

SLA Education Division - Member Spotlight

An Interview with Dr. Lesley Farmer

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In June, I had the wonderful opportunity to attend the SLA 2015 Annual Conference in Boston, Massachusetts, as the Education Division's Travel Award recipient. As a student and first time attendee, I enjoyed meeting many different librarians who were both passionate about the field and willing to share a wide variety of information.

I also had the opportunity to attend the Education Division presentation in which Dr. Lesley Farmer was honored with the Anne Galler Award. Dr. Farmer is a professor at California State University Long Beach (CSULB) and coordinates the Librarianship program. She received the award in recognition of her professional excellence in the field of education librarianship, library education, and for providing outstanding service to the Education Division.

Dr. Farmer took time this summer to answer my questions about her experiences, the advice she has for new professionals, and what receiving the award means to her.

How long have you been a SLA member and a member of the Education Division?

I joined SLA in 1974 in the San Francisco Bay Area, but then joined the Peace Corps. I rejoined SLA and the Education Division in 2001 when the conference was held in Southern California. My colleague, John D'Amicantonio at CSULB, said that the Education Division fit well with my work as a librarianship educator.

Has being a member of SLA and the Education Division made an impact on your career?

SLA has the smartest librarians who provide insightful expertise, so they keep me current in the field. I've enlarged my professional network to the international level, and SLA members are great fun to be with.

What advice would you give new members of the Education Division about their involvement in the Association, and in their career as a librarian?

Participate! Contribute! Volunteer! I've got a webinar hosting opportunity for some lucky person.

What are your thoughts about the future of libraries and of careers in this field? What skills do you think are important for professionals to have?

We're needed now more than ever to select and organize data/information/knowledge, and to provide physical and intellectual access to those resources. We continue to provide value-added service: we don't just select resources for our clientele as a whole; we also select resources -- and the way to share/present them -- for a specific need by a specific individual. We continue to need to have broad general knowledge, [and] in most cases: deep knowledge of at least one discipline, deep organizational and management knowledge, strong communication and

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interpersonal skills, literacy and research skills, instructional skills, technological skills, critical thinking skills, collaborative skills, flexibility yet attention to detail, curiosity and love of learning, and creativity helps. Just your average superhuman.

I know that you have published books and other writings, presented at conferences, served in leadership positions, and received awards from SLA, ALA and more. What does being the 2015 recipient of the Anne Galler Award mean to you?

This honor means highly regarded peers value my lifetime of work. We advance on the shoulders of giants -- such as Anne Galler.