

Ann Bristow's 1998 Jenkins Award Acceptance Speech

Editor's note: Ann was the 1998 recipient of the William Evans Jenkins Award, which is presented annually in recognition of truly outstanding contributions to the Indiana University Libraries or to the library profession in general. We have received several requests to publish her acceptance speech, and are very pleased to present it in this issue of InULA Notes.

I am most grateful for this award because of the opportunity it gives me to tell you how lucky I feel for having been able to work in this place, over these past years, with so many good people.

If I told this tale as it should be told it would be too long and this is an occasion to celebrate the work of many colleagues. I want to mention just a very few people whose contributions have made a great difference to my career and to the lives of many of us. First I want to thank those librarians and the faculty with whom they collaborated who recognized an important opportunity in the late sixties and early seventies and changed the work conditions and status of librarians to a model integrating us more fully with the academic life of the university. Whether we call ourselves "library faculty" or "librarians", we stand with the faculty as members of a community which is offered the protection of academic freedom. We are allowed to work in an environment unique among all organizational and institutional arrangements. Mary Burgan, formerly of the English Department and now General Secretary of the American Association of University Professors, just last month in a column in *Academe* put this unique benefit in wonderful, pithy perspective: "Academic freedom is not a rule to guide the settlement of one or another pedagogical incident; it is an environment in which the exploration of solutions can breathe rather than gasp from one put-down to the next."

My work has been more satisfying to me personally because I have been able to work in such an environment, imperfect as it always must be of course; but of much greater importance, this opportunity to explore solutions without fear of losing one's livelihood (another decent definition of academic freedom) has made for a better library in Bloomington over the past twenty five years. Nancy Cridland recently reminded us of this with her usual intelligence in an article in *InULA Notes* [\(1\)](#). Nancy has provided me personally with the model of what a library faculty member might be from the first time I served with her on a P&T Committee and she showed me how to "breathe rather than gasp," how to explore solutions as a full participant in the debate, to find many ways to become partners with faculty and generally to cherish the opportunities to serve which we have been offered.

Last I would like to thank the Chancellor of the campus, Kenneth Gros Louis as first among the several administrators who, following the example of Herman Wells, have ensured the survival of an environment respectful of academic traditions and values for our campus and for our library.

My thanks to Gary Wiggins and the Award Committee and, most sincerely, to you all. I look forward to the next decade and its opportunities.

