

Ira Doley Raymond

1917–2004

Ira Raymond, former university librarian at the University of Adelaide, died on 12 September. Ira was born on 6 July 1917 in O'Hallaran Hill, South Australia. His mother died in 1930, and in 1932 his father, a leading Churches of Christ minister, moved with his three sons and a new wife to West Australia. Ira was educated at Adelaide High School, Fremantle Boys' School, Perth Modern School and the University of Western Australia. He graduated BA in English and French in 1941 and MA in 1951. Ira was appointed University of Adelaide librarian in 1964 and served in the position for eighteen years until his retirement in 1982.

From 1937 to 1941 Ira taught at schools in Western Australia. This was followed by War service in the Royal Australian Air Force from 1941 to 1945, when he was posted to New Guinea. In 1946 he entered the Library School of the Public Library of New South Wales. After gaining professional qualifications, he held a number of library positions in West Australia before his appointment to the staff of the National Library of Australia in 1949. Here he moved through a number of positions with distinction, and in 1954 was appointed liaison officer in New York. He was accompanied to New York by his wife Patricia, whom he had married in 1951: their long and remarkable relationship continued until the end of his life. They remained in New York until 1957 and Ira took the opportunity to gain the degree of Master of Library Science from Columbia University. On return to the National

Library he held several senior positions in succession. This was a time of unprecedented growth and development at the National Library and Ira made a major contribution to the planning and establishment of national bibliographical services. He continued his involvement in national initiatives throughout his career. He served on a number of committees of the Australian Advisory Council for Bibliographical Services; he sat on the National Library Advisory Committee on the Humanities from 1973 to 1978, and was also chair of the Committee of Australian University Librarians from 1973 to 1978. He took a life-long interest in education for librarianship, serving in a number of advisory roles with the then Library Association of Australia, and establishing a short-lived Library School at the University of Adelaide between 1975 and 1979. He received the highest accolade of his profession, the HCL Anderson Award from ALIA in 1982 for his outstanding contribution to librarianship.

When Ira Raymond moved to Adelaide in 1964, the university library was in a stage of rapid growth. During his service, the size of the collection passed the half million and million volume mark, and the Barr Smith Library building doubled in size. While he was an outstanding bookman, Ira was also ahead of his time in the development of library systems. Operations were steadily computerised from the 1960s onwards and cataloguing went online in 1980. His meticulous planning and execution helped to ensure the success



of these developments. He was highly able in working with the university community and was noted for his thorough 'homework' with all stakeholders before he launched any initiative. His concern to provide the best possible conditions of work and development for staff gained him their unstinting support. He always maintained the role of the Barr Smith Library for the community at large. His great contribution to the University was recognised in 1989 when the title of Librarian Emeritus was conferred on him. The Ira Raymond Exhibition Room in the Barr Smith Library perpetuates his memory. A Festschrift in his honour, entitled *Innovation no stranger*, was published and presented to him in 1983. In his retirement he achieved an Honours Degree in Chinese from the University.

While he was determined in character, Ira's self-effacement was legendary. His wit was equally characteristic: when told by an admirer that he was the most humble man they had met, he replied, 'I agree'. While Christian by upbringing he was deeply persuaded in his own mind of a Christian position which he held in an exemplary manner.

*Paul Wilkins, deputy university librarian,
Barr Smith Library, Adelaide University*

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