The 69th annual meeting of the Midwest Chapter, Music Library Association will take place October 21-23, 2010, at the attractive, new Bloomington-Normal Marriott Hotel and Conference Center located in “Uptown” Normal, Illinois. The conference is being jointly sponsored by Illinois Wesleyan University and Illinois State University, and the local arrangements team consists of Robert Delvin (IWU) and Christine Kubiak (ISU).

While the complete program is still in the planning stage, a couple of hopeful enticements can be announced at this time. The opening Thursday evening session will detail the life and work of the internationally-known, Panamanian-born composer Roque Cordero (1917-2008) who served on the faculty of Illinois State University from 1972 until his retirement in 2000. The guest speaker will be Dr. Marie Labonville, Associate Professor of Musicology at Illinois State University and an authority on Latin American music.

On Friday evening, a local arrangements reception will culminate in a “night at the movies” at the recently restored Art Deco Normal Theater located adjacent to the Conference Center. The Normal Theater specializes in vintage, classic and art movies. The featured film is still in negotiation.

All program events this year will be held at the conference hotel. The Marriott is within walking distance of both Illinois State University and Illinois Wesleyan University, numerous “campus town” specialty shops, restaurants, and nightclubs. For anyone considering travel by Amtrak, the Bloomington-Normal train station is located approximately two blocks from, and in eye-sight, of the hotel. Several trains run daily to and from Chicago/St. Louis/Kansas City. The hotel also provides shuttle service to the Central Illinois Regional Airport with daily flights available on American Eagle and Delta from Chicago, Detroit, and beyond.

Conference and hotel registration details will follow in the September issue of the Midwest Note-Book. For your planning purposes, however, the quoted hotel conference room rate is $119.00 plus tax per single or double occupancy.

As in 1994 and 2003 previously, these two host institutions look forward to welcoming the Midwest Chapter, Music Library Association to central Illinois and Bloomington-Normal.

—Bob Delvin, Illinois Wesleyan University
S’mae! Spring has finally found its way to the Bluegrass, which means the Derby, magnificent horses, and mint juleps are just around the corner! As the spring semester winds down, I hope everyone will have some time to get to those projects that have been waiting all year for your undivided attention. For my summer vacation I’d like to sort through a rather unruly backlog of gifts, work on LibGuides, and find the top of my desk.

Speaking of good times, it was wonderful to see so many Midwesterners at San Diego last March. Our brief, but packed chapter meeting included a report from Therese Dickman and Lynne Weber on the chapter’s oral history project, an update on the chapter’s logo design contest, and a sharing of ideas about how the Midwest Chapter can remember and honor our friend Ralph Papakhian.

Bob Delvin and Christine Kubiak are already putting the finishing touches on our 69th annual meeting in Bloomington-Normal, Illinois, October 21-23, 2010. The fall newsletter will have all the details about the meeting, getting there, and the conference hotel, so stay tuned.

This issue also includes the joyous tributes to Ralph that were given at the Business Meeting in San Diego and Therese’s 1996 interview with Ralph. I feel so very fortunate that Ralph’s humor and gentle soul will always be a part of my life.

—Paula Hickner, University of Kentucky

Member News and Notes

♪ Veronica Alzalde (University of Wisconsin-Madison) is presenting her paper "Shifting Notions of Spectacle in Maurice Ravel's La Valse" at the Society of Dance History Scholars' conference. The conference will be held July 8-13 at the University of Surrey.

♪ Susannah Cleveland, Head of the Music Library and Sound Recordings Archives at Bowling Green State University, has been elected to the MLA Board as a member-at-large.

(continued on page 3)

Midwest Note-Book

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The Midwest Chapter of the Music Library Association is a tax-exempt, non-profit organization.

http://mlamidwest.org
Thanks to generous donations in honor of Geraldine Laudati, the Mills Music Library at the University of Wisconsin-Madison has acquired the monumental two-volume work, Bologna Q15: the making and remaking of a musical manuscript: introductory study and facsimile edition, by Margaret Bent. Awarded the 2009 Claude V. Palisca Award, the American Musicological Society described this limited edition as “an exemplar of regal musicology, a career-crowning achievement that will forever set a benchmark for facsimile editions.”

Geraldine Laudati was Director of the Mills Music Library from 1989–2006; she too set benchmarks for both innovative projects and special collections. During Geri’s tenure, the Music Library launched one of the first streamed audio services in the country, helped pioneer the cataloging and digitization of sheet music, and developed online resources such as the Wisconsin Folksong Collection. Her dedicated work in building the Library’s collections of scores, books and recordings greatly benefit us all today. The Music Library is most appreciative for the contributions from Geri’s many friends and supporters, making it possible to add Bologna Q15 to the collection in her honor.

Mark Scharff (Washington University in St. Louis) has been appointed Coordinator for the NACO-Music Project (NMP). Mark has a long history with NMP, having been an independent contributor since 1991 and a reviewer of other participants since 1994. He has also served on the NMP Advisory Committee both as a regular member and as Chair. His interest in music cataloging and authority control has led him into service on several Music Library Association committees and American Library Association interest groups over the past two decades. Mark’s Midwest Chapter activities have included membership on the Cataloging Committee (Chair, 2007-2008), Local Arrangements Committee, Program Committee, and Nominating Committee.

The University of Notre Dame recently purchased two important manuscripts for its burgeoning sacred music program helmed by Peter Jeffries and Margot Fassler. The first manuscript is a Franciscan Gradual from Ventimeglia, ca. 1500-1525, while the second manuscript—a portable Liturgical Psalter and noted Diurnal for Carthusian use—is from Paris and dates to the second half of the thirteenth century. The Psalter is of particular note since it was purchased and presented to the former Edward H. Arnold Director of Hesburgh Libraries, Jennifer Younger, in honor of her years of service during her retirement celebration on May 18, 2010. The Hesburgh libraries were privileged to have been able to purchase a manuscript of such importance in recognition of an honored colleague.
Born in Detroit on December 28th, 1948, Ralph died at his home in Bloomington, Indiana, on the morning of January 14th, after a sixteen-year long struggle with colorectal cancer.

After graduating from Western Michigan University in 1973 with Bachelor and Master’s degrees in musicology and his MLS, Ralph worked as a cataloger for the University of Florida Libraries until he came to the Music Library at Indiana University in September 1975, as head of its Technical Services Division.

Ralph’s accomplishments and contributions to music librarianship are nothing short of astounding. He served on the board of directors of MLA as assistant and then fiscal officer, and as executive secretary. He was awarded MLA’s Special Achievement Award in 1992, for the co-founding of MLA-L, which has become the conduit for the exchange of information and ideas for music librarians all over the world. In 2008, Ralph was awarded the MLA Citation for his dedication and advocacy for the profession of music librarianship in general and music cataloging in particular, and for providing, over the course of thirty-five years, inspiration, instruction, and mentoring to the next generation of music catalogers.

Ralph received two Richard S. Hill Awards for the best article on music librarianship: In 1983, for “Music in the OCLC Online Union Catalog: A Review” (written with Richard Smiraglia) and in 2002, for his article “Cataloging,” published in the volume of Notes dedicated to “Music Librarianship at the Turn of the Century.” In 1992, Ralph established the MLA Clearinghouse at Indiana University for the purpose of collecting and disseminating miscellaneous MLA documents both electronically and in hard copy.

One of the founding members of the Music OCLC Users Group in 1977, Ralph went on to serve as its Vice-Chair, Secretary/Newsletter Editor, and Chair. Ralph was honored in 2002, by the Steering Committee of the Program for Cooperative Cataloging, for coordinating the first NACO funnel project in 1988. Known as the NACO Music Project (or NMP), the project was funneling contributions from around 50 member institutions who, at the time the award was presented, had completed 94,000 records. Through the end of last September, that total had risen to slightly more than 281,000 new and changed authority records. Ralph started the NMP listserv to facilitate communication among the project’s members, and since NMP’s creation, has trained and reviewed dozens of potential NACO contributors.

As a teacher in the Music Librarianship Specialization program at IU that began in 1978, Ralph is perhaps best known for his work in supervising 74 cataloging interns, and most often acting as mentor throughout their careers. In addition, he was co-instructor of IU’s Summer Music Cataloging Workshop for the ten years that it took place. The Music OCLC Users Group recognized Ralph’s outstanding role in educating and mentoring new music catalogers by presenting him with the Distinguished Service Award in 2005. Acknowledging his hand in sending forth countless people into the profession, the award read, in part: “[The students] have been conditioned to approach work with rigor, curiosity, and creativity; among them are many recognized leaders in music librarianship and in the larger library world … Those persons have come to know that what they do, and how they do it, matters, whatever signals to the contrary may appear. Ralph strives to preserve the best aspects of cataloging while adapting to new rules, new needs, and new technologies. They also know that they have a friend and mentor for their career.”
Ralph had a stellar record of service in faculty governance at Indiana University, serving on the campus-wide faculty council, the IU Bloomington Library Faculty Council and numerous committees. He was an outspoken advocate for social justice and, in his rational and measured way, was the first to come to the aid of any colleague seeking advice.

Ralph never did anything halfway. He was passionate about everything in which he was involved. He was passionate about his family: his wife, Mary; his four lovely children; and those five adorable grandchildren that we’ve all seen on his Facebook page.

He was passionate about his heritage. I think his must have been the only car in Bloomington with a bumper sticker that read, “I am famous in Yerevan.” The subscription to his Armenian newspaper came to him at the music library. Immediately after he was presented with the large red and white sign “Parking for Armenians only—all others will be towed,” it became a permanent fixture in his office window.

Ralph had several nicknames; back in the days before e-mail, Ralph signed all of his typed or handwritten memos with his initials: A-R-P (arp), Mr. Ralph (the more formal mode of address, which I think originated with Becky Dean when she was a student at IU), and Raffi. A few days ago I received a note from Ann Churukian. She had looked up “Raffi” in her dictionary of Armenian names and found these three definitions: 1) exalter; 2) flash of lightning; 3) glorious man.

Of course, Ralph was passionate about his job, music cataloging, and his quiet and humble way, would always let you know exactly what he thought. He was generous with his time, never turning away a question, be it in person or via e-mail. He was passionate about music, sometimes attending 2, 3, 4, or more performances a week, and seldom missing a recital given by one of our student employees. Sometimes, checking my mail messages first thing in the morning, I’d notice a posting from Ralph, sent at some awfully early hour, like 1:30 or 2:00am, and think to myself: he must have gotten home late from the Philharmonic Orchestra concert last night, and sat up, wine glass in hand, catching up on his correspondence.

I think Ralph must have invented the term “bibliographic emergency,” when an irate faculty member who had failed to get his reserves list turned in on time tried to blame inefficient library staff for his negligence. And then, there was “Cataloger Envy,” the condition discovered by Ralph in a 1968 edition of Ludwik Feidelberg’s *Encyclopedia of Library Psychology* and whose definition was included in Ralph’s “From the Chair” column in a 1995 issue of the MOUG Newsletter. The definition begins: “Cataloger Envy denotes the administrator’s conscious or unconscious envy of the cataloger; a normal occurrence in administrators during their early, middle, and late years…”

Ralph always enjoyed the company of his students, and he loved lunching at Mother Bears. He treated our student employees, as well as our graduating Librarianship students to pizza and beer at the end of a semester, or before they left for their first job in the “real world.”

It’s important to note, however, that despite all of the honors and awards Ralph garnered, he was also a loser of one award—year after year, a loser of the University Libraries clean desk award. One of his more endearing and astonishing traits was that he always knew exactly what was in every one of those stacks of articles, music scores, and notes.

Ralph always looked for the best in everyone. He found ways to make each of us, on our own terms, feel special. He was a man without a trace of pretense or guile. He was brilliant, friendly, kind and caring, generous, resourceful, down-to-earth, ornery, persistent, and patient. Ever the teacher and mentor, he always had time to answer a question. He had a wonderful sense of humor. He enjoyed a good argument, but if you were wrong about something, he let you know it, in no uncertain terms.

I don’t believe there is anyone in this room, who has not been touched in some way by Ralph’s profound influence on the library profession. One need look no farther than the person sitting next to you to see Ralph’s legacy to us. It’s difficult to imagine that one person could accomplish so much. To my dear...
colleague and friend of 31 years: Thank you, Ralph.
Dick Griscom, Rebecca Littman, Joe Boonin, and Mark Scharff, will share a brief remembrance, and Ann Churukian will teach us an Armenian toast for Ralph.

—Sue Stancu, Indiana University

In 1981, I was working as a cataloging intern in the Indiana University Music Library. On the bulletin board in technical services, someone had posted a photocopy of a page from AACR2. This would have been the original orange-covered edition published in 1978. It was a page from the section of appendix A that deals with religious names and terms. The first rule instructs the cataloger to “capitalize the names of God, terms referring to the Christian Trinity, and the names of other deities.” It gives examples: Allah, the Almighty, the Father, King of Kings, Lord, Mars, Providence, and Zeus. A bit farther down the page is the instruction to “lowercase most derivative words, both adjectives and nouns.” The examples include the lowercase “godlike,” the lowercase “messianic hope,” and the lowercase “christological.” On this photocopy, posted in technical services, someone had added another example. It was typed using the “Letter Gothic” ball on one of the Selectric typewriters in the department. A capitalized “Ralph” was the example for the first rule, and a lowercase “ralphlike” was the example for the second. This is something that stayed with me through the years, and I’ve often found myself thinking that we could all benefit from being a bit more ralphlike.

—Dick Griscom, University of Pennsylvania

My first memory of Ralph was at the Seattle MLA meeting where I somehow sat with the IU crowd (I think I owe Steve Wright for that one!) The restaurant was charging $35 or $40 a bottle for wine and Ralph was aghast, so he (and Steve, I think) went out to the local liquor store, called, ironically, “Ralph’s,” and bought several bottles to bring back. Our server opened them for us but made us promise to take the bottles with us because she could get fired for letting us have them at all, let alone opening them for us. I knew that I would love Ralph from the moment he got up to go buy cheaper wine. I will miss him greatly.

—Rebecca Littman, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

It seems that I always knew Ralph, but I really got to know the man during my first stint on the board in 1990-92. Ralph was the executive secretary, and moved heaven and earth to facilitate the board’s deliberations and actions. He was everywhere: making copies, phoning around, ensuring that we were all properly fed and had sufficient to drink. What I particularly remember is the difficulty we had in voting for the first ever MLA Special Achievement Award. Everyone (but Ralph, apparently) knew it should go to Ralph for his work in getting MLA-L up and running, but the problem was, “How do we convene a board meeting, have a vote, make it official and do all of that without Ralph’s knowledge?” As I recall, it wasn’t easy and involved much shenanigans, so Ralph could go and run down whatever it was one or another of us forgot to bring to the meeting, etc. Also, at that board meeting, Ralph and my late wife, Nancy, formed a personal bond. Nancy had driven up to Ithaca with me and spent time with a college classmate. One evening, however, we all sat down to dinner together. Afterward, Nancy asked me if all MLA folk were as nice as Ralph. I thought about it for a minute and replied, “Well … almost, but not quite.” It is not only catalogers, nor even music librarians, who will miss Ralph.

—Joe Boonin

(From Steve Wright’s message posted to MLA-L on January 14, 2010): While attending a conference in the mid-1980’s, I went to dinner with Ralph and another colleague. The conversation turned to the professional landscape, and Ralph began talking about people in various music library jobs around the country. What astonished me is that he mentioned so many people, most of whom were just names or unknown to me, and he knew all about each one of them. He knew where they were working, what they

(Continued on page 8)
Celebrating 65 years of the Music Library at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

It’s not every day that a library—whether a music library or not—gets to celebrate a significant anniversary. So when we realized that the University of Illinois Music Library at Urbana-Champaign was to mark its 65th anniversary in 2009, we naturally wanted to mark that event in some way. It was also good, of course, to have something to celebrate among the general gloom affecting the U.S. economy.

The original music branch library at UIUC was founded in 1944, and our first music librarian was Jay Allen. Mr. Allen left the library in 1960, and was succeeded first by Thor E. Wood, then by Desirée de Charms, Bill McClellan (UIUC’s longest-serving music librarian), and Dick Griscom. We are proud to have had two editors of Notes (McClellan and Griscom), one MLA President (McClellan), and one MLA honorary member (Wood), to run our library during the course of its existence. Although the university library had assembled a collection of some 15,000 volumes of printed music and printed books by 1944, the new music branch library opened with just 250 items. It was housed on the 2nd floor of Smith Hall, which was at that time the main building on campus for music and is still in use today for recitals and teaching. Some recitals requiring a more intimate space in Smith Hall take place in the original library room, now called the Memorial Room: only a few of those performing or listening in that room today would know that they are in what was formerly the Music Library.

For over thirty years the music collections grew, taking over ever more parts of Smith Hall, so that eventually, in 1969, it became necessary to move the library’s sound recordings operations to the university’s Undergraduate Library. In August 1974, the Music Library was able to re-consolidate its holdings within a new, purpose-build facility in the new School of Music building on W. Nevada Street, where it remains today. Over time, the library began to provide library services for students in UIUC’s Department of Dance and Department of Theatre, and in Fall 2008 it was renamed the “Music & Performing Arts Library.”

We decided early on that, in order to make our anniversary celebrations a success, we would need the support of our Library Advancement Office. The folks in Library Advancement gave the Music & Performing Arts Library (MPAL) some much-needed publicity in our library friends’ newsletter, Friendscript, and—equally importantly—found a donor who was willing to give us $500 to buy some library “anniversary souvenirs” that we could give away. We decided on some fridge magnets giving the library’s contact details and other useful information, plus some pencils with our library’s name on them. If we had had more money to spend we might have produced some more lavish items, but being a state institution we were not allowed to use state funds for the purpose of creating giveaways, and that’s why having a donor became necessary.
In addition to the free pencils and magnets, several of my colleagues put together an exhibit showing the development of MPAL since its foundation. Some pictures from that exhibition can be seen at http://www.library.illinois.edu/mux/about/exhibits/mpalanniversary.html. We had a library anniversary party (complete with cake!) on December 1, 2009, and this was very well attended. Finally, we started a Web page for personal and professional reminiscences of the Music Library from past staff members, students, and friends. An appeal for reminiscences was sent out via MLA-L, and has produced some good results. The reminiscences site is still growing, and can be viewed at http://www.library.illinois.edu/mux/about/exhibits/65thAnnivReminiscences.html. Further contributions are invited – please send them to me at wagstaff@illinois.edu.

Our experience shows, I hope, that a lot of celebratory goodwill can be generated by a comparatively small amount of time and effort, and at little financial cost. It was certainly fun to be able to celebrate our library, our staff, and our patrons, in this way, and, having been through this exercise once, we are now ready for our 75th anniversary in 2019…

—John Wagstaff, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

When Sue told me that she wanted to toast Ralph in Armenian and asked me if I knew the language, I was reminded of my introduction to Ralph. It came when I applied for a job at Indiana University and was granted a telephone interview. Ralph was on the search committee, and during that interview he asked me if I spoke Armenian. I had to admit that I did not. Fortunately, I got the job anyway. I still don’t speak Armenian, but I have found a way to toast Ralph. I’ve settled on the phrase “Asi kezi hamar eh” which means “This is for you.” It is also fairly short and easy to pronounce. So please join me by raising your voices in a salute to our glorious friend, Ralph Papakhian: Raffi, asi kezi hamar eh!

—Ann Churukian, Vassar College

—Mark Scharff, Washington University in St. Louis

In Memoriam, continued from page 6
MLA Board enthusiastically supported the initiative and, in December, Veronica joined Yi Hong in her efforts to found this student forum. Together, they built a Google Site, Google Group, and Facebook Group. They posted their first call for members to MLA-L on February 1st, 2010.

As of April 2010, the Music Library Student Group (MLSG) has 54 members worldwide. Most members are spread throughout the United States with a couple members signing in from Canada and New Zealand. In the past two months, we have held active business and social conversations on our Google Group discussion list, conducted a productive business meeting in San Diego, developed our Web site, and elected a team of officers. We view MLSG as a pre-professional peer support and career development space for music library students that supplements and helps lead up to its members’ participation in the parallel space afforded to music librarians by MLA’s annual meetings and MLA-L. To that end, we hope that MLSG will provide its members with networking opportunities, peer advice, and online professional development and social events, especially to assist the majority of us on student budgets who may not be able to attend professional conferences as often as we would like. In short, at MLSG, we hope to empower music library students to accomplish their professional goals wherever they are.

There are many ways for MLA members to get involved with MLSG, and we hope that you will! We are currently sponsored by the MLA Career Development & Services Committee. Although membership in MLSG is limited to current students, prospective students, and recent graduates, anyone can join our Facebook group and view our Google Site. You can volunteer to speak on future online career panels that we host, forward us announcements of special interest to music library students, and help spread the word about MLSG to those who may benefit from the group. We will also be looking to the volunteer advisors on MLA’s new Career Advisory Service for mentorship, so we encourage you all very much to volunteer there as well. Going the other way, MLSG also hopes to further MLA and its Chapters’ missions by helping to recruit student members to the Association and Chapters, encouraging and organizing student presentations at annual meetings, and generally working with the MLA Career Development & Services Committee and New Members Forum to accomplish their goals.

Finally, MLSG offers music library students opportunities to take on leadership roles in their peer community. On April 13th, 2010, we announced our inaugural team of officers for the 2010-11 academic year:

Chair: Yi Hong Sim (University of Wisconsin-Madison)
Secretary/Treasurer: Alison de Pollo (University of Tennessee-Knoxville)
Membership: Anna Pranger (Indiana University)
Web Content & Development: Jami Wardlow (San Jose State University)
Programming: Lindy Smith (University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign)

Assisting the officers are Web Content & Development Committee member Charles “Ed” Hill (Indiana University) and Programming Committee members Jane Gilvin (San Jose State University) and Sofia Becerra-Licha (University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill). We currently welcome new committee members at any time.

We are particularly happy that a local music library student group has formed at Indiana University, practically simultaneously! Something must have been in the air. Local student groups serve important and different functions from an online group like MLSG, and we hope to actively encourage the formation of more such groups as the need for them arises. This is another future way in which student groups may form relationships with MLA at the chapter level.

—Yi Hong Sim & Veronica Alzalde, University of Wisconsin-Madison

(continued page 10)
Indiana University Students of Music Librarianship Group (SMLG)

We have started a student group at Indiana University-Bloomington primarily as a networking tool for students who are interested in library science and music in various capacities. Currently some students are working on master's degrees in music and in library science simultaneously, some are working on their library science degree with a specialization in music librarianship, and some are working on their library science degree but have an extensive background in music and want to be involved in both fields. We feel that our Students of Music Librarianship Group provides a resource for all of these students to interact with each other informally. We hope that this group will not only serve as a networking resource for current Music Librarianship students of Indiana University but also as a place for support and as a single representative body through which the faculty of these multiple departments can transmit information. Currently we feel that this group will have the most impact at a chapter level because MLSG will fill a large void at the national level, but we would like to expand our influence as the alumni of this group graduate and disperse across the country. Hopefully alumni will look back fondly on their time with their fellow music librarianship students.

—Anna Pranger, Indiana University-Bloomington

Music Library Student Group, continued

Group members in photo (left to right)
1st row: Yi Hong Sim, Veronica Alzalde, Julie Homi, Jami Ann Wardlow, Jane Gilvin, Matthew Ertz
2nd row: Pamela Pagels, Sean Thibadeaux, Jack Falk, Pat Vallez-Kelly, Bracken Klar

Midwest Chapter Meeting in San Diego: Report

MLA Annual Meeting
San Diego, CA
March 22, 2010

1. Lynne Weber shared with everyone the proposed design for the new Chapter brochure. The contest for a new logo will go forward as planned.

2. Therese Dickman gave an update on the oral history project. She is looking for editors to assist with the project, and hopes to wrap up the interviews in the next few months.

3. Paula Hickner announced that the Chapter’s email listserv is now hosted at the University of Kentucky. She also reported that Bob Devlin is working on the planning and arrangements for the fall Chapter meeting to be held in Bloomington-Normal IL, October 21-23, 2010.

4. Keith gave an update on the Chapter’s financial situation. All the bills for the meeting at Notre Dame have been paid, and it was not necessary to use scholarship money to cover the expenses.

5. Sheri Stormes gave an update on the Chapter meeting in Indianapolis to be held in 2011.

6. There was discussion about a memorial for Ralph Papakhian, who passed away in January. The memorial will be discussed further at the Chapter meeting in the fall.

—Submitted by Keith Cochran
On March 18, 1999, Ralph Papakhian spoke to Therese Dickman about his life and career, noting highlights as a member of the Music Library Association. The interview that follows was conducted as part of the Music Library Association Oral History Project and is shared here with the permission of MLA President Ruthann McTyre, the MLA Archives Committee, and the MLA Oral History Subcommittee. Ralph contributed much to the Music Library Association; the MLA Midwest Chapter; the Music OCLC Users Group (MOUG), the NACO Music Project, and as a music cataloger at Indiana University for most of his professional career (1973 – 2010). Sue Stancu and other MLA colleagues recount many of Ralph’s professional accomplishments in a tribute article on page four of this issue. At the time of this interview, Ralph had himself just completed interviewing John Druesedow about his career for the MLA Midwest Oral History Project. That interview will be shared in a future issue of the Speaking Our History series. Ralph and Therese share Western Michigan University as their alma mater and studied musicology from the same professor. During the MLA Midwest Chapter meeting in Kalamazoo in 1998, Ralph and Therese went together to visit their esteemed professor, Dr. David Sheldon. That memory remained fresh in mind as this article was prepared. The assistance of Ralph’s wife Mary, Greg Fitzgerald, Mark Scharff, and others in verifying the accuracy of names within the text is appreciated, as is Rebecca Littman’s permission to use her photo of Ralph.

Music and Library Experiences Growing Up in Detroit

Therese Dickman (TD): This is Therese Zoski Dickman. I'm here [on March 18, 1999] at the Regal Biltmore Hotel in Los Angeles, California, during the 68th Music Library Association (MLA) Annual Meeting. I am speaking with Ralph Papakhian about his experiences in the Music Library Association. Ralph, how did you get started in the music librarianship field? Where did you study? What led you to this organization?

Ralph Papakhian (RP): I spent a lot of time as a high school student on weekends in the Detroit Public Library Music Division downtown in the main public library, where at that time Kurtz Myers was the music librarian. My brother actually worked as a page in the library. That's where I listened to and took out an awful lot of music, and learned to have fun in the music library.

TD: Were you playing an instrument at that time?

RP: In high school I was a music major at Cass Tech High School, one of the few high schools in the country where you could be a music major and take courses in training, theory, [and] play in the bands. [Editor’s note: Lenore Coral also attended this high school.] There were two or three bands, [and] an orchestra.

TD: Which instrument did you play?
RP: I played mostly clarinet, but the high point of my music career was probably playing the bass drum in the Verdi Requiem. The orchestra and choir were actually going to the MENC [the National Association for Music Education] convention. I believe it was in Indianapolis. Just so I could go along, they let me bang the bass drum. Then after high school, I attended Wayne State University for a couple of years. The music library there was complementary to the Detroit Public Library. They were right across the street from each other. It was not a huge library, but the librarian was there. I think Bruno Nettl was the librarian when I was there.

The Western Michigan University Experience

I went from there to Western Michigan [University], our joint alma mater, in Kalamazoo. I worked as a student assistant with Ada Berkey [1917 – 2005] in the music library for a couple of years. I graduated with a master's [degree] in music history. At that time my wife was also in a graduate program in English literature, and we were going to wait around for her to finish. [One of] my options then, if I'm remembering correctly, was to try to go on for a Ph.D.—which would have taken five years minimum—without any kind of guarantee of work. It was the beginning of the crisis in the humanities. This would have been around 1971 or '72. So the option was either to go on to musicology and—if I was lucky—get a teaching job in some small college some place, or [go to] library school. Western had, at the time, a rather large, well-known library school.

TD: Yes, until about 1979…

RP: …when it closed. I was naturally drawn to music librarianship, since that was my life as a student. I had the opportunity to have cataloging class with John Comaromi [d. 1991], 'Mr. Dewey Decimal' himself.

"I was naturally drawn to music librarianship, since that was my life as a student. I had the opportunity to have cataloging class with John Comaromi [d. 1991], 'Mr. Dewey Decimal' himself."

TD: So he was an influence on you.

RP: Right. Besides classification, he taught descriptive cataloging, and that was my favorite class. It was the most intellectually stimulating class. After the class, we also had what he called a seminar in technical processing, but what the students did in that class was to constantly catalog and re-catalog the library school collection—typing cards, filing them—doing everything that goes on in cataloging. It was as an exercise, and that's all we did for a semester. I was also able to intern with a music cataloger. They actually had a music cataloger!

That was interesting. I used to type cards, and I learned quickly that people will correct you, because the clerks who did the duplicating were multi-lingual. They would come and bring my errors back to me. [Laughter] It was pretty embarrassing, but I learned how that operation works. I think there was a German woman there; she would carefully read everything I cataloged in German and point out every little error. [Laughter]

TD: So that taught you…

RP: …to be careful!

First Professional Position: The University of Florida at Gainesville (1973-1975)

I graduated in ’73 during the oil crisis, so there were no jobs in librarianship. I think I put out about twenty-five applications. I received one interview request at the University of Florida at Gainesville. That was interesting. It was a humanities cataloging position. The head of the catalog department—I think her name was Jean Hixson—wanted a Germanic languages specialist, but the Assistant Director for Technical Services loved Wagner, so he wanted someone with a music background to support the music collection. They had a small music library—a separate music library in the music building that was fairly new. I don't recall that they had a music librarian at that time. I think it was
just a staff person. That was quite a learning experience there. My cataloging supervisors were extraordinary women.

TD: So you did get the job.

RP: Oh, yes. I did get the job, moved my family down, and worked [there] for a couple of years. That was the only job I had where my relatives would visit, because it was in Florida. We had a constant stream of visitors. Once we moved to Bloomington, Indiana, there were no visitors anymore. [Laughter]

TD: You were at the University of Florida from 1973 to 1975?

RP: Right. That's where I learned cataloging. My supervisor was Marion Young, who was close to retirement, and she was a meticulous cataloger. I remember you would put a stack of books on her desk, and a day or two later they would come back with these voluminous little notes, telling you what you did and what you didn't do. Also, Berta Lou Clarke supervised me for awhile. [She] is still active; she's a cataloger now at the Library of Congress. I think she's still in Latin America ordering Spanish materials. Then it was not exclusively music. I did catalog music and a lot of other general humanities literature—some serials, even.

Indiana University Years

When I saw the position opening at Indiana, I called my professor from Western Michigan, David Sheldon, who was a graduate of Indiana [University], and [who] made inquiries about what the situation was. He encouraged me to apply, said it was a marvelous place, and talked about the opera and the musicology programs. So I applied. I was astonished that I was able to get an interview. I was even more astonished that I got the job. So that was a very exciting opportunity.

TD: Yes, and being closer to where you had grown up, too.

RP: Right. We were closer to Detroit. David Fenske was the head of the [music] library. When I arrived [there], Dominique DeLerma was there for a few months as the assistant, and he was about to leave. He was getting a job at a college in Baltimore [Morgan State College, where he worked from 1976-1990]. My predecessor was there for a few weeks while I was there, Joy Vee Davis. She was moving to Georgia. She had already moved, then came back, and gave me a couple of days of instruction about what to do.

TD: It's always helpful when someone’s [predecessor] assists.

RP: Joy, unfortunately, died a few years ago. I think it was because of some kind of cancer. [Joy] worked in public libraries after that. Well, first she went to Auburn, and then [she] worked in some public libraries in the Atlanta area. I learned only recently that she was an adopted orphan, I think, and so had no family, really. Whatever estate she had, she left to the Indiana University music library. When we constructed the new music library, called the William and Gayle Cook Music Library, in 1996, our office suite for the catalogers was named after Joy. So it has a little plaque that says "Joy Vee Davis Office Suite" [which still remains in 2010]. We had terrible facilities in 1975. They stayed terrible until the new building in 1996.

TD: Well, partly because they were in the basement, right? And in cramped quarters…

RP: Right. …and the collections were split. The books and scores were in the Sycamore Hall basement; the records were in the record library in the music building basement; and the performance materials were on another floor. We had flooding [too]. It was pretty dismal.

New Music Librarians Hired

Soon after Dominique [left], David Fenske was able to convert Dominique's position into two beginning-level librarian positions. We were able to recruit Kathy Talalay and Michael Fling for those positions. After that, when my sound recording cataloging assistant departed (her husband finished school, and I think they moved to Seattle, Washington), David Fenske was able to convince the School of Music to convert
that clerical position into a professional cataloging position. We were able then to recruit Sue Stancu as the sound recording cataloger [in 1979]. So within a matter of a few years we had grown to five librarians.

As soon as we had all those people in place, we started preparing plans and proposals for a new facility. It took twenty years before we actually managed to secure the funding and construct the building.

**TD:** As so often is the case, taking fifteen or twenty years to accomplish something of that sort. At Western Michigan University it took fifteen-plus years to get their [new] music building.

**RP:** That's where having the continuity in the staff becomes important. So that became sort of David Fenske's life mission—to get a new facility.

**TD:** What stands out during those early 1980s in terms of the effort for new facilities?

**OCLC Arrives**

**RP:** Let me just preface that. The first thing we were able to do in terms of cataloging was to bring in OCLC [the Online Computer Library Catalog which originated in Ohio]. That was a funny situation. I had started using OCLC in Florida. When I went to Florida, we were typing cards and using White-Out and Exacto blades. By the time I left, we had started using OCLC.

That was a very exciting time for cataloging. When I arrived in Bloomington, I immediately started making inquiries to the network, INCOLSA, at that time. Apparently I didn't go through the right channels. The Dean's office made it clear that I shouldn't be making independent inquiries about OCLC costs. But we got over that, and within a year the whole library system had gone to OCLC. We were able to make a case to have a terminal in the music library, and proceeded to automate.

**A Radical**

Also in the early eighties, you had the beginning of the PC [personal computer] revolution, I guess you would call it. I remember buying a VIC20 computer—which was essentially a game box—for my kids, and playing on it, getting a modem for it, connecting to the university CDC mainframe, and playing e-mail even. I was a radical. I was involved in our faculty union, the American Federation of Teachers [AFT] union. We had great pleasure in compiling faculty salaries. My wife had created a small program, and I input all this data from home on this VIC20 game box, printed it out, and mailed it to the entire faculty. It was the most highly read document on campus!

**TD:** I bet.

**RP:** This would have been in the ’70s. That was a great deal of fun. I still retained my job. [Laughter] I think we had lasting impact, too, because that led to a new attitude about salaries and benefits for faculty. Right now the salaries are on the Web, and the University Administration puts them out. So we've gotten to that point.

Let me just add, as part of that radical activity—The high point was, after issuing those salaries for several years, we petitioned to have a meeting of the entire faculty. [This] was the first time that had happened since the ‘60s. This must have been during the early ‘80s. We had six hundred faculty [there] on the issue of salary policy. The Chancellor of the campus presided in a very large hall, and we had a great time. A hundred of those people must have gotten up and said their piece during the course of that meeting. [Laughter]

**Early Involvement in the Music Library Association**

**TD:** Ralph, let's talk about the Music Library Association itself and how you got involved in the organization.

**RP:** Okay. The first MLA meeting I ever attended was a Southeast Chapter meeting, probably just about the
time they were getting going in 1974 or '75. It was at Columbia, South Carolina.

I remember taking a Greyhound bus to go to the meeting. I met Larry Dixon there, who eventually wound up as a music cataloger at the Library of Congress and now is in the Automation Office there. He has been very helpful to me both as a cataloger and in terms of automation activities.

MOUG Formed; Role as Secretary/Newsletter Editor

[After] I came to Bloomington, [IN], the first meeting I attended was an [MLA Midwest] chapter meeting. I think it was in Columbus, Ohio, where Olga Buth was very active. What a lively personality she was! At about the same time, Lenore Coral, Olga, and Karl van Ausdal—(Lenore and Karl are here at this meeting—I saw them)—they had formed a MARC [MACHINE READABLE CATALOGING] Committee—a Music MARC Committee. This is all documented, so we don't have to go into details. But it wound up forming the Music OCLC Users Group [MOUG]. Probably my first professional work was [being] recruited to fill in as Secretary/Newsletter Editor for MOUG, because the secretary had left her position and the profession, I think.

TD: When was that?

RP: I was elected Secretary/Newsletter Editor in 1980, and the year before that, I think, is when I was appointed to fill in for someone. That was still before word processing. We typed the newsletter and had student assistants collate it and mail it. We had quite a bit of fun with that. MOUG was a very active organization. It was controversial in MLA because it was devoted to only one of the utilities. MLA maintained its distance for quite awhile until it was clear that OCLC was such an important development, that there was no way to avoid it and had to deal with it.

Research Activities with Richard Smiraglia

Also at that time I worked with Richard Smiraglia. Richard had been a student at I.U., before I got there, but he had worked with David Fenske and was the music cataloger at the University of Illinois. We met at MLA meetings and did our research on OCLC use for music cataloging: “Music in the OCLC Online Union Catalog: A Review” [Notes, 38 (December 1981): 257-74]. That followed up on some of the surveys we had done earlier for MOUG. Richard was also involved as an officer. He was chair of MOUG for awhile. We did some preliminary surveys, and that eventually led to a larger study.

That was sort of the high point of my research in cataloging and led to an award. That really surprised us, because, first of all, it was a surprise that Notes was willing to publish it.

Bill McClellan [music librarian at the University of Illinois] was the editor at the time. He published the article. We received the Best Bibliography or Article on Music Librarianship [Richard S. Hill] Award in 1983 for that article. That helped me get tenure—and a promotion.

The MLA Midwest Chapter Cataloging Committee

The next activity in MLA would have been the chapter Cataloging Committee. We have a very large [MLA Midwest] chapter, and probably one of the more important activities in the chapter was the Cataloging Committee. We organized quite a few workshops. I remember we had almost a mini-conference on subject cataloging for music. We brought Harry Price from the Library of Congress, and we agitated for various kinds of improvements in cataloging.

Service on the MLA Board

I think as a result of that visibility, I was nominated for [the] MLA Board. This would have been as a member-at-large in '84. I think David Fenske was on the Nominating Committee… [chuckles] …so that didn't hurt. But I was nominated, and I was elected. It's a two-year term.

I was appointed Assistant Fiscal Officer. Before me, Rick Jones was the Fiscal Officer. He had just introduced PCs to MLA. Administratively, that was very interesting to use a spreadsheet.

I was looking through the minutes and there was even this resolution that was adopted sort of casually about the standards of automation for MLA. Lotus 1-2-3 was the spreadsheet of choice, and WordStar, now lost, was the word processor of choice. That never worked,
as much as we tried to standardize that kind of thing. We had a series of catalogers at that time become fiscal officers. Rick [Jones]; myself; I think Richard Smiraglia after that; and [Richard] Griscom—all people who had backgrounds in music cataloging—became fiscal officers. During that term, I guess the biggest surprise to me was that the Board dealt so little with music librarianship. I think now in my dotage I understand why that happened, but it was really astonishing to me that the Executive Board of the Music Library Association spent all of its time on organizational matters and the administration of the association, so you never really got to anything meaty about music librarianship, or rarely. But that's how it is. The professional work is done in committees, not in Executive Board. When those things come up, they're going to come up from the committees as proposals, standards, documents, and so forth. That's the only time music librarianship is discussed. Otherwise, you're talking about money, publications, membership, selling T-shirts, tote bags, or … [chuckles] just keeping the organization going. Stuff like that. It was fascinating.

Anti-Apartheid Impact on a Maturing MLA

Again, with my radical inclinations, I was also involved with the anti-Apartheid movement in Bloomington. When the opportunity came on the Board, I was able to introduce a resolution to remove any funds that we might have from South African-related investments. We passed [a] resolution and we found a socially responsible fund to move the money into. I think it's probably my most significant contribution as a Board member.

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TD: So then what happened? Where did it lead?
RP: Well, we passed that resolution and we found a socially responsible fund to move the money into. I think it's probably my most significant contribution as a Board member.

The Fiscal Committee continued to use PCs and software. This altered the way the committee worked. Having a PC, you could prepare a budget in one day instead of the several days or months that it had taken before, typing it out and so on. We could revise the budget easily, print it out again, and do all kinds of hypothetical budgeting. The Fiscal Committee presented that information to the full Board for adoption of the budget. I think this made Board meetings expeditious compared to what they were before. Mary [Wallace] Davidson was the President of MLA then [in] 1984.

The MLA Handbook

I went through those minutes. It was a growing period and a lot of work was done on organizing. The [MLA] Handbook became a topic all through the ‘80s, and when I was Secretary, as well, trying to rationalize the procedures of the Board. In fact, Judy Kaufman was on the Board. (I just saw her last night. She's not a music librarian any more, but she was involved with the Handbook.) The Handbook was a constant theme—revising, editing, arguing about.

Retrospective Conversion

Related to this time period was the recon [retrospective conversion] business. Michael Keller (University Librarian at Stanford University) started the ball on that, forming what was called the Associated Music Libraries Group. Some of the larger music libraries got together. He got the Association involved and organized a conference to discuss standards for a retrospective conversion of music that led to a series of grant proposals that were awarded
from the Department of Education, Title II. We must have spent about ten years doing recon at our library, and it included several other libraries—Harvard, Yale, Stanford, Berkeley, and Cornell.

So that was quite an undertaking, and I think it made a mark. Music is the one field that took retrospective conversion very seriously and made a dent in the databases and the utilities.

**MLA Executive Secretary (1988 – 1992)**

After that term on the Board, the Executive Secretary was Linda [Solow] Blotner. As I recall, she changed jobs. She went from MIT to Connecticut, and resigned after two years as the Executive Secretary. So there was a search. I applied. Apparently I was the only applicant [*chuckles*], so I was appointed as Executive Secretary.

**TD:** I see you served in that role from 1988 until 1992.

**RP:** Right. You're reappointed annually up to a maximum of four years. I have to admit, that was a great deal of fun. The Board changes every year with considerable continuity, and I got to meet a lot of people and work with them closely—Don Roberts; Lenore Coral; Mary [Wallace] Davidson; Michael Ochs; Gerry Ostrove—many of whom are still active in MLA.

Sherry Vellucci and I became very good friends. Sherry Vellucci and Diane Walker were the [MLA] treasurers overlapping at that time, and we worked very closely. We were the employees of the Association—Executive Secretary, and the Treasurer. My responsibilities were basically in terms of membership services; publications—keeping track of that; and doing some publicity in the sense of distributing material, not actually creating material. I made some of that electronic.

**Creating MLA-L**

I don't know how I can characterize whatever accomplishments I may have had as Secretary. Coincident with my being Executive Secretary, I started a list, what we now know as a listserv list: MLA-L.

**TD:** How did that happen? How did you get involved in that?

**RP:** As I mentioned [earlier], I played with my game boxes and getting on the network, and e-mail was the first step. I can't remember exactly how, but I started sending electronic mail to Dick Griscom at Northwestern and Steve Wright [at Northern Illinois University], and they couldn't receive e-mail. I would send messages to computer people there at their institutions telling them that they should arrange for [email]. We gradually started getting people on e-mail.

The listserv software became known. I think the first application I saw had to do with NOTIS. There was a NOTIS list. I immediately approached people in our computer center, saying, "We should investigate this." I didn't get too far with the people that should have been interested in it.

My wife, however, had secured a position as a programmer on a particular kind of IBM mainframe machine that used the software. I convinced her to get the software and start this list. We started to experiment, just two or three people—Dick [Griscom] and I, and Lenore [Coral]—testing it. Gradually it worked! As more people became electronic mail users, the list grew.

**TD:** That was mostly via BITNET at first, right?

**Advocate for MLA Board Members to Use E-mail**

**RP:** Yes, BITNET. This was even before the Internet. ARPA was in the background, gradually developing, but BITNET was the first network. [As for] my work on the Board, I also tried to press the Board to rationalize its operations by using e-mail. At that time, we actually had to secure accounts for the Board in a commercial vendor. I think we used MCI Mail at one point or AT&T Mail or ALA-net. ALA-net was [used] at one point, too. So we would be able to conduct some business without having to meet. Some Board members liked that and others didn't; I think that's probably still true. [Laughter] I pushed them after I thought it was something that was going to happen anyway. I guess my other work on the Board was to try to keep everyone focused on the issues at hand...
whenever I could. As Executive Secretary, I wasn't able to vote.

**Jogging as a Hobby**

It was a great pleasure going to the Board meetings, and traveling to libraries all over the country. I had taken up jogging as a hobby. I was able to jog around the steeple at Duke, around the lake at Cornell, around the rotunda at Charlottesville, Virginia. So those were pleasant environments.

**TD:** At MLA meetings you [were able] to jog around the vicinity.

**RP:** That's right. I went around the [San Francisco] Bay.

**The MLA Clearinghouse**

One issue that came up over and over was ephemeral publications that were, for one reason or another, not accepted by *Notes* or one of the [MLA] series. Committees fairly often prepared elaborate reports that the editors didn't regard as being top-notch quality, and we needed a way to assemble that material and make it available. That led to the [MLA] Clearinghouse, which I did basically as a project of my own. It wasn't the function of the Executive Secretary. That became feasible once [the] listserv also made document delivery feasible. I was willing to send out paper, but I wasn't willing to do that exclusively. If I could make the bulk of documents available electronically, then I could put up with distributing paper copies occasionally. But that, I think, had a useful function. Right now with the Web, it's probably been replaced because committees can essentially publish their own documents and make them available easily on their own. The development of the Web has transformed all that kind of communication.

"Coincident with my being Executive Secretary, I started a list, what we now know as a listserv list: MLA-L. We started to experiment, just two or three people—Dick [Griscom] and I, and Lenore [Coral]—testing it. Gradually, it worked! As more people became electronic mail users, the list grew. I also tried to press the Board to rationalize its operations by using e-mail."

**Receiving the MLA Special Achievement Award**

I got an award for MLA-L activity. It was the Special Achievement Award—the first such award. That was very embarrassing. I was Executive Secretary. It was at Cornell. I [had been] involved in discussions of the creation of the Special Achievement Award. That went on for several meetings. There was interest in creating a new award recognizing achievement prior to lifetime achievement at the citation honors. Basically, people were retiring and getting a citation close to retirement. So there was a lot of talk about trying to form some way of recognizing professional service before a lifetime award. I think it's a good idea to have [such] an award.

Each year the Secretary and the Treasurer have to be reappointed, so you're asked to leave the Board meeting and go out and have a coffee or something while they discuss and evaluate your work for the year. Then you're either reappointed or not. I don't think anyone has not been reappointed so far.

**TD:** So at the 1992 meeting [in Baltimore], you were at the annual business meeting, right?

**RP:** Right. At the business meeting after I presented my report, I believe, Don [Roberts] announced the Special Achievement Award, and he named me! I was really startled, I had no clue that I was even considered! That was certainly an honor that I appreciate.

"I got an award for MLA-L activity. It was the Special Achievement Award—the first such award. That was very embarrassing. At the business meeting after I presented my report, Don [Roberts] announced the Special Achievement Award, and he named me! I was really startled, I had no clue that I was even considered! That was certainly an honor that I appreciate."

[Editor's Note: Ralph would receive a second MLA Special Achievement Award in 2008.]

**TD:** A well deserved honor. You had also been on a

RP: Right. The Executive Secretary serves ex officio on a bunch of committees.

**Observed Changes in MLA during the 1980s**

In the later ‘80s, the biggest problem in MLA became membership, because it was clear that the non-librarian members were disappearing—musicologists and people interested in music. That used to be a large part of the organization, even though they didn't attend meetings.

In the ‘80s, MLA became a true professional society for music librarianship, as opposed to a club of people interested in music. That changed the character of the [annual] meeting. Plenary [sessions] decreased; committee meetings increased. Music librarians needed an outlet for their professional development, for their own careers. I can’t remember exactly when, but there was one constitutional change made that actually made one of the purposes of the organization to promote music librarianship. That was a new purpose—an important change to have that in the Constitution.

The MLA Membership Handbook

TD: In 1992 you were on an ad hoc committee to study the enhancement of the [MLA] Membership…

RP: …[Handbook]. Right. The directory was one of my major assignments, I guess. Prior to my term, it was an occasional publication. What I managed to do was to get information from Jim Henderson on diskette for the first time, edit the directory, and make it an annual publication. I think people have now come to rely on it. Everyone uses the Handbook.

One interesting thing was that we used to copyright it successfully. One year it was returned, saying that we could no longer copyright the directory.

TD: Why not?

RP: Copyright law. I don't know if there was a change in the law or the Copyright Office just decided, but alphabetic arrangements of public data were no longer copyrightable. So gradually—this actually happened afterwards when Dick [Griscom] was Executive Secretary—different kinds of information was added to the Handbook to make it copyrightable. Of course, it's useful information, too, but there was a little background to that.

TD: I find the Handbook very helpful. It's right there by my desk at work.

RP: It was word processing that enabled us to do that.

TD: Sure. Now we have the e-mail addresses for members [included] as well, which makes it even more useful.

The MLA Self-Study Steering Committee: A Call to Service While in Intensive Care

RP: The joint Self-Study Steering Committee was in ’94. That was funny. I missed the 1994 convention in Kansas City. I was planning to go, but I had a medical exam and a tumor was discovered in my gut, and I had to go into surgery. But there were complications in the surgery, and I wound up in Intensive Care. Michael Ochs calls me while I'm in that condition and says he wants to appoint me to this Self-Study Steering Committee. [Laughter] In a weak moment, I agreed.

That was an interesting process, where we did a large survey and some planning. We had an outside facilitator—George J. Soeti. They had a focus group. It was a combination—a focus group, a survey, and then an analysis of the results, that Mary [Wallace] Davidson wrote and published in *Notes* [“The Music Library Association: Report of the Self-Study Committee,” *Notes* 53 (June 1997): 1092-1105]. That's still going on now with the 2001 Plan and activities surrounding that.

My role in that was to work on the survey with Sherry Vellucci. We were able to utilize the Survey Research Center at Indiana University to do the computations, actual mailing, and computing of the survey results.
An MLA Pet Peeve

My pet peeve, I guess, with MLA in the last few years has been again on investments, because the policy on investing South Africa-free investments and funds was altered. Once South Africa was "liberated," so to speak, then the wording of that resolution was not quite accurate. But what happened was that a subsequent Board eventually removed any research on investments, and that's still something I feel very strongly about as a person. I think individuals should behave socially responsibly—however that's defined—and I think corporate bodies also have that responsibility.

TD: And also as a reflection of what MLA aspires to and considers itself to be.

RP: Exactly. I know there are numerous arguments on either side of that question. So far I'm in the minority, but I've been in the minority a lot, so I don't mind that.

The World-Wide Web

RP: Other recent work was with the Website Committee.

TD: As part of the Publications Committee?

RP: We were a subcommittee. Let me just talk a bit about the Web. I think this is one of David Fenske's areas of interest, the Internet, and his interest in digital distribution of sound, which led at Bloomington to the Variations Project—probably the single digital library project that's actually functioned in a daily instructional environment. In the process of that, [David] found out about the Web. We had, I think, the first Web server at Indiana University, even before the computer center people got involved. That enabled me to put the [MLA] Clearinghouse on the Web. I think it was in '94 or '95. The Web exploded shortly after that. We all know about that.

So MLA's only presence was the Clearinghouse. I wasn't worried about graphics or anything, so it wasn't very attractive. Now that Web presence is a big advertising activity; everyone has to have their image displayed on the Web. So eventually MLA got around to forming this subcommittee, and it wound up hiring John Shepard's wife, Kathy [Canfield Shepard]. She's a Web designer. Eventually we went through various versions and signed off on some general guidelines. David Gilbert was appointed Website editor, so that committee was disbanded. Currently I work on the MARC Formats Subcommittee.

Music Librarianship Specialization at Indiana University: a Source of Pride

I think one of my personal areas of pride is the work that I've been able to do with the music librarianship program at Indiana [University], where we created the specialization of music librarianship as well as a dual degree program. Originally—this goes back quite a few years now—we tried to teach cataloging as part of a seminar in music librarianship. It didn't go over very well to have two or three sessions at best to teach it as a theoretical discipline. So we quickly altered that and removed cataloging from the seminar and required an internship in music cataloging.

So in our program there are two internships required, six credit hours, three each. One of them must be cataloging. Students can take that either with me for books and scores, or Sue Stancu for sound recordings. Those students that are particularly interested in cataloging can even take a second internship in cataloging or select whatever area they're interested in—reference, collection development, and now Webology. For me, that's meant that I've been able to work with about forty or fifty students over the course of the last fifteen to eighteen years. So one of the exciting things [about] coming to an MLA meeting, is [seeing] these forty or fifty people I know well because I worked with them supervising their
cataloging internship.

TD: How many do you average in a year?

RP: We try to limit enrollment because of that internship. It's time-consuming. We don't want to do more than one at a time, so that's three or four people a year. But all told, I think the program has had an impact on the profession. As other library schools close—Columbia, Chicago—and now [with] many changing their focus to information sciences and informatics, I think it's really important to try to retain this program.

TD: Nothing beats experience. In a mentor relationship, you have the ability to ask questions as they arise, whereas in a class setting, you don't have that one-on-one working relationship.

RP: There's that, and it's real work. [An] internship is what you would do in a job. You're forced to learn how to use the utilities, learn how to use an online system, as well as the cataloging rules and the special requirements for cataloging music.

TD: It's a wonderful way to get some background before accepting a professional position.

RP: Yes. I have fond memories of my cataloging internship at Western [Michigan University]. It wasn't many hours, but it was very helpful. I knew what to do when I started a job.

The NACO-Music Project

TD: Ralph, would you talk a bit about the NACO-Music Project?

RP: That's something I'm very proud of. It grew out of our work in retrospective conversion. This goes back to the old MOUG REMUS-NACO Project that Rick Jones was involved with trying to organize, a cooperative retrospective conversion. The other half of the bibliographic work, of course, is the authority work that's involved. This became a real possibility in 1988 because the Library of Congress and OCLC were developing what was then called the Linked Systems Project (LSP), which allowed for OCLC participants to work directly in the OCLC computing environment and have records transferred automatically between OCLC and the Library of Congress. That was about to happen in 1989.

Prior to that time, the NACO work, nationally, was done on paper forms. People would type out the forms, send them to the Library of Congress by mail, and someone there would input the records into the LC Name Authority File. As it became evident that the Linked Systems Project was about to become real, I worked with MOUG; I think Tim Robson, [from] Case Western [Reserve University], was the chair. I also worked with people in my library, [notably] Marty Joachim, who was one of the first NACO participants working on paper forms. I managed to get appointed as the Coordinator for the NACO-Music Project.

TD: Could you explain what NACO stands for?

RP: At the time it was the Name Authority Cooperative Project. We added the "-Music" part. I was able to convince MOUG and the I.U. Library to fund a training session at the Library of Congress. I spent a week there and worked with Richard Hunter doing name authority records and learning procedures on how to do that for music-related names and titles.

I worked briefly on paper, but very soon thereafter, Glenn Patton—former music librarian who is now at OCLC, also the former chair of MOUG before OCLC recruited him—came to Bloomington and trained us in the Linked Systems Project. We were able to create authority records and [forward] them to people at the Library of Congress; they would be able to view and review them. Then I could add the records locally through OCLC. Records would be transferred.

This started the project, and it was at the tail end of the conversion grants. But as part of the last two grants, we were able to include a NACO component, whereby
several of the recon libraries sent in headings. We hired several librarians to do the authority work for those headings. There were about 15,000 headings created, I think, as part of those projects.

People that were involved are still actively involved—Mark Scharff at Washington [University, St. Louis], Mickey [Michelle] Koth at Yale, and Marlena Frackowski at Westminster. Laura Gayle Green [University of Missouri-Kansas City] was part of that operation, too. She's now the Executive Secretary of MLA as well.

So after those grants, working through MOUG, we were able to expand that project. Those people that were involved in the grants went on to other institutions and were able to continue in their own work, and gradually we elaborated a system of expansion so that we have about forty libraries now participating. We have a system of review so that once a cataloger becomes independent and doesn't require review, then they start reviewing other people's work. We have this widening circle of NACO people helping each other out. I think it was a very good example of cooperative cataloging and cooperative work.

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TD: It must help those at the Library of Congress to have some of that burden removed.

RP: Right. It's still true that in the OCLC database, the number of Library of Congress records is a small proportion of the bibliographic records. I forgot what the percentage is, but it's a fairly small percentage of the database. There's a lot more music cataloged outside the Library of Congress than within. Now we have a core of people that contribute authority records as well so that the cataloging can be improved and hopefully not disappear.

Developing a Music Cataloging Workshop

One recent endeavor that Sue Stancu and I have undertaken actually came out of the MLA Self-Study. The need for continuing education is very apparent. MLA has numerous committees working on various ways of providing that. I thought, as an institution, we would be able to help in that regard, in terms of our relationship with the music librarianship program. Through the School of Music Summer Programs Office, we were able to organize a workshop in music cataloging. We've had three now. What is really remarkable is that we can announce the workshop on MLA-L and the AUTOCAT list, and it's full in about two days. So I think the need for it is obvious if that many people want to participate.

TD: How long does the workshop run?

RP: So far it's been four and a half days a week. We've had a wide variety of people, including someone from Canada, someone from Greece, and a large number of people who are not full-time music librarians, but have assignments in music cataloging. We have to limit it to ten people because of space.

TD: Does each one have a computer available to them?

RP: Well, we haven't gotten to that point. Our latest enhancement was this past year; we had hands-on work. People had to create examples of cataloging. They were able to use computers; then to consult with OCLC or any other source to do the work. Then they prepared transparencies to share with the other participants of the workshop. I guess that might be one model that MLA can look at.

TD: It's making a difference in someone’s professional work as well.

RP: Right. It is gratifying to know, after twenty-five years, that some other people want to know about your work.

TD: Yes. They want to improve their own, and if they find professionals with good experience, they feel more comfortable going to a session of this sort, it seems to me, because they can trust the reliability of it.

RP: It's a commitment of a whole week of your summer to do that, which is [why] I'm surprised people are willing to do that.

TD: It's a good time to do it, though, too. Summer is when you often have fewer demands on your time.
RP: We've done it not as an overload, so we've not made any money off of it personally. We have raised a little money for the library, and been able to buy a laser printer and monitor.

TD: Great. Is there anything else that you would like to share in terms of your career as a music librarian? You've talked about some of the contributions you've made that have been important to you—things that you've been proud of. Is there something that you're still striving to achieve or that you look forward to, now that we're at the end of the century, [approaching] the new millennium?

Sabbatical Project Plans

RP: Yes. This year on [my] sabbatical project, I'm planning to evaluate the use of the NACO records—to demonstrate one way or the other if they're useful. I think there may be statistical ways of improving their use and help. The project itself is a viable and worthwhile activity. I've been approved for July, so I'm looking forward to a few months off of work.

TD: How long would that last?

RP: Five months.

The William and Gayle Cook Music Library

Other than that, I think in [my] own work environment, having the new library [William and Gayle Cook Music Library] has been a remarkable change. I think the potential for that library is great.

TD: Can you briefly describe the new library, for those who might not be familiar with it?

RP: It's about 50,000 square feet, about the same size as the Sibley Library. We had hoped that there would be about 100 computers, but I think right now there are only about forty. There are several services that are incorporated within the perimeter of the library that may be unusual. There are three seminar rooms that are used by the School of Music for small seminars—very popular. There is a studio that is intended for the preparation of audio and visual material for instruction that's not yet been equipped, but the possibilities there, I think, are real. We [also] have the Latin American Music Center within the perimeter of the library.

The Variations Project

Some of the novelties are public compact shelving, which we have on the third floor, and compact shelving and storage areas for the archival collections. The Variations Project, of course, is the main distribution system for sound reserves right now, and that continues to be a model. It hasn't really expanded to other libraries. That may become a concern because of the cost, but the new technologies are coming along, I think, that will make that possible when the commercial sector gets interested in distributing sound.

TD: With the music reserves do you have entire pieces available to students?

RP: What they're doing is digitizing entire disks, so it's an entire CD, LP or tape.

TD: Of course, copyright concerns are taken into account. Students can only listen…

RP: They can only listen. It's a very elaborate system so that you can manipulate the file. You can have forty people listening to the same file and forty people listen to forty different files, and when they're listening to the same file, they can manipulate that file, moving around at their own pace. They can go to different tracks and go backward and forward and so forth. The technical people that created the interface did a nice job. There's an effort to create track lists, at least for the CDs that are indexed, so that you can see a track list, point to the track you want, and listen to the reserve list. They tried to get faculty involved in using that system, because you can actually put a specific track into a syllabus and click from the Web syllabus to the sound source, but that will be a few years before the faculty is interested.

The computers in the music library also serve as the computer work stations for the School of Music. There is no other computer lab. So it's true, the ear training and even other electronic music work can be accomplished with those computers, with special software—Finale and so forth—as well as musical keyboards, and MIDI keyboards.

TD: I look forward to seeing your new library. Perhaps we'll have an MLA Midwest chapter meeting.
there.

RP: We're hoping to have one in 2001, in Bloomington. I haven't gotten around to asking the Deans' permissions, but I can't imagine why they would turn that down. [Editor’s note: The chapter meeting was held in Bloomington, Indiana on October 18-20, 2001.]

TD: Anything else come to mind?

RP: No. That was it. That's my whole life! [Laughter]

TD: Thank you very much for your time…

RP: My pleasure.

TD: …and for participating in this Music Library Association Oral History Project. I'm sure that there will be much more for you to contribute in the days and years ahead.

RP: We'll see.

TD: You are certainly an inspiration to many other music librarians.

RP: Thank you. You're very kind.

[End of interview]

Concluding Thoughts

Ralph Papkhian would go on to contribute much more and receive numerous awards for his service to the music librarianship profession, including the MLA Richard S. Hill Award (2002) and the MOUG Distinguished Service Award (2005). Health issues would eventually impact Ralph’s ability to attend MLA meetings as regularly as he would have liked. Fortunately, in October 2009, he was able to attend the 68th MLA Midwest Chapter Annual Meeting held at Notre Dame. Though more slender and not quite of the same stamina as in earlier years, Ralph raised questions at sessions and mingled with colleagues as of old, interested in what he or she was doing and encouraging them along the way. The last day of the meeting, Ralph hurriedly printed his name and address so I could contact him later about conducting a follow-up oral history interview. On January 14, 2010 cancer would claim his life before a “Part 2” interview was conducted. Ralph’s professional legacy continues on, though, through the lives of those he touched, particularly his former students, as well as his many Indiana University, MOUG, NACO, and MLA colleagues. It is hoped that in some measure, this article helps preserve and explain this inspiring leader’s first 23 years of professional life as expressed by Ralph himself.

—Therese Zoski Dickman
Chair, MLA Oral History Subcommittee
Fine Arts Librarian
Southern Illinois University Edwardsville

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Midwest Chapter of the Music Library Association: Administrative Structure

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Chair: Paula Hickner (University of Kentucky), 2010
Past Chair: Laura Gayle Green (University of Missouri-Kansas City), 2010
Secretary-Treasurer: Keith Cochran (Indiana University), 2010
Newsletter Editor: Anne Shelley (University of Minnesota), 2010
Web Editor: Abbey Thompson (SELCO), 2010

STANDING COMMITTEES

Bylaws (One-year terms; members may be reappointed)
Beth Christiansen (St. Olaf College), Chair
Grace Fitzgerald (University of Iowa)
Laura Gayle Green (University of Missouri-Kansas City)

Membership (Three-year terms; members may be reappointed; Chair serves year as Chair-Elect, two years as Chair, one year as Past-Chair)
Michael J. Duffy (Northern Illinois University), 2010, Chair
Keith Cochran (Indiana University), 2011
Paula Hickner (University of Kentucky), 2010
Richard LeSueur (Ann Arbor District Library, retired), 2010
Sheridan Stormes (Butler University), 2011
Lynne Weber (Minnesota State University, Mankato), 2011

Program (One-year terms; members may be reappointed)
Paula Hickner (University of Kentucky), Chair
Robert Delvin (Illinois Wesleyan University)

Publications (Three-year terms; members may be reappointed; Chair serves one year as Chair-Elect, two years as Chair, one year as Past-Chair)
Lynne Weber (Minnesota State University, Mankato), 2010, Chair
Therese Dickman (Southern Illinois University-Edwardsville), 2012
Michael J. Duffy (Northern Illinois University), 2010
Greg Fitzgerald (Western Michigan University), 2011
Laura Gayle Green (University of Missouri-Kansas City), 2012
Kathleen Haefliger (Chicago State University), 2010
Mary Huismann (University of Minnesota), 2012
Ruth Inman (Kennedy-King College), 2012
Jennifer Matthews (University of Notre Dame), 2011
Amy Pennington (Saint Louis University), 2012
Anne Shelley (University of Minnesota), 2012
Wendy Sistrunk (University of Missouri-Kansas City), 2011
Abbey Thompson (SELCO), 2012

SPECIAL COMMITTEES

Cataloging (Three-year terms; members may be reappointed; Chair serves one year as Chair-Elect, two years as Chair, one year as Past-Chair)
Sue Stancu (Indiana University), 2010, Chair
Kerri Baunach (University of Kentucky), 2012
Patty Falk (Bowling Green State University), 2011
Grace Fitzgerald (University of Iowa), 2012
Mary Huismann (University of Minnesota), 2011
Jennifer Matthews (University of Notre Dame), 2011
Deborah Morris (Roosevelt University), 2012
Ralph Papakhan (Indiana University), 2012
Sandy Rodriguez (University of Missouri-Kansas City), 2011
Mark Scharff (Washington University), 2010
Wendy Sistrunk (University of Missouri-Kansas City), 2011
Abbey Thompson (SELCO), 2011

Public Services (Three-year terms; members may be reappointed; Chair serves one year as Chair-Elect, two years as Chair, one year as Past-Chair)
Kirstin Dougan (University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign), 2011, Chair
Tom Caw (University of Wisconsin-Madison), 2012
Robert Delvin (Illinois Wesleyan University), 2011
Jill King (DePaul University), 2012
Christine Kubiak (Illinois State University), 2011
Rebecca Littman (University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee), 2011
Liz Berndt Morris (Central Michigan University), 2012
Sheridan Stormes (Butler University), 2011

Technology, Archives, Preservation, and Sound (T.A.P.S.) (Three-year terms; members may be reappointed; Chair serves one year as Chair-Elect, two years as Chair, one year as Past-Chair)
Emma Dederick (Indiana University), 2010, Chair
Misti Shaw (DePauw University), 2009, Past-Chair
Susannah Cleveland (Bowling Green State University), 2012
Jeff Gibbens, 2010
Kathleen Haefliger (Chicago State University), 2010
Anne Shelley (University of Minnesota), 2011

Terms expire in October of the year indicated.

This version of the administrative structure should reflect changes made at the 2009 chapter meeting. Please report errors and omissions to the editor.