MEMORIAL RESOLUTION
MARIAN LOUISE ARMSTRONG
(1929 -2016)

Marian Armstrong was deeply rooted in southern Indiana and open to the world. Her greatest pleasure in life was learning, but it is what she taught generations of students that will be her lasting legacy.

Marian was born in Bedford and graduated from Bedford High School. Following a short stint at the local newspaper, she earned a BS in Education from Indiana University (1952). Her first position was as librarian for Edison High School in Gary, Indiana, (1952-56); she then moved to Paris (France) to serve as librarian for the American School. She received her master’s degree in library science from IU in 1958 while serving as librarian for the University School — a laboratory school of the IU School of Education (1957-68). She helped transition the school to a new facility in 1964. She held a part-time teaching appointment with IU’s library science program starting in 1958, and in 1969 she was appointed Assistant Professor in the Graduate Library School (later School of Library and Information Science). She taught reference resources and services, supervised student field work, and was editor of the school’s Alumni Newsletter.

Marian’s ability to connect with and inspire students was phenomenal. She escorted generations of librarians-to-be into their chosen profession. “On my first day on the job in 1958, practice students were waiting for me at my door,” Armstrong said upon retirement. “It has been the same ever since. It often becomes a lifelong mentoring relationship.” She helped students earn jobs in school, public, academic, and special libraries, continuing to serve as advisor far beyond the normal role of a professor.

“All of us could write volumes about Professor Armstrong. We loved her quick wit, her often sardonic but whimsical and delightful mannerisms, her wisdom and love of our profession, her expectations for excellence both in the classroom and in our profession, her love for
basketball, her honor for and friendship with Coach Bob Knight, and all things IU,” recalled Patty Lunsford, a 1976 graduate.

Ginny Richey, a former adjunct faculty member at SLIS who once shared an office with Marian, observed that she made it a point to keep her ears open for opportunities that could help her students. “She was deeply interested in people,” Richey said. “If she knew of a job that one of her students was perfect for, she would make the connection. She would also spend hours matching up people with the perfect learning opportunity. She was interested in her students more than just as a teacher. She was interested in their success and their trials in the field.”

Marian was an active member of several organizations with a lifelong devotion to the spread of knowledge and education, not just on campus but throughout the community and state. She participated in the design of the Herman B Wells Library and was instrumental in organizing cooperative programs among the Monroe County Community School Corporation librarians. She served on the boards of the Monroe County Public Library (including as president) and the Monroe County Library Foundation. An advisory committee for the Indiana Department of Education on which she served revised the guidelines for Indiana School Media Programs. She was active in the American Library Association, the Indiana Library Federation, and the Association of Indiana Media Educators. She was a member of the Hoagy Carmichael Jazz Society, the Friends of Art, The Monroe County Historical Society, and she participated in the North American Amphibian Monitoring Program.

Marian was a member of the IU athletics committee from 1971 to 1977. She also served on the Executive Council of the IU Alumni Association (1996-99) and was on the Woodburn Guild Board of Governors (2001-04). She received the School of Library and Information Science Distinguished Alumni Award (1990) and the IU Alumni Association Gertrude Rich Award (1999). She was elected to the library honorary society, Beta Phi Mu, in 1958 and received the Beta Phi Mu Chi Chapter Service Award in 1992. Following her retirement, she traveled, hiked, and worked on her farm, and she was active with the emeriti faculty.
Friends and colleagues recall her enthusiasm for her profession and for the university. She had an impish sense of humor and a sheer joy of life and pleasure being with other people that made it exciting to be around her. She found people who fit her level of enthusiasm. Above all else, it was the impact on her students that will remain. Many librarians in Indiana and beyond have a sense of the excitement of the profession and connect it with real people – thanks to Miss Marian Armstrong.

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