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Memorial: Margaret Althea Goldblatt (1948-2000)

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Memorial: Margaret Althea Goldblatt (1948–2000)

¶1 Margaret Goldblatt, who died on June 15, 2000, in Cape Town, South Africa, after a year-long battle with cancer, was a rare combination of librarian and entrepreneur. She had both a sense of humor and a sense of professionalism that endeared her to those who knew her. Many of her colleagues knew her only through telephone and e-mail communications, for she worked the last several years from the office of Ward and Associates, located in the home she shared with her husband Peter Ward and her two children, Clea Goldblatt, age 21, and Zachary Ward, age 11.

¶2 Margaret was born in Cape Town on June 21, 1948, to John and Althea Howes. As a child, she moved around southern Africa wherever her father's work took the family. She attended elementary school in Hararre and high school in Johannesburg. The family eventually settled in Cape Town where she attended the University of Capetown, majoring in geography. She married Peter Goldblatt and subsequently immigrated to St. Louis in the early 1970s. While living in St. Louis, Margaret obtained a master's degree in library science from the University of Illinois and worked at the law library at Washington University. Following a divorce, Margaret moved to Ann Arbor, Michigan, where, beginning in the mid-1980s, she worked with her husband Peter Ward in a computer services and publishing business, which included a great deal of work with large and small law libraries of all types.

¶3 Ward and Associates produced recent acquisitions lists and, by retaining the records and developing software, was able to make many uses of its "bibliographic utility." Most of its products were later taken over by commercial publishers. Margaret's knowledge of cataloging, MARC formats, the company's software, and the operating procedures of RLIN, OCLC, and other third parties was unique. I know mine was not the only library that improved its service and collection development techniques by using Margaret's talents, although the results are impossible to disentangle from those of her husband. For example, Margaret helped to produce lists, by topic, of titles held by three or more peer libraries but not by Michigan. She also helped libraries with automation projects such as authority control. Throughout any project, her wit and dry, sometimes even cutting, sense of humor helped when all else failed.

¶4 Margaret made the transition from a regular member of AALL to that of a vendor, and for the last several years she did not attend our annual meetings. But she was, right to the end of her life, a powerful influence on the application of technology to library work in all types of libraries. It is typical of Margaret's strong sense of privacy that many were unaware of her illness until it ended her life. It is typical of Margaret's energy that she earned a second master's degree

even as she did the work with Peter and enjoyed her family. In the last few years, she used her master's in education, earned at the University of Michigan, to work with the Coalition of Essential Schools, an educational reform movement, to which she was devoted.

¶¹⁵ It is hard to lose her as a friend and colleague, and it is hard not to have what she would have contributed had she lived longer.—*Margaret A. Leary*¹

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