



MILDRED CROWE LANGNER

President, Medical Library Association, 1966/67

President's Page

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"If the librarian is important to the institution's well-being, he must think of that institution's whole being. He cannot emphasize the academic aspects of acquiring a fine library collection and ignore the service aspects which would insure the full use and appreciation of that collection. . . . It will do us no good to proclaim our favorite truism that the library is the 'heart of the school' if our library shows no heart itself." These are the thoughts of Mildred Langner which she expressed in an editorial in the *BULLETIN* in 1959. These statements exemplify her philosophy, for, at a time when many libraries are growing so fast that they sacrifice the personal touch, Mildred remains an advocate of service at all costs. Among the attitudes that have been dearest to her mind and heart are service, public relations, and personnel relations. Among the disciplines of medical librarianship, medical history has always been one of her chief interests.

Most of us know the incoming President as Mildred Langner; some of us knew her in the past as Mildred Crowe. Most of us are familiar with her background, education, service record, and posts held. For those who are not, here are the facts: Born in Chattanooga, she attended the University of that city and then obtained her L.S. degree from the Peabody College for Teachers. She interned under Mrs. Eileen R. Cunningham at Vanderbilt University. Her first endeavor in the field of medical librarianship was the organization of the Medical Society Library in her home town. This post afforded her the opportunity to tackle almost every aspect of medical librarianship and formed the groundwork for her future tasks.

As Librarian of the University of Alabama Medical Center Library, she built up an outstanding general collection while also emphasizing medical history. Her stay there culminated in the acquisition in 1955 of the Lawrence Reynolds Library of rare and historical material, possibly the finest private collection

then in existence. This task completed, she moved on to the Library of the budding Medical School of the University of Miami, which she guided to a thriving enterprise now concerned with extensive plans for expansion. (It was here that I first met Mildred, and I shall always remember seeing her entering the Library, carrying a huge straw tray filled with colorful hibiscus blooms from her garden. She brought these every morning so that both the staff and the patrons could enjoy their beauty. And, upon her arrival, the staff would breathe a sigh of "Now we don't need to worry, for Mrs. L. is here and everything will be fine." Mrs. L. not only preaches personnel relations, she lives up to them.)

In 1961/62, she served as Chief of the Reference Services Division of the National Library of Medicine, during the exciting period of the establishment of MEDLARS and the move from Washington to Bethesda. In 1963, feeling that pioneering in the establishing and building up of new collections in young medical school libraries was her special interest, she returned to Miami as Head Librarian and Associate Professor of Medical Bibliography.

In all her positions Mildred has been intensely interested in writing, and, in addition to serving for several years as an editor of the *Jefferson Hillman Bulletin of the University of Alabama*, she was Editor of the *BULLETIN* for four years, ending her term with the superb NLM anniversary number. Throughout her career she has taught courses in scientific writing to medical and graduate students and to faculty. She has written articles on medical librarianship, public relations, and scientific writing for many professional journals and was the author of the chapter, "Public Relations," in the second edition of the *Handbook of Medical Library Practice*.

She has also been extremely interested in teaching courses in medical bibliography and medical history to medical students, and has

given many lectures on scientific research tools to the faculties of both schools where she has served.

In the course of her busy career, she has trained many librarians who will be a credit to the profession. She has conducted courses of instruction for nonacademic personnel on her staff, encouraging them to further study, and has inspired many of her professional staff to become head librarians in other institutions.

Her interest in the Medical Library Association began upon entering the profession, and, almost immediately thereafter, she became its Secretary. Since then she has served on and chaired many committees, including those on Standards, Publication, and the Prize Essay Awards. She was Chairman of the first refresher course program, the forerunner of the presently thriving continuing education courses. She participated as an author in the First International Congress in London and served as a committee member for the Second Congress in Washington.

She has served as consultant on medical and dental library problems to many groups and has helped in the establishment of many hospital libraries.

In Mrs. Langner's capable mind, time is an elastic concept. She believes in the responsibilities of a professional worker in furthering the profession, and, in addition to the Medical Library Association, she is a member of the Special Libraries Association (serving as a founder and President-Elect of the Alabama Chapter), the American Medical Writers' Association, the American Library Association, the American Association for the History of Medicine, and other professional societies.

Her marriage to the late Julian Langner, a most charming and brilliant man, was a short, but most happy, one. An economist by profession, Julian was equally interested in history and natural and political science. He took such delight in knowledge and his enthusiasm was so infectious that he guided Mildred to even broader horizons. He was always interested in her work, proud of her accomplishments, and pleased that, even though she was a most capable administrator with never ending plans for the future, she still remained gracious and utterly feminine.

The cordial hospitality of Julian and Mildred's home is well-known, and the tradition is still carried on in her apartment with a beautiful view of the bay. It is an open secret among her friends that, despite her vast collection of exotic cookbooks, Mildred never cooks, but always encourages someone to do the cooking for her, thereby enabling her to enjoy her many parties as much as do the friends she loves to entertain. Her hobbies include reading, which she does widely and avidly, sunning, swimming, traveling, and some expert dancing.

There is a special quality which personifies Mildred. One is reminded of it in Emerson's quotation, "Our chief want in life is somebody who shall make us do what we can." She does even more, for she inspires people whom she guides to "stretch" and to do mentally more than they thought they could.

As a former member of her staff, I wish her all success. I know the Medical Library Association can only surpass its achievements of the past under her persistent, able leadership.

RAISSA MAURIN