



Merrill Wadsworth Smith passed away on April 4, 2006, at home in Sherborn, Massachusetts, after a long battle with ovarian cancer. Merrill was president of ARLIS/NA in 1991, serving on the ARLIS/NA Executive Board from 1990-1992. She contributed greatly to the financial stability of the Society through her work as chair and member of both the Development and Finance committees. She was a champion mentor and friend to many librarians, especially at the start of their careers.

Merrill studied art history and zoology at Rutgers University, earning her A.B. in 1963. She attended the Institute of Fine Arts' architectural history program in New York City while working part-time at Skidmore Owings and Merrill (SOM). Merrill then earned her Masters of Library Science in 1966 at the University of Denver. As a young librarian she worked in technical processing in the library at Urbana College, a small liberal arts college in Ohio, was the periodicals librarian at the Frick Fine Arts Library in Pittsburgh, and the art and architecture librarian at the University of Colorado (1973-75). Merrill and her husband Allen spent the following four or five years living in a village in Wales where she excelled at weaving. Upon their return to the U.S. Merrill became the visual collections librarian at Rotch Library, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, working in that position for ten years (1978-1988).

As visual collections librarian, Merrill directed the videodisc project for the Aga Khan Project for Islamic Architecture at Harvard and MIT, working closely with the MIT Media Lab from 1983-85. Her work with visual materials inspired many other image projects including the Aviator laser disc at Columbia and the development of SPIRO, the first networked image database.

From 1988 to 2006 Merrill was the associate librarian at the Rotch Library of Architecture and Planning at MIT. One of Rotch's seven librarians, Merrill was collections manager for architecture, art, planning, and urban design, and had many diverse management responsibilities, including hiring, training, and supervising the visual collections librarian.

Merrill's love of travel led her to often attend the International Federation of Library Associations conferences with her ARLIS colleagues, including the infamous year in Moscow during the dissolution and break-up of the Soviet Union in 1991. Merrill reported being behind barricades with Peter Bennett and other fellow ARLISians. In addition to travel, she loved downhill skiing, sailing, and gardening.

Those who were fortunate to know Merrill will miss her Yankee charm, her commitment to ARLIS/NA, her love of fine food and wine, her gentle, self-effacing nature, her quick mind, and her stalwart courage.

Contributions in her memory may be made to the Dana Farber Cancer Institute and/or to ARLIS/NA at the addresses below:

Dana Farber Cancer Institute
10 Brookline Place West

6th Floor
Brookline, MA 02445

Please include a note: "This gift is in honor of Merrill Wadsworth Smith, and is earmarked for ovarian cancer research".

ARLIS/NA
329 March Road, suite 232
Box 11
Kanata, Ontario K2K 2E1
Canada

Please specify: Society, Patron, President or Founders Circle and make your donation "in honor of Merrill Wadsworth Smith".