in all of the programs. The beginning team needed to cover the six program areas in the Graduate School of Religion: Hebrew Bible, New Testament, Theology, Church History and History of Christian Thought, Ethics, and Pastoral Studies (encompassing Homiletics, as well as Religion and Personality).

Dot shared her thought process in an August 4, 2010, interview with Eileen Crawford and Bill Hook, and wrote a follow-up clarification in unpublished notes that outlines what she had in mind:

The plan was to appoint a bibliographer, a graduate student well on in his/her program, for each of the six areas. Appointments would be made from suggestions from the faculty in the various areas; this was

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the bridge-builder. It assured faculty that their ongoing interests in building their specialized collections would be addressed. As the appointees kept up with their current literatures, it not only informed their own research, it could build acquisitions lists for the collection. Keeping up with and judging current publications, it seemed to me, was just what graduate students should be doing anyway. It was this highly motivated learning activity which could be tapped for building a solid collection.

In addition to the Ph.D. programs, the Divinity School offered ministerial programs that needed to be included in the plan. Since the reference salary alone was insufficient to cover all six positions, more thinking out of the box was required. Dot writes:

I was driven to examine what had been considered a sacred cow, the Kesler Endowment. The fund had been endowed by Professor John Louis Kesler for the purpose of assuring continuing education opportunities for rural ministers in isolated communities. I had the greatest respect for Professor Kesler's intention and commitment to that goal. But the world had changed dramatically in the half century since he made that endowment gift. Mobility and communications had rendered the rural minister of his day obsolete by the eighties. The question was: How can I use the fund where it is needed, and still honor his intention and gift? The answer became clear.

Under the evolving plan, the Kesler Circulating Library would expand rather than diminish. One of Dot's priorities was to maintain the flourishing mailing service. The Kesler collection was shelved behind a closed grill. Under Dot's guidance, it was weeded and then inter-shelved with the Divinity Library collection. Patrons of the Kesler circulating library now had access to the entire Divinity collection. Likewise, faculty and students could access the previously isolated Kesler collection. With the original intent of the Kesler gift enhanced by access to a larger collection, the Kesler Fund could then be used to support the bibliographer and the selection of material in Pastoral Studies, as well as the ongoing expenses for the assistant and collection of the Kesler mailing service.

The bibliographer program was fully developed, funded, and resourced by a talented group of Ph.D. students during a six-month period. Dot articulates the unforeseen benefits of venturing into uncharted waters:

“As I spread my wings with proposals, receptions, and exhibits, I grew increasingly bold as I called upon the bibliographers for research and any number of their creative gifts. For the most part, they were willing participants in whatever I asked of them. Rather than simply relieving me of making selections for the collection, the plan multiplied what I could do to develop resources and thereby enable real growth of the collection and its services. The bibliographer's team brought life to the Divinity Library.”

Dot's written account¹ gives special recognition to Anne Richardson Womack (currently Digital Projects Librarian) for her early development in the mid-nineties of the online *Revised Common Lectionary*² and its companion site, *Art and the Christian Tradition*.³ The lectionary site receives more hits than any of the other Vanderbilt University Library websites, and regularly receives comments from a global audience. Dot believes that Anne may not have had the Kesler Service especially in mind when developing the two projects. Nevertheless, Dot sees these websites as a serendipitous expansion of the Kesler Service and another example of what can be accomplished when one is willing to innovate.

¹ Dorothy (Dot) Parks, Unpublished notes re: Student Bibliographer Program, 2013.

² <http://lectionary.library.vanderbilt.edu/>; project of the Vanderbilt Divinity Library, a division of the Jean and Alexander Heard Library

³ <http://diglib.library.vanderbilt.edu/act-search.pl>

THE BIBLIOGRAPHER PROGRAM TODAY

The Divinity Library bibliographer program continues today aided by another highlight of Dot's tenure as Library Director. Working closely with Dean Jack Forstman, the number of new endowments designated for the Divinity Library book funds was dramatically expanded. Today, the endowed funds account for 47 percent of the Collection's budget.

The bibliographer program in many ways remains unchanged, with job descriptions that would still be recognizable by its earliest participants. However, technological innovation has radically changed how the work is carried out. There are up to eleven bibliographers with collection responsibilities for each of the Divinity School's areas of study and program strengths. The library's primary vendor distributes its title offerings electronically rather than through paper slips. Bibliographers access the vendor's website and make selections electronically that the Collections Librarian vets before submitting an electronic purchase.

Each of the bibliographers also maintains a LibGuide for their subject area. The LibGuides' homepages have an RSS feed of all of the purchases made within the past 30 days. In addition, bibliographers can highlight new book purchases, databases, blogs, or anything else in their field that warrants special recognition. Bibliographers are encouraged to use their creativity in maintaining the LibGuides and are only limited by established practices and time constraints. Periodically, bibliographers send e-mails to their faculty and patron group with a link to the LibGuide to remind them of its existence, and the services that they and the librarians have to offer.

Even timesheets are maintained and submitted electronically. The maximum hours per week are ten, but the hours are flexible. Fewer hours are allowable in crunch periods and recoverable during slower periods in the academic calendar. Bibliographers are asked to schedule five hours a week so that they can be available at known times for staff questions and to build community. Their remaining hours can be completed at their convenience.

Certainly the program has faced challenges over time. Vanderbilt's Ph.D. programs in religion now admit fewer students and make larger financial awards compared to earlier years of the program, decreasing the pool of candidates and their need for additional income. The vacant bibliographer positions compete for a smaller number of qualified students with a few better-paying positions in the Graduate Department of Religion and the Divinity School, as well as teaching assistant positions. So far, there have not been empty bibliographer positions, but recruitment has been expanded to include second-year students and occasionally those in their first. Fortunately, graduating students have recommended the program to students behind them in their subject areas, which generates interest and receptivity when students are contacted about an opening.

Unforeseen projects evolve with frequency in the Divinity Library. It would be difficult to see how they would be accomplished if there were not a sufficient pool of student staff possessing an expert's level of subject knowledge to apply to the tasks. Dot's words still ring true today: "The bibliographer's team brings life to the library."

ASSESSING THE STUDENT BIBLIOGRAPHER PROGRAM AFTER THREE DECADES

There have been five Collection Librarians administering the program since its inception: Dorothy Parks Evins, Bill Hook, Ann Richardson Womack, Meredith Hammons, and Eileen Crawford. These administrators are all champions of the program, but empirical evidence had never been collected to give strength to their advocacy. Thirty years after the program's beginning seemed a good time to record its history and gauge its success.

As the current program administrator, I compiled a list of the student bibliographers employed between 1979 and 2010. Six questions, along with a cover letter, were sent to ninety former bibliographers, and twenty responses were received.⁴ The questions were open-ended in the hopes that former bibliographers would provide further insights into the impact of the program on their careers. Most of the responses were positive and affirmed the assumptions that had been offered by Dot as arguments on the program's behalf at its inception. Respondents wrote from their experiences as faculty, Deans, and editors in publishing houses.

ASSUMPTIONS

1. Student bibliographers would build a bridge between the Divinity School and the Divinity Library.

When there is an opening for a new bibliographer, faculty in the subject area of the vacancy are contacted to recommend candidates for the position. Faculty and librarians are partners in the selection process, and have an investment from the beginning in the success of the new hire. Bibliographers are encouraged to promote their services to the patrons in their subject area. As both students and bibliographers, they easily navigate the space between the two roles, providing more frequent and informed contact than a typical Collections Librarian is able to develop among a much larger and diverse patron base.

2. Student bibliographers' subject expertise and their awareness of the research interests of their faculty and other students in their program area would allow for a more focused and discerning selection of material as they perused vendor slips and publisher's catalogs and websites.

Through many of the thirty years of the program, the Divinity Library has been unique among the Vanderbilt libraries in not utilizing an approval plan for collections. Although the Divinity Library's collections budget was leaner than other libraries, and many of its peer theological libraries, the bibliographers' knowledge of research interests has resulted in a high degree of patron satisfaction with the collection.

3. Student bibliographers greatly enhanced the library staff's language and subject expertise.

Although the student bibliographers' major responsibility was to select material, they were also called on to help answer reference or cataloging questions, assist in teaching bibliographic instruction classes, or perform special projects. The Divinity Library staff has never numbered more than three and three quarter professional staff, and for much of the thirty-year period it was less. During periods of staff vacancies, bibliographers have even been recruited to fill staff and professional roles. It would not be excessive to give them significant credit for the goodwill garnered for the library among their constituents.

4. Student bibliographers would personally benefit from their library experience in multiple ways.

Student bibliographers were treated and trusted as professionals, but their pay has never reflected the level of their job responsibilities. Yet, the low pay rate did not discourage candidates, even for financially struggling students. The library was already a second home to most of them. The selection process gave them a broader awareness of their subject area outside of their own narrow research interests. Perhaps the most affirming statements from bibliographers over the years in support of the program were their appreciation of community in the midst of the

⁴ A copy of the questions and responses from a representative sample of former student bibliographers is included as an appendix to this essay.

often lonely scholarly work of a graduate student. For many, interactions with library staff provided them with a sense of family.

5. Student bibliographers would impact the libraries of institutions that employed them as faculty through a greater appreciation of how libraries can collaborate in the learning process.

This assumption was cherished by the administrators of the bibliographer program, but had only anecdotal evidence for its validity. The idea was that student bibliographers would go on to become faculty members at seminaries and theological schools, where their bibliographer experience would make them informed advocates of the librarians and the libraries in their institutions. How could this not be true given their pseudo librarian professional experiences as student bibliographers?

THE BIBLIOGRAPHER PROGRAM IN THE FUTURE (“OH NO! - THE FUTURE IS ALREADY HERE!”)

As I began this project to record the history of the Student Bibliographer program, the library was preparing for a paradigm shift in how collections would continue to be developed, how they would be accessed, and how they would be valued. It was difficult to anticipate how the bibliographer program would survive in this new environment. At the very point when I was recording the history and exhorting the values of the program in the hopes that it would provide a model for struggling theological libraries after the 2008 economic crash, the viability of our program seemed to me to be in question.

It was announced in the summer of 2011 that the Vanderbilt University Libraries would be adopting a preference for electronic-monograph formats over print. Fortuitously, for a library system that was running out of stack space in its libraries and its remote annex, the number of physical books in the collection would no longer be considered the benchmark of a great library. In fairness, it must be emphasized that there was considerably more nuance in the library administrations' communication of this great leap forward that would propel us into a 21st century research library. However, as the Collections Librarian in the Divinity Library, I interpreted this announcement as a radical and negative change in which vast numbers of e-books would be dropped into the catalog, patrons would access the library remotely, and the collection that had been so thoughtfully built over time would soon languish in dusty stacks.

The challenges in preparing for this transition in the Divinity Library were compounded by the relative inexperience of the student bibliographers. All but two of them had been hired in the summer of 2011, when the conversation with an e-book vendor was just beginning. It was unusual for more than half of the bibliographers to vacate their positions during the same period. New bibliographers receive training at the start of their employment, but it usually takes at least a year to become comfortable spending thousands of dollars on library material. Conversations with more seasoned bibliographers in the Collections workroom had functioned as a confidence builder for new recruits as tips and learned wisdom were shared.

All too soon it became a reality. In 2011, the Vanderbilt University Library System contracted with ProQuest's ebrary to provide e-books through their Patron Driven Acquisition program. The Library also subscribed to 70,000+ e-books from ebrary's Academic Complete collection. The 70,000 Academic Complete records were loaded in January 2012, providing access to books published between 1995 and 2011. No selection was required, although the duplication rate against the library's print collection was surprisingly high, suggesting the very satisfactory quality of the electronic offerings.

Our main vendor, YBP, began delivery of the Patron Driven Acquisition program the same month. Through this program, books that fit pre-established parameters in the Library of Congress B classification were downloaded weekly into the online catalog, essentially operating as an approval plan. Meanwhile, the established workflow for selecting books continued alongside ebrary's e-book delivery programs. Bibliographers made their title-by-title selection decisions in YBP's GOBI database, with the added option of being able to select an electronic version of the book when an e-version of the title was available.

The Patron Driven Acquisition program raised many questions. However, the transition period was made easier by the Library administrators' flexibility in allowing bibliographers discretion in selecting print or e-book for the titles they reviewed. Some libraries within the Vanderbilt system have patrons who are more comfortable with e-books. In the Divinity Library, student bibliographers know their faculty and peer preferences, or they can send an e-mail to solicit a format option for a particular title. This personalized service is enabled through their status as both student and bibliographer.

As the trend of patrons relying on remote access continues it logically follows that ways to deliver library services electronically must also evolve. The student bibliographers and their expert subject knowledge have already been put to good use in developing subject LibGuides, and, when requested, LibGuides for particular courses. Upgrades in this software and additional training have given them even more tools to reach their patron group electronically. A recently appointed task force charged to study the University Library's use of social media has opened up possibilities that may be unique to the Divinity Library that has ten student bibliographers at their disposal. Who better to send a tweet or make use of some other social media platform yet to be imagined than a fellow student whose job was conceived as a bridge between the School and the Library?

At least in the near future, the student bibliographers seem to have an important contribution to make to the Divinity Library as it strives to remain an integral and visible partner in the educational process. As the current Collections Librarian and administrator of the program, I am more than grateful that they are able to navigate the library's technology changes so easily, and have the patience to drag me up to their level of technological comfort.

APPENDIX: SURVEY QUESTIONS TO FORMER BIBLIOGRAPHERS, WITH RESPONSES

1. At the time the plan to hire student bibliographers was initiated, it was thought that the program would build a bridge between the School and its Library. Do you think this assumption was borne out during your time as a bibliographer, and if so, can you provide examples of ways in which this occurred?
- I think the primary way was that students in my classes and professors I had, recognized me as a link to the library. They knew I could answer questions and it made it easier, particularly for students, to ask me things, recommend books, etc. in the course of their normal day, rather than having to seek out the right person in the library to contact. That was also true for professors, since they could ask me their questions and I could point them to the right person. I also felt as though I learned a great deal that helped me in my work as a teaching assistant by being in the library and thus learning more about what our resources were and how to access them, that I could then pass on to others.

- Yes, I think so. Instead of simply being served by the library, the positions of student bibliographers provided an avenue for students to serve and contribute to the library. I think that the arrangement enhanced a sense of shared trust between students and the library. That is, we were trusted to identify and initiate orders for books that became a part of a major research library. Additionally, in our regular staff meetings, the “professional librarians” solicited ideas and input from the bibliographers and, although it has been several years now, I’m certain that a number of our ideas were adopted. Finally, fellow students felt very free to approach us about resources they would find useful for their research.
 - Most definitely! During my tenure as a bibliographer, I have time and again been able to direct my area colleagues in the graduate program and faculty to new monographs and journal articles relevant to their current research, for that was my understanding of program’s concept. As part of my own education and being of help to the area faculty and students, I made a monthly schedule to browse latest journals that arrived at the Divinity Library. I thought it also a collegial duty to refer dissertation writers to current research in their own area of research.
2. If you are currently at an institution that has a library, could you see this model working as a bridge between library staff and non-library staff?⁵
 - I could definitely see this model working in my current institution. Having students engaged in the collections process gives them greater knowledge of and investment in the resources of the library. I just gave a presentation in a graduate level class where, here in October, several students had never set foot in the library. Providing graduate students with jobs so closely tied to their fields gives them a larger investment in the library and in doing their own outreach for the library.
 - My university does not have a student bibliographer system in any field. It is a large state school with professional bibliographers. Last August I brought up the Vanderbilt idea at a meeting on how to improve the library. The professional librarians were intrigued. They had never heard of this idea and wanted to explore it some more. I haven’t heard since if anything has been done about it.
 - I am not currently at a university, but when I taught at a university, I had a fine relationship with the library staff, especially those in acquisitions. They did not have the Divinity Library’s model and when I mentioned it to them, they all expressed surprise that someone could have come up with the idea as a cost saving measure. Of course, were that model to be used, then several of the full time staff in their acquisitions department would have been without work. At the moment of a world-wide financial crisis, there is no doubt in my mind that Library Directors would jump at this proposal were it suggested to them.
 3. Another strength of the program was the addition of language and subject expertise to the library staff through the employment of student bibliographers. Not only were the bibliographers charged with selecting material for the library, but they could be called on to help answer reference or cataloging questions. Were you called on to participate in library activities outside of collections, and did this experience have any impact on your academic career as a student or later in your employment?

⁵ There were a number of “does not apply” responses to this question due to employment in institutions that do not have Ph.D. level programs.

- Providing reference and cataloging questions to masters' students and PhD colleagues had two wonderful side benefits. First, over time it strengthened my own confidence about offering suggestions for broadening/deepening research, recommending books and other resources to consult, and helping students reframe research interest in order to sharpen their searches and end results. Second, it strengthened my ability to listen, ask helpful questions, and communicate clearly with students. It made me more aware that occasions to assist students are actually a dialogue between limited, finite, sometimes ignorant human beings who are thinking together about how best to proceed with something that must be accomplished. The dynamics of this were helpful after and outside the classroom when I was teaching, meeting with individual students about their projects/papers. They were also helpful while I was dean of the seminary, meeting with colleagues to think through their research and writing projects.
 - Yes, I work in publishing, so helping with cataloging books has influenced how I develop products. When I think about titling, subjects, back cover copy, and BISAC codes for a book, I always think about how to make the title something that will pull up easily for someone searching a library catalog. I also think about how catalogers will deal with the book when it comes into the library. When I have to work with marketing and designers, I always pull from my experience working in Collection Development. There are people in marketing and design, that don't understand that a subtitle is something that is part of a record filed with the Library of Congress versus cover copy that is strictly for marketing. I try to push people to make things clear, so a person who sees the book in passing will be able to find it later in a catalog or an Amazon search because the title and subtitle are clear. The Divinity Library's work with libraries in other countries has made me more aware of what constraints other libraries may face. It affects how I view the cost of the product. It also pushes me to think of ways we can donate products to areas in need.
 - Absolutely. The reference part of the job was exciting and rewarding. Professors, students, people from the city would call and/or come by for help in researching particular things. In general, just learning the library to the degree I did — the research tools, the specialized reference materials — was a plus for me as a student and has been invaluable as I've tried to assist students in these years that I've been teaching.
 - Just a couple of times I was asked to help outside collections, but it was extremely rewarding work. Every bit of research I did as a bibliographer increased my skill as an academic. That was extremely helpful for my dissertation, since I was researching a topic that was truly new and had almost nothing gathered on it. Many of the sources were also from the popular culture. I am still going out to dinner on the things I learned there.
4. Several bibliographers have commented that their responsibilities for the library gave them a much broader awareness of their academic discipline than they would have had otherwise. Are there ways that you think your time as a bibliographer made you a better scholar/teacher in your discipline?
- Yes! Most immediately, it strengthened my awareness of what was "out there" and how to access it. This was wonderful for my dissertation research. In addition, it broadened my view of and appreciation for the links between my discipline and other disciplines. Some of this came from reviewing publisher's catalogs; some came from conversations with PhD program colleagues working alongside me in the library (my

personal in-house reference consultants!); and some was an unconscious process of gaining confidence regarding what was happening in my field.

- This is definitely the case for me. As bibliographer and assistant archivist for the Glatzer collection, I provided myself with a graduate-level education in Judaica. This aspect of my education at Vanderbilt has served me well over the past two decades.
 - I agree 100 percent with the comment on a broader awareness of my discipline. At the time we had a growing library of pastoral care of theology from many newish perspectives: liberation, feminist, and evangelical as well. Left to myself, I fear I would have ignored the latter, which would have been a huge shame. I was able to discover what the cutting edge issues in the field were, and that's priceless. I simply cannot keep up with all the publications that come out now without the time I put in as a bibliographer and what I learned.
 - My time as a bibliographer was invaluable to my education and my scholarly career. Broadening the awareness of my academic discipline is only the beginning. This opportunity made me an expert in how to seek out and locate research materials. This knowledge has been a blessing for my own research, yet it has also made me a more complete teacher. I can now guide students through the process of finding research materials with more depth, which aids the quality of their own academic work.
5. If you have worked at an institution that has a library, did your experience as a bibliographer influence how you have related to the library staff? Were you more or less motivated to participate on library committees?
- Although I could never hope to possess 1/100th of the knowledge of most library staff members, my time as a bibliographer galvanized my interest and respect for the potential of libraries and the craft of Library Science. In my current position I have been easily able to relate to the library staff. Similarly, I am now more likely to seek the help of the staff or offer my services if they are needed. Not only that, but it is now much easier to collaborate with the library on research matters or when helping students.
 - Absolutely. One of my first committee appointments as a new faculty member was to the Library Committee. It was assumed I brought some understanding of issues (I did) and interest. I'm not afraid to ask for help from the library staff and find them always willing to assist. I think my time as a bibliographer helped me better understand both the resources of the library but also of the staff.
 - Absolutely, I was one of those "readers" in my childhood so always had the approval of the librarians I encountered, but it wasn't until my time as a bibliographer that I was able to get over (part of) my intimidation and see the librarians as helpful peers. I've been an advocate of the library everywhere I've been since then.
 - My experience as bibliographer helped me appreciate the many types of demands placed on library staff. This has enabled me to view each library as a microcosm in which staff see their job as an opportunity to enrich the education industry and the local community. Library people are special people. Participating on a library committee was natural for me as a new professor.

6. Bibliographers have commented over the years that their work in the library has provided them with an important sense of community through interaction with library full-time and student staff. Could you comment on how library employment impacted your total experience as a student at Vanderbilt?
- The opportunity to be a bibliographer strengthened my association with my academic peers. I was better able to witness and discuss how other students envisioned the future of their studies and their programs. On a personal level, the library staff was welcoming, communal and incredibly helpful. I have nothing but great memories regarding the spirit of the Divinity Library staff and their hard work in making every possible resource available to any student who needed help.
 - It was a really important part of community engagement for me. I learned to know students from other programs, engaged in all sorts of conversations, learned to know and appreciate the staff (they were terrific when I was doing dissertation research and writing!) and made friends there. It was one of the places that really connected me to the University and I'm very grateful for that experience. It also made me "at home" in the library and that was wonderful. I roamed all over it — discovered resources, used them, etc.
 - The staff of the library became a very important part of my life as a student. They encouraged me in my studies and made me feel like part of a family. If I was proud of something, they were happy along with me. If I needed someone to listen because I was stressed about money or coursework, there was always someone who would lend an ear. My happiest memories are of the library. So many funny stories I tell to this day involve something that happened in Collections Development or at the circulation desk.
 - The library was, without question, home for me during my time at Vanderbilt. When I worked as a bibliographer, I would go hang out in the bibliographer's room even when I wasn't working, because I knew I could find people to talk to. When I received the news that I had passed my qualifying exams, I went straight to the library because I knew I would find people there who would celebrate with me. I met a large number of my closest friends in graduate school while working with them in the library. A lot of the time, when I reflect on my time at Vanderbilt, I picture myself sitting at the old reference/circulation desk or in the bibliographer's room before the renovation, having in depth discussions, laughing a great deal, and developing both as a scholar and as a person.
 - I experienced incredible community with my library colleagues — both at work and at play (golf tournaments, chess matches, work breaks, after hours gatherings). I treasure those experiences, which were the most meaningful and enjoyable of my time at Vanderbilt. Because of other library responsibilities, I also was able to get to know a broad range of students, e.g., ABDs who were coming in once a year to renew books and especially undergraduates. I learned about issues with which these students struggled that I don't believe many of my GDR/VDS peers experienced/valued/respected.
 - Being a bibliographer has always given me a sensitivity to the place/role and contribution of a university library. I have had the opportunity to speak up for the library and librarians many times, especially when budgets are discussed. Being a bibliographer was a very important part of my Vanderbilt experience. It

gave me a “home” during my years at school. Taking on this role gave me the opportunity for relationships with the library staff and with faculty/students that I would have never had without the position. I have very fond memories of my work as a bibliographer and I am very thankful that the opportunity was offered. I hope Dot knows that she made a wonderful contribution to the school and the lives of those involved!! Way to go Dot.⁶

⁶ There were a couple (and only a couple) of responses to particular questions that were from a more negative perspective. I include them here so as not to suppress the voices of those less satisfied with their experience as bibliographers.

- I was a bibliographer for a period of only a few weeks, as I recollect, but the work did strengthen the bridge between school and library. Honestly (I hope this isn't discouraging) I found the work tedious. I was hoping I'd enjoy it more than I did. It got dry.
- I got along with the staff more than I did with the students. Unfortunately there was a lot of negativity among students regarding a number of things having to do with doctoral study and the job market for Ph.D graduates.

