



Ultimately, as our authors show in chronicling their own journeys, transitions can help us evolve into more versatile librarians—and quite possibly more well-rounded people, too.

Ch-ch-changes: Evolution of a School Librarian

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“A library is a growing organism. It is an accepted biological fact that a growing organism alone will survive. An organism that ceases to grow will petrify and perish” (Ranganathan 1931). So wrote S. R. Ranganathan in *Five Laws of Library Science*, deftly encapsulating a principle that school librarians know well from their own experience. We grow and change in response to our environment; to pluck another choice word from Ranganathan, we evolve.

School librarians do not exist in a bubble. Despite the cliché of the stuffy, antiquated, bun-wearing shusher, school librarians are a dynamic group. We adapt to the challenges around us—not just those affecting libraries but also those impacting classrooms and communities. We may often fly solo in our buildings, but we are not insular.

New school librarians may not be aware of the amazing potential of their career choice. Sure, we change kids’ lives by developing readers and makers, collaborating with classroom teachers, and building relationships with our local communities. But as you read through this issue of *Knowledge Quest*, you will see how school librarians are also administrators, nationally recognized authors and speakers, educators of future librarians, and influencers of policy. The authors in this issue do not represent the sum total of possible school librarian careers; many dynamic librarians are busy carving out their own paths and building new definitions of what it means to be a school librarian. Some do so by running for AASL President, others by breaking down barriers in their buildings so that real collaboration can happen.

Regardless of the magnitude of our contributions, all of our efforts serve to advance our field.

This issue of *Knowledge Quest* looks at transitions, both personal and professional. Transitions can bring challenges—and I’m sure our readers can think of an example or two on their own—but they also bring opportunities for growth. Examples of this growth abound in the articles in this issue as when Hilda Weisburg details how a changing school dynamic propelled her from the classroom into school librarianship. Her further choice

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to pursue a higher degree in librarianship has influenced and benefited the entire field greatly. Even in retirement, her work continues to shine a light on the value of school librarians, and her leadership encourages us to be leaders as well.

Karla Collins and Jen Spisak transitioned from the K–12 arena to higher education, helping others build their careers as school librarians. One had aimed for higher ed, the other never suspected that academia would be part of her journey. Yet, here they are, discussing the challenges and virtues of moving away from working directly with kids to training the next generations of school librarians and enlarging their circle of influence.

Many school districts opt to have a district-level librarian as their main library contact. Ann Morgester discusses how her career took a different path when she embraced the district-level position and how it has enhanced her understanding of the world of school librarians.

Carmen Redding tells about her leap from front-line librarianship to state-level representative. Her story demonstrates the all-too-common challenge of fulfilling multiple responsibilities, as she strives to represent school librarians and youth services librarians in her state of North Dakota.

Other transitions in a school library career are highlighted in articles from Chiquita Toure and Erikka Adams. The switch from elementary to high school can indeed be drastic, as Chiquita demonstrates in detailing her transition. Going from fixed to flexible scheduling widened her perception of the potential of the school library. Erikka has found her niche (for now!) as a public school-turned-independent school librarian. The changes she experienced will resonate with those already enjoying careers at independent schools and may prove eye-opening to those who are unfamiliar with that sector.

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the evolution of our paths, whether it's the front lines or behind the scenes, will students continue to reap the discovery, knowledge, and hope that we bring to our schools and communities. One thing is certain: no two journeys are the same.

Putting together this issue has been an honor—and an opportunity for growth—for both of us, as well. Our journeys as school librarians have led us along this path where we get to work with new people. We, too, have seen transitions in our careers and continue to embrace them. Neither of us expected to be contributing to *Knowledge Quest* as guest editors, but the opportunity is priceless. Having the chance to work with trailblazers in our field at all stages of their careers has been an inspiring experience, and one we suspect will help sustain us through the transitions that await us.

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