

Crowe remarks for OCLC Members Council: Notes
May 2003

- It was 10 years ago that I entered this body, fresh from (BCR) board service, and began to do my part to help keep OCLC governance a vital force in the life of the collaborative This has been one of the most positive experiences of my career, as I hope it has for all of you!
- I came to the Council in the company of many other eager librarians, of course, among them a woman from the east coast I had not met before. She impressed me early on because of her command of the issues, ability to cut to the heart of the matter, and skill in leading groups to get their work done. It seems hard to believe that this woman is about to leave this body, and I cannot speak at this meeting without paying **tribute to Kris Senecal** for her many very, very effective contributions to library cooperation . . . in PALINET and through this body . . . over so many years. I especially will miss her good counsel and very congenial company!
- My purpose here is not to enumerate the many roles and responsibilities of your board. Those of you who return in the fall will hear one of the Trustees speak about this topic, as a part of the process the Council will follow in preparing to elect two new Trustees at this time next year.
- Still, I want to take a few minutes to do two things:

+ First and foremost, I want to acknowledge what I think has been the most notable success of recent times for the Council and the Board: the maturing of the vital relationship that must exist between us--and for both bodies also with OCLC management. I believe that, at least in part because of this development, OCLC now is much better able to serve its many members' interests. In this progress, I sense a revived commitment to the values that always have marked OCLC when it has been most successful:

- 1. open communication based on mutual trust and respect**
- 2. a strong commitment to a culture of COLLABORATION and CONTRIBUTION**
- 3. an improved understanding of the challenges--and sometimes of the necessary tensions--that can be associated with OCLC's having to operate in a businesslike manner.**

+ Second, I will take the balance of this time to give you a sense of some of the key issues that the board has been dealing with in recent times.

If I decided to approach this task by citing for you at least one example of the leadership that has been shown by each member of the Board. In this way, I can accomplish the topical review and help connect you with the people who make up the board . . . I decided that we should project an image of each Trustee as I mention her or him, even for those who also are with us at this meeting.

My own image--which the OCLC staff found in the archives--suggests that --with time-- service to the cooperative even can be slimming!

But let me start with a reminder about the composition of the Board: There are 15 members of the board: Six members are elected (two every two years) from this Council, for 6-year terms; eight members are elected by the board itself (for 4-year terms). The 15th member is the President and CEO, who is a full voting member by right of office.

Of the "eight" trustees who are elected by the board itself, three are elected from the library profession and five are to be people who have backgrounds in diverse other fields, such as business, law, accounting, finance, economics, government, education, and information technology.

We seek a diverse group of people in other ways too, of course, as we look for a balance of skills and backgrounds. This is true of course for the Council when it considers prospective Trustees in its elections process.

We are sensitive for example to the value of having at least one member of the Board who has strong ties to the central Ohio community---because of the many matters that we deal with, especially related to law and finance, that relate to the environs in which the main OCLC campus is located/ We and the Council also increasingly must look for at least one member who can bring an international perspective and, I suspect, soon also someone who has the perspective of other cultural heritage organizations.

For the Board's five meetings a year, each of which consumes at least two days--typically a Sunday-Monday, we look for people who can assimilate large bodies of sometime complex information (we can receive several inches of paper for some meetings!), who can ask thoughtful and thought-provoking questions, and, overall, people who can constructively contribute to discussion and decision-making. We look for people, above all, who can always keep at the forefront the best interests of the collaborative.

Now, to the introductions --- both of some of the issues that the board has dealt with recently and to the people who now make up the board . . .

I have arrayed them roughly in order by the length of their service. . . .

+ **Maurice Glicksman**: Maurice, who is recovering from a medical procedure (else he would be here!), is the "go-to Trustee" on almost any issue . . . He is vice chair and senior member of the board. In many ways he is our memory. Whether the issue is investment policies, compensation practices, or the board's own process and procedure, we can turn to him for information and perspective. Maurice's key role often has been to help keep us **focused on the OCLC mission** to serve libraries, about which he cares passionately . . . He is a researcher of renown, a talented teacher, seasoned executive, and a man who cares deeply about community--in every sense: whether community in the academy, city and state, or worldwide. His wisdom--the only word I can use here--is substantial and always offered with wit and grace.

+ **Tom Shaughnessy**: Tom, who once served in this Council, is the Trustee who can be counted on to suggest that we pause at critical moments to be sure that we have asked the hard questions of ourselves and management . . . and that we have **looked at issues across all sectors of the library community** to test the usefulness of a proposal for various types of libraries in different parts of the world. Tom makes suggestions about offering "solutions" and he is the one often to ask hard and constructive questions to keep us focused, with dry humor and intensity of purpose!

+ **Barbara Gubbin**: Count on Barbara, who was elected to the Board from Council, to bring to bear the perspective of a seasoned, globally minded public library leader. Her commitment to OCLC's providing **solutions that scale** for different sizes of libraries--not only public libraries--is unyielding. She kept the Audit Committee focused on many issues during her two years of most able service as chair of that group, especially to look for ways to improve how we communicate about the financial health of OCLC to the membership. If you don't know Barbara, meet her! She is a librarian with world experience --and she may even tell you how an expatriate citizen of the U.K. came to lead the Houston Public Library.

+ **Vickie Hanawalt**: Also a product of this Council, Vickie has been a mainstay of the Board, especially in her three years as chair of the Personnel and Compensation Committee. That committee's issues are many, always sensitive, and often very complex. Whether it has been helping management promote a culture of leadership development and continuing education for OCLC staff, encouraging Jay in his wish to conduct periodic surveys of OCLC employees for their opinions (and to help us focus on what we and management might do with what we learn!), reviewing evaluation systems for senior management, leading the process of evaluation of the CEO, or promoting our active support for OCLC's inclusion program, Vickie has been at the

forefront. She has a strong and steady hand, and a wonderful, understated sense of humor that many in the body have seen!

+ **Ralph Frasier:** One of the leading attorneys in Ohio, but also a loyal son of North Carolina (and a true hero of the early Civil Rights movement, as Larry Alford will recount for you anytime!), Ralph has taken on the role of chair of the Audit Committee at one of the most challenging times for such bodies, especially since we plan to issue in the next year an RFP to test the interest of several accounting firms about auditing this enterprise. Ralph's broad perspective, skills in analysis of complex issues (of all kinds!), and bedrock commitment to better the future for young people from all sectors of society . . . around the world. . . is matched by an untiring willingness to work above and beyond. He helps connect OCLC with leaders and "do-ers" in many communities . . .and has been a joy to observe and learn from.

+ **Dave Lauer:** Another wise man: Dave is an accountant extraordinaire, recently retired president of one of the largest banks in the nation, a consultant to non-profit organizations (now doing a stint at the Ohio State's Med Center) . . . and he is very experienced in the governance of large organizations (he sits on the board of Wendy's International!). He also is a committed civic leader (check out the plaque for the newest addition at the Port Columbus airport the next time you pass, and you will see his name there)... Dave is completing his second year as chair of our Finance Committee, where he has helped greatly to shape a continually improving process for us to understand and so help ensure the financial stability of the cooperative. He is the epitome of a good teacher for so many of us who came to the board not so wise to the kinds of issues we have dealt with this year: bond offerings, balancing investment portfolios, and when and how to capitalize some kinds of expenses!

+ **Jane Ryland:** Highly regarded in higher education's IT sector, Jane, who is a key member of the Internet2 team, gives us not only the benefit of her understanding of technology and its applications to OCLC's mission, she also brings to the Board her success leading another membership-based collaborative. Almost all of the issues that OCLC faces have been before her in her past life. If you were able to view portions of her recent presentation on Internet2, here at OCLC, you would quickly something of the great value that Jane brings to the board and to OCLC at large.

+ **Betsy Wilson:** Another strong leader elected from this Council, Betsy already has done a stint as chair of the Audit Committee, where she set the stage for a fresh look at processes to follow in the future, especially for the plans to issue the RFP I cited earlier. She now is a mainstay on the Board Executive Committee, offering the perspectives of a librarian who works on the Pacific Rim leading a library where many innovations are born. She is also a successful leader in ACRL, and ARL, wise to the diversity of issues in the largest sector of the OCLC membership . . . Betsy's commitment to the cause of collaboration led her back to the Council this year as the Board's representative on the staff development task force, where I know she rendered valuable service.

+ **Brad Baker:** One more veteran of this Council: Brad now is chair of the Nominating and Board Development Committee, where his well honed skills as leader and organizer of work are much in evidence. Brad's ability to move issues through good discussion . . . to a reasoned conclusion . . . is second to none. . . and he does this with much good humor. We count on him to lead in the identification of new members of the Board, to the Board's own ongoing development, and to help sustain the work of the Joint Committee on Membership, where he is about to serve a second term for the Board. It's that "Illinois thing" come forward to benefit all of OCLC.

+ **Ed Barry:** Ed is new to the Board this year, but is well versed in the ways of libraries from his past life as president of Oxford University Press, as well as service on such bodies as the board of RLG. Ed has made a strong commitment to learn about the state of OCLC and its members (he attended a recent meeting of members of Nylink, for example) and already will have met many of you at this meeting. His commitment to the values that OCLC represents on behalf of libraries is clear, as is his understanding of the role of the not for profit organization to operate in a

businesslike manner in the interests of its stakeholders. He asks refreshing questions and contributes a much-needed publisher-perspective to our deliberations, with a ready smile and good humor.

+ **Larry Alford and Jerry Stephens:** Larry and Jerry, also new to the Board this year, are very, very well known to you, as the most recent past presidents of the Council . . . They both have a strong legacy--with Betsy--of having helped the collaborative work through successfully the many sensitive issues of changes in governance over the last three years. Even in their first two meetings of the Board, both Larry and Jerry, who sit on two committees each, have been full and active players, asking excellent questions and making very helpful suggestions both on matters of process and substance. . . .and we avoid all discussion of barbecue – of the Carolina, Bama or Kansas City varieties!

+ **Martín Gómez:** Martin, also in his first year on the Board, was a stalwart of the Advisory Council on Strategic Directions and Governance of three years ago. He is a library leader of international reputation (recall the awards won by the Brooklyn Public Library under his leadership), and is very wise in the ways of professional organizations, including ALA. If you have not done so at this meeting, say hello! Now based in San Francisco, Martin has renewed his commitment to the collaborative, sacrificing--with Betsy and Vickie and so many of our Western U.S. and international delegates--many work hours on U.S. East Coast time when the body is saying, "But it's 4 o'clock in the morning!"

... and, last, **Jay Jordan**

Jay is a full member of the Board, by virtue of his position, of course . . . I will not here begin to recap the many examples of his leadership: But I will emphasize that those of you who have seen Jay in action in the Council or in meetings elsewhere see the same man that we see in the boards. I especially can testify, after more than three years as chair of the board, that the same energetic, positive spirit you see is who he is. Jay keeps his eye on many goals at once and relentlessly looks to the future. He listens well (one must have a thick skin as a CEO) and he delegates and gladly gives credit to others. Jay celebrates success with some zest (I hope you have a chance to witness him doing magic tricks some time!); and he acknowledges our occasional mis-steps or failures with honesty and good humor, and always with a commitment to learn from them.

I close this **tour of the Board**--which I have used only to suggest something about the scope of our work for the members on such issues as audits, personnel, financial planning, and the future of technology-- by invoking the privilege of the chair to call on Mr. Jordan to step forward.

Jay may not recall this, but it was four years ago this month --as he was completing his first year as President and CEO--that he and I were driving across the plains of Kansas to visit a group of librarians who had never met an OCLC president! **THIS** year, a few days after his fifth anniversary leading this collaborative--a much changed, more global cooperative now--I am delighted to use this forum --closest to the whole of the membership- present him with his 5-year service plaque!

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