

Thank you Sylvia and members of the Distinguished Service Award Committee for giving me the privilege of introducing Deborah Kempe as this year's honoree. I also want to thank my fellow hard working nominators: Sumitra Duncan, Frick Art Reference Library; Jon Evans, Museum of Fine Arts, Houston; Beverly Mitchell, Southern Methodist University; Christina Peter, Columbia University, and especially Linda Seckelson, also retired from The Metropolitan Museum of Art, who instigated this effort. It was a pleasure working with her again.

I need to apologize to the awards committee for giving them so much work in this difficult time. Our submission included letters of support from 50 people in eight countries including seven former ARLIS/NA presidents and six Distinguished Service Award recipients.

Colleagues attest to Debbie's accomplishments in art libraries throughout her distinguished career from its beginnings at Avery Library to her twenty-five years at the Frick Art Reference Library, where she was Chief of Collections Management & Access before retiring last May.

Debbie's support for furthering international relations, her dedicated service to our Society, and her talent as a visionary who can also plan, find funding for, and lead collaborative projects are themes that run throughout the letters of support. She accomplished all of this while managing a department that she reshaped from one using card catalogs to one that leads in the development and implementation of national and international standards.

Behind all these public accomplishments was a consistent and selfless effort to develop new professionals, both as a mentor as well as a manager. Many librarians ascribe their success to Debbie. She helped seasoned professionals as well as new interns and library school students. I wish I had time to read extensive excerpts from all of her supporters, but here are just four:

"Debbie was the kind of boss that you can only dream about."

“I am certain that, like me, numerous colleagues can attribute career success ... to her excellent example and natural inclination to be collaborative and a mentor to all of us.”

“Debbie has always been an advocate of pursuing a solid understanding of the ‘next big thing’ in ... technology and ... demonstrated [this] in her support of professional development with her staff”

“It is no exaggeration to say that I would never have been able to build a career as a librarian without Debbie’s example, encouragement and support - she was the best mentor anybody could ever dream of.”

What all of these letters make clear is that anyone would be grateful to call Debbie a colleague, a mentor, or a friend. It is my great pleasure to introduce Deborah Kempe.