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Librarianship, like other disciplines, has its seasons and its personalities. Warren Horton will take his place as one of the great figures in the recent history of the profession in Australia during a period when a substantial restructuring of all aspects of Australian life, especially of its public and private organisations, was afoot. As director-general of the National Library of Australia from July 1985 until his retirement in July 1999, he led a great institution through one of the most turbulent periods in its history. At the same time he played a leading role on the national and international stages of the profession.

He was born in Ryde, and grew up in Dee Why. He attended primary school there, and was by his account, fairly summarily transferred to Canberra Grammar in 1949. This early dislocation in his life perhaps gave him the foundations of the political sense which was one of his outstanding gifts. He started professional life in the Public Library of New South Wales, and was soon recognised as a bright young achiever, working in the Information Service sections of the General Reference Library and the Mitchell Library. He was deputy of the State Library of NSW from 1975 to 1981, and State Librarian of Victoria between 1981 and 1985. Although one version of his life has him at first determined to become a politician, he never faltered in his service nor his dedication to librarianship. That profession has recognised his achievements, not least those on the international stage.

From 1991 to 1997 he was an elected member to the executive board of the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA). He was the first member from the Pacific Region, a somewhat unknown entity in a largely Euro-American organisation, and it is fair to say that he put the libraries of the region firmly on the international map. He received IFLA's Gold Medal in 1997 and its Honorary Fellowship in 1999. Only his developing illness prevented him from becoming its president.

He was intensely active on the Australian, New Zealand and South-east Asian fronts. The Australian Li-

brary and Information Association, of which he was president in 1984, awarded him its Fellowship in 1985, and in 1988 he received its HCL Anderson Award, which is the highest professional honour open to an Australian librarian. He was instrumental in the broader interface between government and libraries: indeed the performance of the director-general of the National Library is one of the barometers by which governments gain a perspective of libraries across the nation as a whole.

During his directorship the National Library encountered fiscal and electronic turbulence, and his ride turned out to be if not rougher, then rough in a different way from that of his predecessors. His tenure saw major 'restructuring', a relative downsizing of the National Library workforce, a contraction of national horizons, a movement from social to economic pre-occupations as the driving force of Australian polity, and a major shift in the status of the public service and its relations with the body politic. At the same time, he was strengthening the essential links between the National Library and the broader profession, and restored the Library to a pivotal place in the formal and informal networks of Australian and regional libraries through which service devolves to citizens in a wide range of contexts.

He was a guide and mentor to many librarians in the region. He educated and inspired a generation of Australian librarians to *engage* with the political process, and his presence in the national capital when the Association's head office was established there was a fortunate coincidence indeed.

His personal life was marked with tragedy: his marriage to the historian Patsy Hardy in 1985 changed his life and brought to it a richness of affection and conviviality. Her death in 1994 was a terrible blow to him and to all their friends, and he chose to commemorate her life with a magnificent set of tapestry panels which grace the walls of the National Library. After her death he was 'adopted' by the Woods diplomatic household, which offered him a family life which did



much to heal, or at least ameliorate, the wound in his soul.

He will not be forgotten: his work on the national and international stages, as a mentor to younger professionals, and as the mainspring of the Aurora Foundation whose role is the development of leadership in the younger cadres of the profession will ensure this. Those who received the gift of his friendship will die with it still warm in their hearts.

In his life he ventured much. As such men do, he attracted his share of envy and dislike: when faced with difficulties he preferred to resolve them amicably, but if this could not be achieved he had no hesitation in moving resolutely. Where others havered, he would act. For this he attracted criticism, and occasionally, outright malice. Large libraries and big men are easy targets, but he was never deterred from following a right course of action simply because it would attract hostility.

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During the 2004 biennial conference, the contribution to the profession and ALIA by those of our leaders who have died in the preceding two years will be acknowledged. Read inCite in the coming months for details.