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The SLA/Education Division: Beginnings and Early Days

By Charles D. Missar

During the SLA annual conference in Boston in June 1972, a group of education librarians met informally to discuss the possibility of forming a separate section in the Social Science Division. There had been an Education and Library Service Section started in 1948, but it dissolved in 1955. Then, 17 years later Barbara Marks of New York University sensed renewed interest on the part of a number of librarians. These included, among other, Dorothy Christiansen of the Center for Urban Education, Wayne Gossage of Bank Street College, Murray Wortzel of Herbert Lehman College, Guest Perry of Houghton Mifflin Company, Priscilla Linsley of Educational Testing Service, and Malcolm Hamilton of the Harvard University Graduate School of Education.

As a result of their meeting, it was decided to pursue section status, to recruit prospective members, and to request permission to plan a program for the Pittsburgh conference in June 1973. Dorothy Christiansen agreed to serve as the first chairperson and coordinator of the planned luncheon program. It turned out to be a very successful event with about 50 people attending. With such support, the Education Section was officially launched and 74 members were listed in the August 1973 directory issue of *Special Libraries*.

Guest Perry succeeded to the chair in June 1974 with the mandate to move forward as quickly as possible to achieve Division status. The bylaws of the Association required that a written petition of the 100 voting members be submitted to the Board of Directors requesting such action. A formal petition was made quickly so that at the Toronto conference in June 1974 the Board approved the

establishment of the Education Provisional Division.

For the January 1974 issue of *Special Libraries*, Wayne Gossage wrote a letter to the editor pointing out that this new group was directed toward “university education libraries, federal education libraries, school district professional libraries, education association libraries, libraries of the education, textbook publishers, AV media publishers and a wide variety of other special libraries with some education dimension.”

At the 1974 SLA conference, Priscilla Linsley became the chair of the new Provisional Division. The need to sign up more members and to get full Division status was imperative. By June 30, 1975, there were 152 members—50% more than needed. Malcolm Hamilton took over the chairmanship at the 1975 Chicago conference. Rosetta Martin of Tufts University was chosen chair-elect and Lois Renter of the American College Testing Program was chosen secretary-treasurer. Finally at the Board of Directors meeting in October 1975 the Education Division was given full status—a little over three years from the first meeting.

Also in the Fall of 1975, *The Bulletin*, the Division’s newsletter, was launched with Guest Perry serving as the editor. The first issue had 26 pages with a directory of members, a book review section, a bibliography exchange, a list of new publications, a list of books on teaching by teachers, and an index of advertisers. Three issues were published in 1976-1976. The Spring issue highlighted the Denver conference with a program on “Full Service, One-Stop Information

Centers' and a field trip to the Educational Commission of the States. Rosetta Marin became Division chair in June 1976 and the membership roster grew to 202. Plans were drawn up for programs in New York in 1977. Patsy Tupper of the Minnesota State Department of Education was chosen as Chair-elect. Malcom Hamilton became a co-editor of *The Bulletin* beginning with volume II. In the Fall issue a review of the Division program was given as well as the directory of members.

In June 1977 at the New York conference there were programs on "Nationwide Education Information Sources" and "Worldwide Information Source." The latter was co-sponsored with the Social Sciences Division and there was a field trip to the UNICEF Information Center. Ethel Auster of the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education was selected as Chair-elect and Charles Missar of the U.S. National Institute of Education became Secretary-Treasurer. Membership continued to grow, now standing at about 225.

In the Fall of 1977, *The Bulletin* was renamed *Education Libraries* and became theme-oriented. "Back to Basics," "Textbooks," and "Materials Selection" were featured in Volume III. Guest Perry and Malcom Hamilton continued as co-editors, improving the size and quality of the publication. An annual index has been provided from the beginning.

When the 69th SLA annual conference was held in Kansas City in 1978, the Division sponsored a well-attended panel discussion on "Small Grants and How to Get Them" and co-sponsored a program on "Problems in Communications" with the Legislative Reference Section. Ethel Auster took over the responsibilities of the chair and Pauline Rothstein from the ERIC Clearinghouse on Urban Education was selected Chair-elect. Membership had grown to 260.

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