

Peggy Bateson Celebrates Her 42nd Year at Cary Library

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Having grown up in Lexington, Peggy Bateson was introduced to Cary Library at a young age. She would go to the library after school to study while her mom worked. Two of her neighbors were librarians, so she would get a ride home from them at the end of the night. Growing up with a single mother and three siblings, Peggy started working at a young age to help her mother.

In June of 1968, at the age of fifteen, she started working as a Student Page for a dollar per hour in the Children's Room. As a Student Page she was trained to shelve books, revise library materials, mend books, do billing, file card catalogs and wait on library patrons. These skills proved to be of great value when she was moved into the Adult Library.

In Aril of 1970, Peggy's senior year of high school, the library was informed that a member of the Circulation Department would be leaving in June. She was moved to the Adult Department in April and in June, she became a full time member of the Circulation Department. From 1970 to 1975 Peggy worked as a Library Technician and in 1975 she became Circulation Supervisor. While being nervous about taking the job, she felt that she had been trained well in the Children's Room. She had already done all of the jobs that the adults she would be supervising do. At first it was a challenge for Peggy to be responsible for hiring, training and supervising twenty-five plus high school students, but it got easier as time went on and in the end proved to be very rewarding. In 1982, she was selected as the "Outstanding Summer Youth Employment Supervisor" as a participant in the CETA, a state run jobs program for young students.

Working with the students over the years has been truly rewarding for Peggy. She said, "We had some great kids come through our doors. Working at the library was a family affair for some kids. We had a lot of brothers and sisters working here. It was a lot of fun!" Cary Library hired students at age fourteen and Peggy would set up flexible schedules for the students in order to allow them to work and still be involved with school activities. It was a lot of work for her, but it allowed the kids to be able to stay at the library through high school. Many of the students would even come back to work during their college breaks. Peggy said, "It was amazing to watch the changes in kids as they went through high school. I felt some joy in knowing that the library had played a small part in these kid's lives."

All of the young students who worked at Cary Library in the earlier years have gone on to do wonderful things with their lives. They have become doctors, lawyers, teachers, merchants, bankers, computer technicians and even a couple librarians, just to name a few. Many have even raised families of their own. Peggy said that she is still visited each year by adults who were once members of the student staff.

Today, there are only four students working at Cary Memorial Library. Students nowadays are more focused on their academics and being involved with extra curricular activities. It has been hard to get kids to commit to work a lot of hours. Peggy said, "Truthfully, I would rather see kids concentrate on getting good grades and taking advantage of the opportunities that LHS has to offer. They have the rest of their lives to work!"



Photo by Jim Shaw

Peggy Bateson of the Cary Memorial Library

There have been many changes to the library since Peggy joined the staff in the summer of 68'. They didn't have computers back then and now she doesn't know how they ever survived without them. They also had a real card catalog and now everything is done through the computers. They use to only circulate books, magazines and records. Today they circulate books, magazines, DVDs, books on CD, books on tape, audio cassettes, CDs, and other library items. And there was no air conditioning! Can you imagine?

While there have been many changes over the years, there are still some things that have never changed at Cary Library – The high level of community support for the library, the commitment of the library

staff to provide quality service to library users, and that the library staff members work as a team and support each other.

It is easy to see why Peggy loves what she does. She states that, "This has never been a job to me. I'm lucky to have a job that I love. This has been my one and only job my entire life. It really is a labor of love. This is a great library and the staff has been so supportive to me over the forty-two years that I have worked here. The patrons have been great! I'm just giving back all that has been given to me."

Congratulations, and thank you Peggy for your years of dedicated service.