

OUR MEMORIES...

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Many years ago, my Mom and Mr. Hubbard were both diagnosed with melanoma and undergoing treatment at the same time. Every time Mr. Hubbard saw me, he would inquire about my Mom's health and ask how she was doing. He continued to do this, even years after she completed treatment and was in remission. His genuine concern meant a lot to me.

— Kim Stevens | Senior Catalog Librarian

Mr. Hubbard was a gentleman and family man. I met him for the first time nearly 14 years ago. He was a no-nonsense man. He was direct and honest, a great example of a leader and librarian. I discovered my husband and I were expecting our second child weeks before I started my new position at JSU. I was extremely nervous to tell my new boss, Mr. Hubbard, that I would have to start maternity leave within 4 months after I began my new job. My voice was shaking as I informed him I was pregnant and hoped my position was secure. Not only did he tell me my position was secure, he hugged and congratulated me on our new family addition. He also informed me that because I was new, I did not have any sick leave stored up to use to get paid during my leave. So, he emailed my colleagues and asked if anyone wanted to donate time to my maternity leave so I would be able to be on leave for 6 to 8 weeks after having the baby. Not only did my colleagues donate some of their leave to me, they gave more time than I needed. What a blessing! Mr. Hubbard was always concerned about my continual professional development as well as my family. He is truly missed.

— Charlcie Pettway Vann | Psychology & General Reference Librarian

When I was an undergraduate student worker at JSU, I would regularly see Mr. Hubbard walking the floors. Although I was just a student worker, he knew my name and knew that I was involved in the music department. He was a music connoisseur, and he always asked about the productions in which I was involved. He never missed an opera in which I performed and was extremely supportive. When I saw him years later as a newly-hired librarian at JSU, he was very glad to see me, but I also had to reassure him that I continued to sing and enjoy music. He saw the people around him as much more than employees. He sincerely cared about the interests and well-being of those working at the Library, regardless of title.

— Kim Westbrook | Business & Social Sciences Librarian

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The

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Remembering William Hubbard

by John-Bauer Graham, Dean of Library Services



William J. Hubbard

This spring, the University lost William J. Hubbard, professor emeritus and former University Librarian, a position he held until his retirement in 2008. Mr. Hubbard hailed from Detroit, graduating from Dartmouth College and receiving his Master of Library Science from SUNY-Geneseo. Before his arrival at JSU, Mr. Hubbard worked in libraries at SUNY-Fredonia, Virginia Tech, and the State Library of Virginia. He was hired as JSU's University Librarian in 1988, and his service to the profession of librarianship in Alabama and beyond was extensive. Mr. Hubbard held leadership roles in the Alabama Library Association, the Network of Alabama Academic Libraries, and the Library Services and Technology Act Advisory Council. He was co-editor of the *Alabama Librarian*, an Alabama Library Association scholarly publication. Mr. Hubbard's tenure at JSU was notable for a number of accomplishments.

He took the monumental step of automating the Library, moving operations to its first integrated library system, and then, in 1999, transitioning to the web-based system the Library currently uses. He oversaw numerous upgrades to that system since

the first migration, and he also played an integral role in moving the entire University forward with its first content management system. Mr. Hubbard received the Eminent Librarian Award in 2005 for his "exceptional and enduring contribution towards the development of library services in Alabama."

But those of us who worked with him every day know that there was so much more to Mr. Hubbard than just a laundry list of accomplishments.

When I first began working for the Library, over twenty years ago, I didn't have much interaction with Mr. Hubbard. I met him while interviewing for the position of second shift Circulation Assistant. Working nights and weekends, I would come on as he was leaving the building. He was a man of schedules

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and routine; leaving promptly at 4:30, he would say his good evenings and drop off one of the millions of books he was always reading to be checked back in. Working the second shift can be somewhat isolating. You have an opportunity to get to know the librarians who rotate their nights and weekends, but you seldom interact with the twenty other staff — and if you were lucky and stayed out of trouble, never Library administrators. After a year on night shift, I moved to day shift in the Technical Services Department as Serials/Acquisitions Assistant. This position allowed me to get to know Mr. Hubbard — not because I got into trouble — but because I had one of the most important jobs in the Library: making photocopies of the *New York Times* and other crossword puzzles that Mr. Hubbard would regularly come by to retrieve.

I was working nights and weekends on my Master of Library and Information Studies, and Mr. Hubbard took a great interest in that. He was always encouraging staff members to better themselves and further their education. Observing him interact with the acquisitions faculty and staff allowed me to quietly take in those things they don't teach you in library school. It also allowed me to see another side of the man who went to work every day with a tie and a briefcase. In that briefcase he had a sense of humor, a love of sports, and a true passion for librarianship. I learned that he loved the Simpsons, the Kingston Trio, and college football. I know the term means different things to different people, but in my eyes he was the quintessential Renaissance man. I admired his intellect, his passion for life and interests outside of the Library, but just as important to a budding librarian, his true commitment and devotion to our mission as our University's Library.

After completing my library degree, I was fortunate enough to be hired for a faculty position as an instruction librarian. I was now Mr. Hubbard's colleague, but he remained my mentor. I observed more of his management philosophy and style, and as I moved into different positions in the Library, Mr. Hubbard was both gracious and willing to

reveal the inner workings of higher education administration to me. A good mentor leads by example, but he also sometimes takes your hand and drags you to where you need to be and what you need to know. When I became a Library department head, Mr. Hubbard drug me to committee meetings, made me a lead in a University-wide project, and continued to nurture and tend to my career. I am forever indebted for the time and attention he spent on me. He shaped me into the academic leader I hope and strive to be.

He and I started weekly racquetball games, and I learned that he also carried in that briefcase an extremely competitive spirit. As a former athlete, he didn't think much of my prowess (those that know me know that I look less than athletic), but I'll never forget two of those racquetball matches. The first one we ever played, I beat him badly. Knowing his legendary temper and competitiveness, I feared he would be upset with me and thought: what have I done? But Mr. Hubbard looked at me, grinned, and said, “You're deceptively athletic.” I took it as a compliment. Later, I was having a bad game and he pulled ahead of me on points. Perhaps thinking that I was throwing the game, he stopped in the middle of a point and angrily said, “Don't ever *let* me win!” His comment “inspired” me, and when I proceeded to beat him, he seemed proud of my response to his “challenge.”

We all owe a debt of gratitude to those who gave us a chance and those who have challenged us to succeed. Mr. Hubbard did both for me, and for that I am forever grateful. Every time I hear or read the quote below, I can't help but think of him. I know he would approve and smile. He “embiggened” me, and I try to keep my spirit noble.

“A noble spirit embiggens the smallest man.”

— *Jebediah Springfield*



Mr. Hubbard is awarded Professor Emeritus by JSU's 11th President, Dr. William A. Meehan, at the Fall Commencement, December 19, 2008.

OUR MEMORIES...

Soon after I started working at the Library in 2000, I rode to a meeting in Montgomery with Mr. Hubbard. For some reason, we were the only ones to go. On the way, he took me to see the Talladega racetrack, which I had never seen. Someone asked me later if we were able to make small talk during the drive. Oh, I said, we discussed Honda's VTEC 4-cylinder engines, like the one in my Accord. We had another discussion after I got a V-6 Honda Accord a few years later.

When I look in my desk drawer for a pen, I see the fancy pen set Mr. Hubbard gave me when I got tenure and was promoted to Associate Professor. Every time I see that pen, I think of him.

— *Paula Barnett-Ellis | Health/Sciences Librarian*

I came to work at the Library in October, and in December of that year, I attended my first Library Christmas Party! My husband and both my sons, who were young at the time, attended with me. During the night's festivities, Mr. Hubbard sat in front of a beautiful fireplace in a high-back chair and read *The Night Before Christmas* to all the kids who were there that night. His booming, deep voice was perfect for reading to them! Each child sat at his feet very quietly listening to every word! It was then that I *knew* I had found my home here with everyone. His face was animated as he would look down at each child, and they hung on every word. At the end of the story, he let out a joyous, “Happy Christmas to all and to all a good night!” which led to laughter and applause! This story sticks with me every year as we gather for Christmas, and my sons still remember it to this day. He truly was a good man and a great librarian!

— *Debrah Fragoso | Acquisitions Assistant*

Mr. Hubbard was such a wonderful man! I have very fond memories of working for him. Every Friday morning, he would walk the floors of the Library to stop by and chat with the librarians to see how they were doing and ask if they needed anything. He was very dedicated to his staff and faculty, and I will always remember him fondly for that. Another funny memory I have of Mr. Hubbard was his car. He used to drive a Pontiac Fiero. I want to say that the color was gold. It was such a sporty and unique car, just like the man himself. He is certainly missed.

— *Carley Knight | Fine Arts, Communication, Language Librarian*

I am one of only three people still at the Library who was here before William Hubbard became University Librarian in 1988. His coming meant a new chapter in the Library's life, one marked with vision, purpose, a sense of direction. Fair but firm in his dealings with faculty and staff, he had high standards for both the Library and those who worked there, and led with discipline. He spent many hours with University administration on behalf of the Library and its people, bettering our lot considerably. Yet Bill, as he preferred to be called, always had time for us.

At least once a week, and sometimes more, he would visit each floor of the Library to chat with that floor's librarian, partly just to keep connected but also to see how we were doing and to find out if there was anything we needed to improve our floors or the services we provided to the University community. He cared.

Outside the Library, Bill was the same stand-up guy he was in the Library; he did not have a work persona and an off-duty persona. What you saw was what you got. Always. Once he learned an employee had a particular hobby or interest, he made sure to include that in his floor chats. A two-sport athlete in college, Bill kept his competitive instincts honed with the Library's intramural volleyball team, the Temple of Doom, which he formed. Yet as competitive as he could be on the volleyball court, Bill also would invite colleagues to his house to have a poolside chat while drinking a beer, which Bill himself had brewed. He was that kind of guy.

I remember Bill Hubbard as a mentor, a role model, and a friend. He honored me by choosing the Library's seventh floor to have one of his “official” portraits hung; Bill loved reading, especially fiction.

As he neared retirement, former Jacksonville State University president Harold McGee said that William Hubbard was the best hire he made while at JSU. Dr. McGee nailed it.

— *Harry Nuttall | Literature Librarian*

My memories of Mr. Hubbard go back to when I started at the Library as a student assistant. He approved my hiring at that level, then as the Acquisitions Assistant, and then as the Distance Education/Electronic Resources Manager. He was a wonderful ambassador for the Library. From the beginning of my time at the Library, Mr. Hubbard was always there.

A few of my strongest memories of Mr. Hubbard occurred when the Office of Graduate Studies was housed on the 8th Floor. Dr. William Carr was the Dean at the time, and my mother, Carol Welch, was his secretary. Dr. Carr and Mr. Hubbard got along great! That was clear when Mr. Hubbard chose not to run my mother out of the building and permanently ban her from reentry on two occasions. First, when she cooked some turnip greens in the kitchenette on the 8th Floor and the smell was transmitted to the entire building through the service elevator and, second, when she burned a piece of bread and set off the smoke detector. Thinking of those two events makes me smile!!!

Even after he retired, Mr. Hubbard was a part of the Library. I know that retirement suited him, because he always had a smile on his face when he was in the building. I will remember Mr. Hubbard most from those smiles and his hearty laugh. I will miss seeing him and Mrs. Barbara walking around town, at JSU football games, and, most importantly, I will miss seeing them at our annual Christmas party. It just will not be the same.

— *Jodi Poe | Head of Technical Services*