After 26 years of exemplary leadership at the Colorado School of Mines, Library Director extraordinaire Joni Lerud-Heck announced her retirement from the Arthur Lakes Library beginning on June 1, 2016. During her tenure as the Library Director, Joni successfully captained the Library ship through the challenging waves of technological advances, Internet access, longer hours and increasing enrollment. Her years of dedicated service to the Mines faculty, staff, students, alumni and community will be acutely missed.

Joni’s passion for libraries and the geosciences is reflected in her academic and professional career. After completing a Bachelor’s and Master’s degree in Geology from the University of North Dakota, she earned a Master’s degree in Librarianship at the University of Denver in 1979. After working in private industry, she became director of libraries at Montana College of Mineral Science and Technology, then director of the Arthur Lakes Library in 1989.

There were 25 staff members and 1 computer when Joni arrived at the Library in 1989 but through the decades, Joni has guided over 150 people through changing responsibilities. The Library now has computer labs and online access to over 240,000 e-journals and e-books from the Library’s website in 2016. In addition to her Director responsibilities, Joni also taught undergraduate and graduate level courses at Mines, including EPICS, CSM 101 and GE 608, History of Geologic Concepts.

One of the Library Director’s responsibilities is to seek support for the Library from the University and community to expand its resources and research capability. Joni’s devotion to this task has been richly rewarded throughout the years and several research centers were established during her tenure as Library Director, including The Russell L. & Lyn Wood Mining History Archive, The Information Center for Ropeway Studies and The Tell Ertl Oil Shale Repository.

Joni’s contributions to Mines, librarianship and the geology field includes publishing 34 professional papers and serving in leadership positions in 13 professional societies including the American Library Association, The Alliance (formerly Colorado Association of Research Libraries), Geology Society of America, American Geological Institute, Geoscience Information Society.
How has a North Dakota upbringing influenced or enhanced your career path?

Growing up in rural North Dakota shaped my work ethic, how to think critically, and the values of education. The long North Dakota winters made it easy to read a lot of books. I worked in my high school library and did some special projects in the Geology Library at the University of North Dakota (UND) with aerial photos and maps. The eventual path I would take started to form.

Please describe your education, including the challenges facing women geology majors in the 70’s.

I found a brochure on geology at the School Counselor’s office and was intrigued. The State Geologist and Chair of the Geology Department at UND told me he knew I would make an excellent geologist and recommended a degree called Bachelor of Science in Geology. This degree was essentially equivalent to the Mines curriculum. By junior year, I was usually the only woman in my geology and engineering classes and received lots of good-natured teasing by the men. “You are only looking to marry a geologist” was said just after I had received the highest grade on a geology test.

What has changed most from your appointment as Director of the Library to the present?

Technology is the paradigm shift that occurred during my career. When I walked in the door in 1989, we had one computer and now communication is much more instantaneous. The Library must be good friends with the IT folks as they are providing the way for how we do business. Libraries now must be more responsive to their constituent community. In the past, the community adhered to the rules of the Library. Now the community strongly influences whatever rules are necessary for sharing this resource of materials and space. I like the new way much more.

Please share your experiences and favorite moments with Mines students as an instructor.

Every time I teach, I think I learn more than the students. I have taught EPICS courses, CSM 101 and GEOL 608, “History of Geologic Concepts”. What I enjoyed most about EPICS was seeing the students “own” the information they had collected and argued about and turn into young professionals, confident of their abilities and their findings. My favorite memories of CSM 101 involved students who had shared some of their life challenges with me; the loss of a grandmother who had been so important in one young woman’s life, a Native American student not only trying to assimilate in a primarily white society but also exploring what is means to be gay, and a young man dealing with the real manifestations of depression. I hope I was some help to them as I admired their courage to meet each new day and rise above the challenges. In GEOL 608, I had to work hard to stay ahead of such fine minds.

Share some of your most favorite moments and experiences at Arthur Lakes Library.

Most surprising memory: Standing in the Archive with Bob Sorgenfrei and Michael Kohl, coauthor of “Discovering Dinosaurs in the Old West: the Field Journals of Arthur Lakes” and in walks a very distinguished looking gentleman who says, “Hello, I am Arthur Lakes’ grandson.” We immediately took him to lunch and let him tell stories. I’m glad I didn’t believe it when people said, “Mines students don’t do recreational reading. They don’t have time”. Our little rental collection of recent fiction and non-fiction remains one of our best circulating collections. We gave the CASA tutoring program a hole-in-the-wall place to begin their efforts and it just took off. It is so pleasant to walk into the Conger Reference Room and see the brightly colored chairs filled with students for tutoring.

What accomplishments are you most proud of at Arthur Lakes Library?

I am very proud that we have been able to attract and retain an excellent faculty and paraprofessional staff that work together as a team and have the right qualifications, talents, and abilities for this particular University. We take this effort very seriously and have been quite successful at attracting some of the best. I am also very proud that Russell and Lyn Wood endowed the Mining History Archive during my tenure. This archive became internationally known very quickly and the history of the Colorado School of Mines is part of that Archive. I treasure my friendship with the Wood family. The Information Center for Ropeway Studies was also established during my time as well. It used to be one of three such information centers in the world – it is now one of two and the only one that is publically available. It also has two significant endowments to assure its presence into the future.

For the extended version of this interview, please go to: http://library.mines.edu/UserFiles/File/library/PDF/Inside/JLH-interview.pdf
Farewell to Heather Whitehead

The Library’s favorite Canadian, Heather Whitehead, E-Resources and Acquisitions Librarian, announced her retirement effective April 30, 2016 after 15 years of exemplary service. During her career as a Reference, E-Resources and Acquisitions Librarian, Heather has greatly facilitated the research process for the Mines campus from answering user requests at the Help Desk, reviewing and tracking complicated e-resource licensing agreements, building the collection and chairing the Annual Book Sale. Heather’s thoroughness and efficiency combined with a sharp sense of humor will be sorely missed by the faculty, staff, students and community users of the Library.

Growing up in New Brunswick, Canada near the Bay of Fundy, Heather developed a lifelong fascination with salt water beaches, rocks and tides. She received her Bachelor of Science in Geology degree from the University of Alberta in Edmonton. Due to the oil bust of the 1980s, Heather changed direction and completed a Masters of Library and Information Science from the University of Western Ontario in London. Heather remembers, “Back in the pre-Internet days, I was working as a freelance editor for scientific publications and spent a lot of time in libraries checking citations. I discovered the Bib and Index of Geology (now GeoRef online) and was fascinated by the way data was organized and standardized. That led me to library school.”

Heather’s first library position was at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in Troy NY as a Science Reference Librarian. When a Reference Librarian position opened at Mines in 2001, Heather’s love of geology, librarianship and the West made a perfect fit. In 2008, she transferred to the E-Resources and Acquisitions Librarian position. There, Heather accomplished her crowning achievement; managing the conversion of almost all the print journals and databases to electronic format and stretching budget to accommodate the new electronic model.

Heather will expand upon her love of the Great Outdoors in her new home in Arizona. She is looking forward to exploring the desert environment filled with hummingbirds and surrounded by stars while facing the challenges of snakes and scorpions. Heather will also return often to another deep love, Yellowstone in winter.

Celebrating Joni Lerud-Heck

and Mining History Association. In 2003, she received the Peter Schmidt award in recognition and appreciation of cultural heritage collection in mining, metallurgy, and geosciences libraries. In 2007, Joni was awarded the Arthur Gray Leonard Medal by the University of North Dakota Geology and Geological Engineering Department recognizing outstanding achievement in research in the geosciences.

At Mines, Joni was awarded the 2011 Faculty and Staff Philanthropy Award bestowed on faculty or staff members who demonstrate outstanding volunteer and philanthropic commitment to the Colorado School of Mines and its mission. Per the selection committee, “Joni and her husband, Tom Heck support a variety of different initiatives on campus, but much of their focus is on helping to sustain the resources provided to Arthur Lakes Library while modernizing the space and building a 21st century library for today’s Mines student.” In addition, Joni and Tom have supported faculty chairs, scholarships and fellowships for students as well as the Library’s special collections.

From a pioneering female geology student in North Dakota to Library Director at the Arthur Lakes Library, Joni has not only witnessed but undergone the many changes and challenges that face Mines faculty and students today. As Lisa Dunn, Head of Reference notes, “Joni Lerud-Heck saw the department through its transformation from a traditional library of print collections and quiet student study to a dynamic technology-based library with strong digital and print resources, modern services, and spaces configured for a range of student needs”. Joni’s admirable example of engaged leadership, philanthropic giving and devotion to research and information preservation reinforce a lasting legacy for the Library to build upon in the 21st century.
Make an Impact!

Contributions to Arthur Lakes Library make us a world-class source for information in the study of engineering and applied science related to the earth, energy and the environment. Thank you for making this possible!

Giving to the Arthur Lakes Library has never been easier! Enclosed in this issue is a pre-addressed donor envelope with instructions and donor form included.

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