



## IN MEMORIAM

Page Ackerman  
University Librarian, Emerita  
UC Los Angeles  
1912 – 2006

Page Ackerman, age 93, died of congestive heart failure February 28, 2006, at Royal Oaks Manor, in Duarte, California, the first woman in the United States to head such a large, complex library system.

“It was with great sadness that I learned of Page’s death,” said University Librarian Gary E. Strong. “Among her countless other contributions, the management structures and processes she put into place and the staff she hired and trained enabled the UCLA Library to grow into one of the top five research libraries in North America. As one of the nation’s leading experts in library management and personnel, she made a lasting impact both at UCLA and on libraries across the country. She will be sorely missed.”

Born June 30, 1912, in Evanston, Illinois, Ackerman moved with her family to Santa Monica and in 1929 enrolled in the first class to attend the new Westwood campus of the then so- called Southern Branch of the University of California. As a junior she transferred to Agnes Scott College in Decatur, Georgia, graduating in 1933 with a B.A. in English, then attended the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and graduated in 1940 with a B.A. in library science.

Subsequently she worked as a cataloger at the Columbia Theological Seminary in Decatur until 1943 when she was appointed post librarian at the U.S. Army’s Aberdeen Proving Ground in Maryland, where the atomic bomb was being developed. While there Ackerman began a lifelong friendship with the eminent astronomer, Edwin Hubble, head of ballistics, and his wife, Grace. On leaving that position, she was given a full regimental review and a Meritorious Service citation.

Ackerman then worked at Union Theological Seminary in Richmond, Virginia, as an assistant librarian, from 1945 until 1949 when UCLA Associate University Librarian Robert Vosper hired her to be reference librarian serving the needs of students and faculty in the School of Social Welfare. In 1954 she was appointed Assistant University Librarian with responsibility for personnel and budget; in 1965, Associate University Librarian; and in 1973, University Librarian, a position she held until her retirement in 1977.

During the years 1965-77 Ackerman’s main focus was on staff development, personnel administration, and the coordination of efforts by all libraries in the UC system efforts initially brought about by senate budgetary problems. She was a leader in developing the UCLA Library’s innovative administrative network, which became a model for library management systems across the country; played a key role in getting the library staff covered by the Public Employees Retirement System; worked to establish university- wide catalog and selection strategies, and to develop the Southern Regional Library Facility and insure its location at UCLA. The projects in which she played a major role are a reality today; and the sharing of efforts among all UC libraries is one of their greatest strengths.

During her tenure as University Librarian, Ackerman brought about the acquisition of several significant collections. Gilbert Harrison, a UCLA alumnus and long time editor of *The New Republic*, gave his extensive collection of materials by and about Gertrude Stein, which he had developed over the course of their lifelong

friendship. The family of Ralph J. Bunche, also a UCLA alumnus and Nobel Peace Prize winner, gave his papers tracing his remarkable career as scholar and United Nations peacemaker. And through the efforts of Joan Palevsky and Page Ackerman, the papers of Anais Nin were brought to UCLA to join those of Nin's friends, Lawrence Durrell and Henry Miller.

In 1973-77 Ackerman was a professor in UCLA's Graduate School of Library and Information Science, in whose establishing she had been instrumental and where she helped create the Frances Clarke Sayers Lectureship. Subsequent to her retirement from UCLA she also taught in UC Berkeley's School of Library and Information Studies, 1978-80, and served as a consultant for libraries at UC Santa Cruz, and the Universities of Arizona, Florida, and Hawaii.

Ackerman also became very involved with the Association of Research Libraries (ARL) while working as University Librarian. Both then and after retiring, she served ARL in a number of capacities, including as the first woman on its Board of Directors. The Association's Executive Director, Duane Webster, said of her, "Page was an integral force in the evolution of ARL's capability to prepare talented librarians for leadership in research libraries... Almost thirty years after I first met her, I am struck by the still- resounding consequences of her pertinence and poignancy of thought and wisdom."

She served as president of both the UCLA Faculty Women's Association and the UCLA Emeriti Association, and on the boards of the UCLA chapter of Phi Beta Kappa and that association's Southern Branch. Especially for beginning librarians, she established the Page Ackerman Staff Opportunities Fund, and in 1976 was made an honorary member of Gold Shield Alumnae of UCLA.

Among other honors, Ackerman received the Distinguished Alumni Award from the University of North Carolina and the Status of Women Award from the American Association of University Women, both in 1973; the UCLA Alumni Association's Award of Distinction in 1977; Agnes Scott College's Outstanding Alumna Award for Distinguished Career in 1978; and a Distinguished Career Citation from the Association of College and Research Libraries in 1989. An ornamental tapestry by James Bassiler, commissioned in her honor by Chancellor Charles E. Young and the Friends of the UCLA Library, now hangs in the lobby of the Young Research Library.

In a letter to the library staff written when she retired, Page Ackerman wrote, "This is my last opportunity to say goodbye and thank you to all the people with whom I have worked and from whom I have learned for so many years. I am convinced that, even in times of rapid and radical change, libraries grow on a continuum, as an organism grows, and that the progress during my years as Librarian is a product of UCLA's truly phenomenal development over the previous fifty. I am extraordinarily grateful that my working years here covered twenty- seven of those fifty. Looking back, I would not wish to have spent them in any other place, with any other people, in any other enterprise."

A two volume oral history with Ackerman, completed by Dale E. Treleven in 1995, is housed in the Charles E. Young Research Library Department of Special Collections.

Florence H. Ridley  
Dawn Setzer