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In Memory of Kathy Greey

May 8, 1937–December 27, 2000

This issue is dedicated to Kathy Greey, who exemplified the best of librarianship both at home and internationally. On December 27, 2000, in Hong Kong, Kathy died after battling meningitis for nearly a month. She had retired from the Portland State University Library faculty in 1997 after a career as Education Librarian that spanned thirty years. Since her retirement, in addition to volunteer work with the Multnomah County Library bookstore and other organizations, she had indulged regularly in one of her passions—traveling. Whenever any of her friends or colleagues ran into her, the first question usually was, “Where are you off to next?”

When Kathy was hospitalized in Fuzhou, China, she had just completed a Portland State University tour of China and was making a brief side trip with her friend, Jackie Bell, to visit Chinese librarians she knew as a result of her work with the Fujian-Oregon Library Exchange Program. The Winter 2001 issue of the *OLA Quarterly* published an article written by Kathy and Rosalind Wang about this program. Retirement never stopped Kathy from being a librarian.

When we leave on a trip, we have every reason to think we will return home. Some of us are better travelers than others, but no matter how careful our planning, every trip brings its own surprises, some delightful, some not. One day, though, we won't return, but each of us will leave our own unique footprints. Kathy left her footprints in the lands of her travels and in the hearts and minds of those who knew her. She affected many lives and made many lasting contributions to the library profession as the following remarks only begin to illustrate.

“Kathy's last trip” by Jackie Bell

Traveling with Kathy anywhere was a joy for me. Not only was she an interesting companion with her guidebook at the ready, but she also provided wonderful organizational skills. I am looking at the *China Itinerary for Jackie Bell and Kathy Greey* prepared, of course, by Kathy. The itinerary gives a day to day description of airline flights and times, cities to be visited, hotel names and points of interest. Kathy had toured China with a PSU group in 1980, and she was astounded by the changes in the Chinese cities she visited again on our 2000 PSU tour.

The city of Guilin, on the Li River, was one spot she had not visited in 1980. The itinerary read “November 17: Guilin, Li River Cruise.” This area has been a favorite subject for painters and poets for centuries, and the river cruise was the highlight of Kathy's trip to China. She spent most of the day standing on the boat deck soaking up the scenery.

Under “Section 2: Private tour of Fujian Province,” Kathy listed the events for our last week in China. “November 22: Visit to Xiaman University Library.” We toured the campus and the library and were hosted to a wonderful luncheon. When our Chinese hosts revealed that they were fans of the Portland Trailblazers, I was able to make a contribution to the conversation, as Kathy had no interest in sports.

“November 24: Tour Wuyi Mountains.” While I was climbing the steep path to Paradise Peak, Kathy sat at the tea house helping our charming young guide with the English to be used in a pamphlet he was hoping would appeal to English speaking tourists.

“November 25-28: Visit with friends from Fujian Provincial Library.” In Fuzhou we were met by an enthusiastic delegation led by the library Director, Mr. Zheng. On Saturday and Sunday, Kathy's friends treated us to visits to interesting sights, a tea ceremony, wonderful food and good conversation (sometimes in English and sometimes with smiles, hand movements and laughter). One of our hosts was a wonderful man, Mr. He, who had met Kathy when he visited Oregon in 1989. They exchanged Christmas cards for ten years. On Monday we toured the library from top to bottom. In the Oregon Section, Kathy and the librarian, Mr. Shaoning Ke, beamed as we took their pictures. Kathy was instrumental in securing the books for this section. Several years ago she hosted a weekend at the Oregon Coast for several Chinese librarians, including Mr. Ke.

On Tuesday we toured Quanzhou with Ms. Xu and Mr. Xu who visited Portland last Fall. This interesting city was the origin for the Maritime Silk Route. At Kathy's insistence, we toured the Quanzhou library. I'm a CPA, and I was surprised at how interesting library tours can be if taken with the proper people.

Kathy became very ill on our car trip back to Fuzhou. Via cellular phone from our car, Mr. Zheng evaluated our situation and made arrangements for Kathy to be admitted to the Fuzhou University Hospital. The library staff waved our car through the front gate of the hospital, had a wheelchair ready and transported Kathy to a hospital room where Mr. Cheng quickly assembled doctors and staff. I went back to the hotel that night thinking Kathy had the flu and was exhausted by our trip. On Wednesday morning she was tested for meningitis, and the results came back positive. On Thursday, Mrs. Cheng (Julia)

and I had a wonderful conversation with Kathy. She was smiling and wanted to know what was happening. I was elated; I thought she was close to recovery. That night she suffered seizures and fell into a coma.

As I waited for the life flight that would take her to Hong Kong, I sat alone with Kathy, held her, and stroked her face. I think people in a coma can sometimes hear so I talked to her about the life flight, how I felt that her recovery was imminent, that her cousin Charlotte was waiting for her in Hong Kong, and about many other things. A little later Mr. Zheng arrived with about six members of his staff. We waited together while the life flight crew prepared Kathy for the journey. We watched as she was transported into the ambulance. I felt like I was surrounded by a warm and loving family. We wished the crew God's speed.

While I feel deeply saddened by the death of my friend Kathy, I feel enriched by the affection she shared with her Chinese friends and the affection they shared with me, a stranger.

Jim Schepcke, Director, Oregon State Library

Kathy Greey was a valuable and devoted member of the Oregon-Fujian Book Exchange Committee. She served as co-chair of the Committee in the early 1990s at the height of our activity. She led the team that collected and sent 17,000 surplus library books to Fujian in 1993, and she contributed her own resources to this effort. I will always remember Kathy for her sunny disposition, even on the grayest Oregon day, and for her fondness for Chinese tea and dim sum (perquisites of the Oregon-Fujian Book Exchange Committee). I admired Kathy for her quiet intelligence and her conscientiousness. Kathy, you will be greatly missed by your colleagues.

**Tom Pfingsten, Director,
Portland State University Library**

When I arrived at the Portland State University Library in 1980 as director, it quickly became apparent that Kathy Greey was one of the most influential members of the library faculty. Kathy was a person whose views and opinions were listened to and even sought out because of the respect that she commanded across the campus. Never aggressive or confrontational, Kathy always took a calm, reasoned approach that-together with her winning smile-was impossible to resist. Early on I found myself relying on Kathy as a source of advice and counsel and, over the years she helped me deal with many difficult issues of major importance to the PSU Library. I can honestly say that Kathy Greey was a very important part of my education as library director at PSU. She helped me understand issues and provided important insights, all in a gentle and positive way. Her perspective was always based on the welfare of the PSU Library, not on a personal agenda. After Kathy's retirement we continued to discuss ideas for improving the PSU Library, and she

agreed to join the board of the Friends of the Library. It is sad to be deprived of Kathy Greey's help and support.

Lynne DeMont, PSU Public Access Services Supervisor
With Kathy as manager, mentor, role model, and mother confessor, the Education staff answered endless reference questions, battled floods in the basement, and managed the Education/Social Sciences collections. But no matter what the challenge, Kathy and her staff always put their patrons' needs first. "May I help you?" was almost a mantra, Kathy's personal standard of appropriate public service.

As secretary of the Phi Kappa Phi Honor Society, Kathy worked long hours, before and after her retirement, in service to this organization. As a result, many recipients of Phi Kappa Phi scholarships owe their awards directly to Kathy's personal efforts.

I think that Kathy would like to be remembered for all those times in her distinguished life when she said, "May I help you?" And meant every word of it.

**Mr. Xu Zhaokai, Director,
Quanzhou Municipal Library, China**

I greatly deplore Ms. Kathy's passing. All of my colleagues who had ever met her are also plunged into deep sorrow at the sad news ... she left me her beautiful image when she visited Quanzhou. Even though Kathy was not a high government official, her death is not like a "feather"—so light that it will be blown away. On the contrary, her contribution to the library world is significant and substantial. It is as heavy as the Tai Mountain (the biggest mountain in China), and it is going to stay there forever. It cannot be moved away. Please remember me to Ms. Kathy's family with my deepest sadness. 🇨🇳

