Georgia's A.L.A. Accredited Library Education Programs: 1964-1989
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At the time the Georgia Librarian began publication in 1964 there had been two library school programs accredited by the American Library Association in Georgia for many years: The School of Library Studies at Atlanta University and the Division of Librarianship at Emory University. The Emory program had originated as a formal school in 1903 at the Atlanta Carnegie Library under the leadership of the librarian, Anne Wallace, and with the financial support of Andrew Carnegie. This first library school in the Southeast became affiliated with Emory in 1925 and physically moved to the Druid Hills campus in 1930.

When the Hampton Institute Library School closed in 1938, the American Library Association with the financial support of the Carnegie Corporation sponsored a survey to determine if there should continue to be a school in the South to train African Americans. The study found there to be a continued need and recommended that the school be located at Atlanta University. Tommie Dora Barker, Dean of the Emory Library School, served on the A.L.A. survey team. The Atlanta University School of Library Service opened in 1941 with Eliza Atkins Gleason, the first African American to earn a doctorate in library science, serving as Dean and Virginia Lacy Jones as one of its full-time faculty.

In 1964 Virginia Lacy Jones was Dean of the Atlanta University school. Evalene Jackson had directed the Emory program since 1954, but due to failing health she resigned as Director in the fall of 1964. Dean Charles Lester of the Emory Graduate School of Arts and Sciences served as Acting Director of the program until the arrival of Venable Lawson in the fall of 1965.

Serving on the full-time faculty at Atlanta University at that time were Tommie Allen, Hallie Brooks, and Josephine Thompson; and the school's librarian was Lucretia Parker. The full-time Emory faculty included Helen Hagan, Agnes Reagan, and Marion Taylor. Ethelyn Roberts was librarian for the Emory program. The full-time faculties were supplemented by a number of part-time teachers recruited from local libraries and with visiting faculty for the summer programs.

In the fall of 1964 there were 60 students enrolled in the Atlanta University program, 39 full-time and 21 part-time. Emory had 50 students enrolled, 18 full-time and 32 part-time.

There were seven A.L.A. accredited library education programs in the Southeast at that time: Atlanta University, Emory, Florida State, Louisiana State, Kentucky, North Carolina, and Peabody. The number of known placements of graduates of these seven schools in 1964 was 347. Atlanta University contributing 49 to this figure and Emory, 28.

Beginning in the 1950's there was a tremendous growth in libraries, particularly in the Southeast which was attempting to catch up with other areas of the country economically, socially, and politically. LSCA funds supported the development of public libraries, and the new emphasis on education and the related recognition of the importance of the library in the educational program promoted the development of libraries in public schools and in colleges and universities; while special libraries were rapidly increasing in business and government. The shortage of trained librarians became acute. This shortage was recognized by the Federal government through Title II-B of the Higher Education Act of 1965, which provided support for institutes related to library needs and scholarships to support students seeking careers in library service. This generous support together with the publicity given to the shortage of librarians impacted positively on the number of graduates from the Southeastern and Georgia schools. The number of graduates increased each year from 1964 into the 1970s. By 1971 the number of placements of graduates from seven Southeastern schools had increased to 532, and of these the two Georgia schools placed 140. For the academic period fall 1971 through summer 1972 the Southeastern schools awarded 817 master's degrees, Atlanta University contributing 103 to this total and Emory 106.

In the 1960s new technology began to impact on libraries and on library education. In 1964 Emory was offering one course on "Mechanized Information Storage and Retrieval Systems" and Atlanta University, one course on "Documentation" related to the new technology. Databases were unheard of as part of library collections, OCLC was a dream, and punched cards were basic to library automation efforts. Librarianship was quick to sense the importance of the technological changes for library procedures and services, and in the late 1960s a number of courses related to the new technology had been introduced in both programs. Specialists with strong computer science backgrounds were sought for the faculties. The impact of technology had made such drastic changes in librarianship by the end of the 1970s it could no longer be contained in discrete courses but had pervaded the total curriculum. Faculty became aware that competencies they were teaching had meaning not only for librarianship but in all aspects of an information oriented society. This awareness was reflected by the addition of the word "Information" in the titles of library schools. The Atlanta University School of Library Service became the School of Library and Information Studies in 1979, and Emory's Division of Librarianship became the Division of Library and Information Management in 1981 following a complete revision of the curriculum. With the number of non-library agencies in Atlanta dealing with information management, the city provided an ideal environment for educational programs for this wider audience and the two schools attempted to be responsive to this environment.

With the rapid changes developing in the profession it became imperative to structure programs to provide continuing education opportunities for the practicing librarian. This need was met by the Atlanta schools through a number of workshops and institutes, frequently co-sponsored. However, it was recognized that a formal academic program beyond the master's degree was essential to permit practitioners to remain current in the profession and to upgrade those who wished to re-enter the profession. Emory began a post-master's sixth year program in 1956 which was formalized with the Diploma for Advanced Study in Librarianship in 1967. Sixty-two practitioners received the Diploma. Atlanta University introduced a comparable Specialist program in 1974, and twenty-four practitioners have received this Specialist Degree.

Traditionally library school students have been used in the parent university's library as graduate assistants. In 1968 an assistantship program was developed by the two Atlanta schools with the Atlanta Public Library. This off-campus assistantship program rapidly expanded at both schools and

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part-time employment was formalized for students in a number of metropolitan colleges and universities, public library systems, and in a variety of special libraries. The schools attempted to match student interests and backgrounds with the local agencies' needs, and the employers attempted where possible to make the students' work assignments complementary to their academic programs and career interests.

Any list of important librarians or library educators of this century would have to include the name of Virginia Lacy Jones who served as Dean of Atlanta University School from 1945 to 1981, resigning to accept the Directorship of the Robert W. Woodruff Library of the Atlanta University Center. She had been the second African American to earn the doctorate in library science. Her honors include the A.L.A. Melvil Dewey Award in 1973, A.L.A. Honorary Membership (the Association’s highest honor) in 1976, and the Joseph W. Lipincott Award in 1977. The University of Michigan awarded her an honorary doctorate in 1979, she received the Beta Phi Mu Award in 1980, and the Southeastern Library Association presented her with the Mary Rotherwick Award in 1982. Among library educators she was known as the “Dean of Library School Deans.” Upon her departure from the library school, Lorene Brown was appointed Dean. She had joined the Atlanta University faculty in 1974, after completing the doctoral program at the University of Wisconsin.

The Emory and Atlanta University schools traditionally worked together, sharing lecturers and on occasion faculty, and co-sponsoring workshops and institutes. With the slow pace of racial integration, particularly in the professions, the two schools found they served two distinct constituencies. Atlanta University attracted geographically diverse students who wished to obtain their education in the unique environment provided by an African American university, and a majority upon graduation were recruited to positions outside the Southeast. The Emory student body, though derived from a national audience, tended to be recruited into positions in the Southeast, many remaining in the metropolitan Atlanta area.

The well-publicized shortage of librarians and the generous Federal support available for library education in the late 1960s and early 1970s encouraged the introduction of new programs. Between 1964 and 1980 the A.L.A. accredited library education programs doubled, both nationally (from 31 to 62) and in the Southeast (from 7 to 14). Although it could be assumed that the increase in the number of library schools would impact positively on the number of graduates, this proved not to be true. Russell Bidlack, in summarizing the Library and Information Education Statistical Report 1983, compared the number of master’s degrees conferred by the 49 accredited programs providing data both in 1971-72 and 1981-82. He found the number of graduates had dropped approximately 50% during the decade. A total of 15 accredited programs in the Southeast provided data for the 1983 Report, and the total master’s degrees awarded by these schools was only 616, over 200 less than the seven Southeastern schools had reported for 1971-72. What was true in the Southeast was true nationwide. In 1971-72 the 49 reporting U.S. accredited programs conferred 5,784 master’s degrees, whereas for 1981-82, 54 U.S. accredited programs reported only 3,637 master’s conferred.

A number of factors can be identified as contributing to this decline in the number of graduates: the well-publicized shortage of librarians suddenly disappeared; job opportunities still existed but often in less desirable locations or proved to be highly competitive; and with the increasing opportunities for women available in all professions the traditional “female professions” such as nursing, librarianship, and teaching had to compete with all professional groups for its new generation of professionals. Library salaries did not aid this competition.

Following in close pursuit of this growing number of library education programs has been the escalating cost of the educational program. A full-time faculty of ten was considered minimum to cover a curriculum expected to provide competencies in the new information age. Competencies varied from computer science to children's services, research methods to personnel management, acquisition of materials to their preservation, media and production to monographs and serials. Academia also became more concerned with research (and the related capability of faculty to attract grants to support their research) and evidence of continuing research efforts became essential for tenure status. The doctorate became a requirement for graduate faculty. These factors accompanied by ongoing inflation rapidly increased the costs of library education. In 1964-65 the Emory personnel budget for the library school was $48,415; by 1986-87 this had increased to $344,983. During the same period the non-personnel budget rose from $3,300 to $58,657. Added to these 1986-87 figures must be the $286,055 the University provided students during the year in scholarships and the tuition grants provided practicing librarians seeking the degree to assist them in meeting the cost of an ever increasing tuition.

Private universities historically have supported library education. Of the ten charter members of the Association of American Library Schools in 1915, six had originated in private institutions, three (including the forerunner of the Emory program) were affiliated with public libraries, and only one (Wisconsin) was founded in a state supported university. Of the thirty-three A.L.A. accredited programs in the United States in 1964 fifteen were in private institutions, including the two Georgia schools. With the proliferation of programs in state supported universities, the demographics of a diminishing college age population, and increasing costs of academic programs and overall financial stringencies faced by higher education, universities began seriously evaluating their programs and their overall mission.

Since 1984 six historically outstanding library schools have closed: five of the six have been in private institutions, and two of these have been in the Southeast (Emory and Peabody). With the announcement of the closing of the master's program at Chicago, the forty-six remaining A.L.A. accredited programs in this country will be reduced to eleven supported by private institutions.

With the University’s decision to close the Emory program in 1987, efforts were made to salvage all that was possible for the remaining A.L.A. accredited program in the state. Due to the longevity of the program, the Division of Library and Information Management had developed a library collection unique to the Southeast in historical materials related to libraries and library education. It was arranged for Atlanta University to purchase these materials for integration into its library school collection and to assure their remaining as a state resource.

The Archives Institute was initiated by the Georgia Department of Archives and History and the Division of Librarianship in 1987. This summer institute has been repeated on successive years, and in summer 1987 the Carter Presidential Library became another sponsor. Emory’s responsibilities for the Institute have been transferred to the Atlanta University program to assure its continuation.

Following the closing of the Emory program in 1988, the University approved that all endowments that had been provided to support library education would continue to be used for that purpose. The Carnegie Endowment of $100,000 which had been provided by the Carnegie Corporation in 1949 was presented to Atlanta University for the support of the School of Library and Information Studies. The Tommie Dora Barker Endowment, created to honor the former Dean and Director of the program who had also served as director of the Atlanta Carnegie Library from 1915 to 1939, was transferred to the Atlanta Fulton Public Library to support staff development. The Mildred Jordan Endowment, memorializing the librarian for the Emory Calhoun Medical Library from 1933 to 1953, was...
transferred to the Emory University Health Sciences Library to support staff development. The Marion Taylor Endowment, honoring a faculty member on her retirement in 1982 who continued on the faculty through the closing, with other smaller endowments, was transferred to the Emory Woodruff Library for staff development. The Katherine Carnes Endowment, created in memory of the librarian of Wesleyan College Library from 1919 to 1959, was transferred to Atlanta University to provide scholarships for library school students. It is believed that this conscientious attempt to honor the wishes of original donors is unique among universities that have seen fit to close their library school programs.

It is impossible in a brief article to give the coverage to the Emory and Atlanta University programs that would be necessary to fully characterize them for a quarter of a century. However, it is important to note that in these 25 years the schools awarded 2,779 master's degrees — 1,405 by Atlanta University, 1,374 by Emory. It has been a quarter century of dramatic changes in library service and in the schools' curriculum. Great opportunities were afforded through Federal funding for part of this period, and increasing costs have remained a constant.

The two schools have been sustained through the years by dedicated faculties, strongly motivated students, and the loyalty and support of their alumni and the professional librarians of Atlanta and Georgia.

References


5. Ibid., pp. 552-538.