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Special Libraries Versus Information Analysis Centers

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available through universities. Ms. Klassen does not tell us what she has or has not been doing to further her own educational experience. This is unfortunate, because it is reasonably safe to predict that with or without an M.L.S. doing nothing after that leads to obsolescence. Lest she believe that this is simply an educator's tactic for bullying individuals into being students, I need to add that this was also my view during 25 years as a practitioner. If anything, the need for education and continuing education has become greater, and will continue to be still greater. Education is a lifetime process, and the M.L.S. is just one step along the way. How important it was or was not for Ms. Klassen depends on what she has done since then.

On one point she is surely wrong, when she argues that SLA members are more concerned than other professional groups about status and degrees. She should try her B.A. in history and sociology as a job qualification in applying for a position as a doctor or a lawyer.

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SPECIAL LIBRARIES VERSUS INFORMATION ANALYSIS CENTERS

It was with interest and a great sense of *ennui* that I read the article by M. Cecilia Rothschild in the Summer 1987 issue. The author discusses (pp. 164-165) IAC/library relationships and says that, "There is a general consensus on the distinctions between the IAC and the library." She then goes on to point out four distinctions summarized from the library side: libraries do not produce information; libraries process documents, not information; libraries do not directly solve user problems; and libraries do not create new knowledge.

I assume that the author speaks strictly of the distinctions made by the Department of Defense about the differences between special libraries and information analysis centers. I certainly hope so, because those distinctions fly directly in the face of the definitions classically adopted for special library services. Guy E. Marion, a former SLA president and one of the pioneering leaders in the development of the philosophy of special library services, laid out the basis of these services in his classic article "The Library as an Adjunct to Industrial Laboratories" (*Library Journal*, September 1910, pp. 400-404), and generations of special librarians have tried to follow them. It is all too true that many of us have fallen short of his ideal, but I think it is still our ideal and one that many of us strive to attain. All too often we are unable to convince management that the library should be supported to that extent, and those information analysis functions (if they are performed at all) get scattered elsewhere in the organization. And, of course, many of us lack the subject-based knowledge for undertaking the kinds of in-depth analysis and repackaging of information that are required by our users. This is, again, a failure on our part to realize the ideals of our early founders, and is probably at least partly attributable to library schools trying to turn out generalists, rather than professionals, competent in a subject *and* in library/information center management.

The distinctions made in Ms. Rothschild's article (if it purports to speak of special libraries service philosophy in general) fly directly in the face of a great tradition—a tradition that is also the central key to the future of the special library in the information society.

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