

657-01 The Special Library

Personal Statement

I'm Libby Lampert.



I live in Greenville, NC and am originally from Southern California. I was raised in the 1980's in the shadow of Disneyland and the Huntington Library. This is my first semester in the MLIS Program at UCNG. In 1996, I received my BA in English from Mills, a women's liberal arts college in Oakland, California. Silicon Valley in the mid 1990's had a dizzying effect on me, and I found myself learning HTML and building webpages, first for fun and then as a career.

In 1999, the start-up company I worked for was purchased by Microsoft and I relocated with them to Redmond, WA. My work evolved into a User Experience Design role for entertainment products. My favorite role was User

Experience Lead on the Xbox 360 team where I was able to influence design and lead a team of designers, engineers and artists. I was at Microsoft for 10 years doing everything from Accessibility and Usability Testing and Design to Collaborating on the Xbox 360 Style Guide. I developed a passion for Information Architecture, which led me back to Los Angeles to Disney where I worked as a Senior Information Architect for wearable technology and booking engines for the parks.

Joining Disney was an amazing experience. Attending “Disney University” is your first assignment. They train you and school you and discuss all the resources available to you. One of those being The Disney Archives - a very *special* special library exclusively for Disney employees. It contains everything Disney is curated by a Librarian with the most amazing job of all time and my actual first name. I fell in love with the Archives and hoped I could do projects that would require its usage.

I did not see any formal Information Architecture during my time at Microsoft. Bits and pieces, but nothing with any real process behind it. Disney was great because I was surrounded by a team of people who did nothing but architecture. Each one of them had a MLIS degree from UCLA. And Libby at the Library? She had one of those, too. That realization is what led me here.

I love what Public Libraries offer; they really are beacons. My true love is the Special Library. The small size, the intimacy, and the ability to go to the highest of intensities in immersive content experiences gets me. I am most drawn to a library like the Walt Disney Archives – old, multi-media and super creative. I would have to have a passion for the subject matter, of course. I don’t think this would be hard as I tend to go bananas over anything I like or connect with.

In 2013 it became clear to me that the best possible treatment for my chronic, long-term illness was only available at Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore. I quit working in 2012 and by February 2014 I was admitted to Hopkins where I stayed for about 6 weeks, followed by about 2.5 years of intensive outpatient treatment. It turned out to be the best decision I ever made, but my life got weird during those 3 years in Baltimore that followed. I had to sacrifice a lot to get the treatment I needed. For example, my Baltimore living situation did not include Wi-Fi, and I didn't have a driver's license. This was brand new to a girl who put in 10 years at Microsoft, usually with a new car parked in the garage.

I learned the bus routes to get around Baltimore, learning as many branches of Enoch Pratt Public Library as I could as each one was different than the one before in terms of specialty, vibe and transportation convenience. I learned that for things like how to get a copy of my birth certificate or how to get online to reach out to contacts or even work on my resume that the Librarians were amazing resources. So many things had changed in my time offline, and the Pratt Librarians were an absolute lifeline to me. After about 3 years I had 2 jobs – one as a Peer Support Specialist at a homeless shelter. I also worked at a free bookstore where I sorted, stamped, organized and shelved books. The more I did, the more I continued to improve – after a time, I was better enough to return to Los Angeles.

What I hope for myself while completing this MLIS program is a solid foundation in Library and Information Science – a formal education which, as a product of the doc com years spent rolling up our sleeves and jumping into the deep end – I have always lacked. My work has always lacked this, and I am so excited to be given the opportunity to have access this now. Once I've completed the program and have a MLIS degree, it is my goal is to obtain employment in a special digital library. I hope to feel empowered with both

my experiential and formal educations and passionate about the library's subject matter. And I hope this enthusiasm is infectious.

My applicable Outside skills and experiences include information architecture, user experience design, general computer knowledge (mac/pc).

My question for a working young professional would be: What is the one thing you learned at library school that prepared you most for your current job?