

Closing Statement

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Library Science Department

LIS 657: The Special Library

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I didn't realize there was a term for what I'm doing until fairly recently. "Second Career" librarian – in training. I was reading a job posting from one of my MLIS list services, and the employer was especially interested in early and second-career MLIS grads. "Oh, THAT'S me!" Being older than most other students, I felt alone in August, resuming my studies after 30 years. But the longer I stick around, the more I see myself in what I'm doing and even a demand for people like me.

I have been able to connect to that self, that 20-year-old me at college all those decades ago. There's so much I had forgotten about her. About being a student. About being furiously curious. I had forgotten how much I loved thinking up the weirdest possible paper topics and having incredible fun proving them. Writing pages and pages. I remember being fixated on "Exploring the Role of Bodily Fluids in James Joyce's Ulysses" my senior year and having so much fun validating my thesis.

Here I am. Same Libby. Geeking out on researching Los Alamos librarian Charlotte Serber. It has been difficult. It is harder to see the readings with my 50-year-old eyes. The anxiety was beyond anything I had anticipated. In the beginning, I was so nervous I was throwing up during class, off cam. I only got better by continuing to show up to class. I can't say much for my attendance back in the early 1990s (it sucked), but since starting my three classes at UCNG this semester, my very first semester as a grad student, I have not missed a session. I went from straining to get enough word count for a 500-word essay in August to having to cut pages out of my last research paper to get it in under 2,000 words.

Aside from my nerves, I have so enjoyed the class, which has impacted me. I have enjoyed the course format - I liked the way each class went deep into one particular subject and many times with a library-embedded topic-specific guest speaker. My favorite class sessions were "ChatGPT and AI Literacy" and "Art Libraries." I learned so much about types of libraries that I didn't

know existed. For example, I had a concept of law libraries, art libraries, and archives, but medical, science, and corporate libraries were all entirely new for me.

The Guest Speakers really brought the subject matter to life. I was fascinated with hearing Jess Reece, Director of Life Science Intelligence at North Carolina Biotechnology Center discuss her work in a life science library. This was a completely new concept to me, just like watching Helen Leggeri, Integration Lead at Harley-Davidson Motor Company, a virtual-esque guest speaker, on video discussing her corporate library. A librarian at Harley Davidson was not something I ever considered but have found her so inspiring as I think about careers.

My ultimate goal for this MLIS degree remains the same as in August, but it's much more focused. Less fuzzy. Paths have appeared. I would still like to be doing digital archival work in a particular special library – specificity along the lines of the Walt Disney Archives I wrote about in our last assignment, Profile of a Special Library.