In Memoriam

NORAH ELSPETH JONES
November 4, 1921-March 10, 2010

Norah passed away peacefully in her sleep at her home on March 10, 2010 after a prolonged bout with pulmonary fibrosis. She was born in Toronto, Canada, to Oscar Corey Jones and Norah Fitzroy Cutler Jones. In 1934 her family moved to California and settled in Santa Monica. She received her BA from UCLA with a major in French and a minor in German in 1943 and was elected to membership in Phi Beta Kappa. In 1945 she received a MA in French from UCLA. In 1949 she received a library degree from UC Berkeley.

Her lengthy and successful career in the UCLA Library began in 1944 as a clerk. After becoming a library professional in 1949 she was appointed supervisor of the Reserve Book Room in the Powell Library, a position she held until 1958 when she was appointed College Librarian in charge of the newly created College Library. While in this position, she and Music Department Chair Walter Rubsam organized the Music in the Rotunda concert series. In 1966-1967 she took a leave of absence from the Library to become an Exchange Librarian at the Brotherton Library at the University of Leeds in England. In 1970 she was appointed Head of Technical Services in the University Research Library and held this position until her retirement in 1986. In 1975 she was President of the systemwide Librarians Association (LAUC) when that group received official University recognition. Russell Shank, former University Librarian, wrote that “her contributions to the University in general, and to the UCLA campus, have been extraordinary.”

In retirement Norah continued her close ties to UCLA, most notably with the UCLA Emeriti Association, where her achievements were no less extraordinary. She was seen as one of the mainstays of that organization until ill health prevented her continuing involvement as the Archivist and Chair of the Membership and Book Exchange Committees. At times she also served as co-editor of the Association’s Newsletter. She could always be counted on for the appropriate response to procedural questions. When Marian Broome, the founding director of the Emeriti/Retirees Relations Center retired at the end of December 1997, Norah served as Interim Director until Eddie Murphy, the current Director, arrived in May 1998. She again assumed the position of Interim Director from December 1999 until May 2000 when Eddie Murphy was recovering from an accident. For Norah’s invaluable service and the unstinting generosity of her time and energy to the Association she was named “Emerita of the Year” in 2003 and in May 2009 received the rarely awarded Association’s Lifetime Distinguished Service Award.

She became the first Archivist for the Council of University of California Emeriti Associations (CUCEA) in October 1995 and was in that position until 2009. From 2006 to 2008 she was also the Council’s Historian. On May 1, 2003 she was elected an Honorary Member. In
2004 she served as Chair of the CUCEA Bylaws Revision Committee which produced the current 2005 Bylaws.

After her retirement she also found time to be the Treasurer for Meals on Wheels of West Los Angeles as well as delivering meals, Treasurer of St. Margaret’s Guild of St. Alban’s Episcopal Church, and Secretary of the Board of Directors of her condominium association and keeper of their records and later Treasurer for that association. In 2003 she received a Rotary Club medal and plaque as Westside Volunteer of the Year and also was named a Paul Harris Fellow of the Rotary Club.

She created an endowment for the UCLA Library’s Department of Special Collections—the Norah E. Jones Fund for Fine Printing.

A memorial service was held for her on March 18th at St. Alban’s Episcopal Church, followed by a celebratory reception in the California Room of the UCLA Faculty Center.

Norah will be very much missed by her many longtime friends and colleagues.

She is survived by two nephews and three nieces and their children. A sixth niece died in an accident many years ago.

Ralph Johnson and Barbara Rapoport