

Editorial – An Ode To Cheryl Hamill On Her Retirement

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Cheryl Hamill recently announced her retirement from health libraries after a distinguished career. For several decades she combined her various roles in Western Australia with immense contributions to health librarianship nationally and internationally. In 2013 she was conferred an ALIA fellowship and in 2020 she received the HCL Anderson award, ALIA's highest honour. Part of the citation for this award states:

Cheryl is a model of all that is best in health librarianship, constantly looking for ways to improve the services and resources provided to clinicians and other library users. She demonstrates expertise in her own practice and seeks out the very latest information in order to drive further improvements – not only for herself and her immediate team, but also for her broader network of colleagues in ALIA Health Libraries Australia. Through her collaborative approach, including committee work, editorial contributions, original research, publications, presentations and papers, Cheryl has helped others develop a greater understanding of the field. Through her persistent advocacy, she has progressed the standing of health librarians in Australia.

During Cheryl's career...

In 1986 "The Academic American Encyclopedia" was made available on CD-ROM, the first reference work published in this medium.

In 1987 Fluoxetine became commercially available.

In 1988 laser cataract surgery was first undertaken.

In 1989 Sir Tim-Berners Lee invented the World Wide Web.

In 1989 Intel introduced the 80486 microprocessor

In 1990 the human genome project officially began.

In 1990 the first decrease in cancer incidence and mortality was recorded.

In 1990 Archie, the first search engine, was developed by a student at McGill University in Montreal.

In 1991 Paul Ginsparg founded the arXiv archive for physics preprints at Los Alamos National Laboratory (LAN-L) to make preprints in physics freely available.

In 1992 the first vaccine for Hepatitis A became available.

In 1993 the National Library of Medicine launched its website, one of the first in the United States Federal Government.

In 1993 the first successful commercial plain paper copier Xerox 914 was released.

In 1996 Dolly the sheep was cloned.

In 1996 the first internet enabled mobile device, The Nokia 9000 Communicator was released in Finland.

In 1997 MEDLINE became available free of charge on the world wide web.

In 1998 Google was established.

In 1999 the hormone Ghrelin was identified.

In 2000 Pubmed Central and ClinicalTrials.gov premiered.

In 2000 the first tablet computer was developed by Microsoft.

In 2001 the first telesurgery was performed.

In 2001 Apple released the iPod.

In 2001 CERN and the University of Geneva held the first OAI Workshop.

In 2003 Carlo Urbani, of Doctors without Borders alerted the World Health Organization to the threat of the SARS virus, triggering the most effective response to an epidemic in history.

In 2003 the Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ) was launched at Lund University in Sweden as a central directory for open access journals.

In 2004 Mark Zuckerberg invented Facebook.

In 2005 the first decrease in total number of deaths from cancer was recorded.

In 2005 the floppy disk was replaced by USB flash drives, and YouTube was launched.

In 2007 Twitter, the iPhone, and the Kindle were all launched.

In 2008 the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNF) required recipients of funding grants to publish their research results in open access.

In 2009 MedlinePlus launched its Twitter feed, and in 2010 Mobile MedlinePlus was released.

In 2011 e-books outsold printed books at Amazon for the first time.

In 2012 the Apple iPad is released.

In 2012 several innovative and relatively new journals, including F1000 Research, PeerJ, and eLife, are launched. These journals are experimenting with new forms of peer review, new business models, and new funding sources.

In 2014 a 3D printer was used for the first ever skull transplant.

In 2014 the smart watch market reached 5 million, and Amazon Alexa was launched.

In 2016 wireless devices surpassed wired devices as the predominant means of accessing the internet.

In 2018 Coalition S formed, publishing Plan S.

In 2019 Projekt DEAL concluded "publish and read" agreements with major scholarly publishers.

In 2022 the complete human genome was sequenced.

... And Cheryl seemed to be across all of it. So, to honour Cheryl and her many years of service to colleagues and clinicians, an editorial indulgence, some doggerel poetry...

An Ode To Cheryl On Her Retirement

There once was a health librarian named Cheryl,
Whose name was not amenable to limerick writing,
Unless she had colleagues named Beryl, or Meryl,
And they co-authored papers, and were diligent in citing.

Still, even if the rhymes elude a limerick,
The HCL Anderson award is worthy of something poetic.
A sonnet in MeSH, perhaps, announced with a gong,
Or NLM classification reworked as the Dockers theme song.

I know. A Haiku!
It's True, I do know haiku.
See, told you I do.

But back to Cheryl, and all that she does,
For WA, and HLA, and NLA, and ALIA;
For committees and sub-committees and all their paraphernalia;
And, well, frankly, for all of us.

(Sidenote - ALIA is not the Australian Liquor Industry Association...
although that would explain some MARC records I've seen – boom-tish!)

But back to Cheryl, and all that she does,
In collecting and parsing and sharing,
And building and joining and supporting,
And setting an example for all of us.

There cannot be a PubMed search string she has not run,
An interdisciplinary comment thread she has not begun,
A publisher price she has not negotiated down,
Or an uppity rep she has not run out of town.

So all hail Cheryl, a paragon of the profession,
Even if she would be appalled by this digression.
Fare thee well in your deserved retirement,
As you pen your memoirs on digital parchment.

No more battling the traffic on Canning Highway.
No more worrying if your job can be done by AI.
No more union claims frustrated at every turn.
No more desire to watch the (publishing) world burn.

No more finding all the full-text... except one!
No more search updates to be redone.
No more fighting mildew in the basement stacks.
No more downtime after more cyber attacks.

Just a new hip to go with the other one
And a new caravan to chase the sun.
Plenty of reading and a Europe trip or two,
A Dockers flag to pine for and some Weagles to boo.

The money is the same but the hours are better.
As one road ends another will lead wherever.
Dream a new dream and say goodbye to tension,
Set a new goal and say hello to your pension.

All hail Cheryl, a paragon of the profession,
The legacy she leaves is a lasting impression.
Health and libraries are richer for her contribution,
And all of us blessed by her friendship and dedication.