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### A Library Life: Christina W. McCawley

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# A Library Life: Christina W. McCawley



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**By Neal B. Kenney**

## **Early Life**

Christina "Chris" McCawley, daughter of the late Duncan and Winifred Wolcott, was born in Akron, Ohio. She was brought up in Silver Lake, a suburb of Akron, along with her sister, Marilyn, now deceased. Her father was a Vice President of Sales for Borden's Ice Cream in Northeast Ohio. Her mother was a homemaker.

Chris graduated from Cuyahoga Falls High School, and earned her Bachelor's Degrees in French and English at Ohio Wesleyan University. While studying at Ohio Wesleyan, she encountered John Reed, a reference librarian, whose enthusiasm for his profession impressed her and encouraged her to pursue graduate study in Library Science. She received her M.S.L.S. degree from Catholic University of America. Shortly after graduating from CUA, she worked at the Library of Congress for six months.



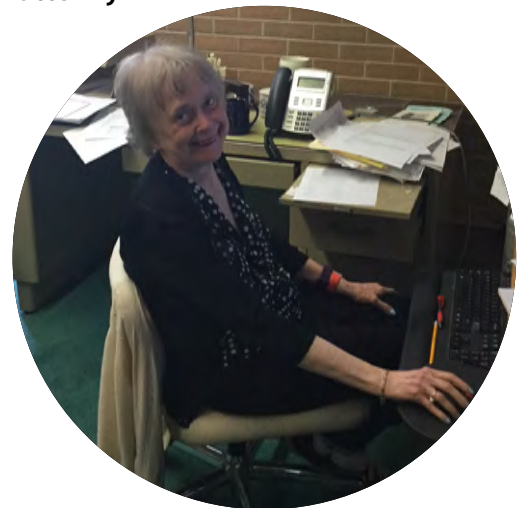
**Former music technician Jeff Spicer and his wife (left), with Chris (center), and former Library Director Dick Swain (right) at a library celebration in 2004.**

## **Arriving At West Chester**

In 1971, her husband, Dwight McCawley, accepted a position as a faculty member in the English Department at West Chester State College. Later that same year, Chris was hired as a Cataloging and Reference Librarian at the Francis Harvey Green Library at West Chester State College. Her subsequent positions at the Library and College included:

Cataloging / Reference Librarian; Special Materials Cataloger ; Music Cataloging; Chair, Tepsel (now Tep) Committee; Chair, University Library Budget Committee (2012-2014); and Serials Librarian / Acquisitions Librarian.

Chris received her Ph.D. in Information Science and Library Management from Drexel University in 1984. She remains close to her advisor and mentor at Drexel, Tom Childers. Like Chris, Tom is a devoted opera buff. They stay in touch, and often see one another when attending operas at The Met. Chris' three favorite operas are The Marriage of Figaro, Don Giovanni, and Madam Butterfly.



**Chris in her office during her last week of work at University Libraries.**



# A Library Life: Christina W. McCawley

## Career At University Libraries

In 1984, Chris became Serials Librarian. In 1987, she assumed additional duties as Acquisitions Librarian. Chris eagerly embraced the challenge of evolving technologies in the field of Library Science and patiently taught the new computer systems to fellow Library employees.

As library technologies evolved, Chris began overseeing the dismantling of the Serials Department because, according to Chris, "Everything is on-line now." Before her retirement in May, 2019, she reported that "We are withdrawing so print current print subscriptions, from 2,000 titles down to 400 titles."

Chris noted that interaction with faculty members has changed now, from one-on-one contact to mostly e-mail encounters. Student contact with the Reference Desk Librarian on-duty traditionally consisted of one-on-one at the Reference Desk. Now, e-mail contact has become quite popular as well.



*In 1995, Chris participated in a library exchange program with Dave Parks, a Librarian from Saffordshire University in England. Here they are in August 1995.*

She remains active in the field of library science. Chris is a member of the International Committee called Serials and Other Continuing Resources Committee, SOCR Committee of IFLA (International Federation of Library Associations.) It met in Athens, Greece this summer.

Chris was a witness to many major events/firsts at West Chester University, including the demolition of Old Main Hall in 1971, the opening of the six-floor addition to the Francis Harvey Green Library in 1976, the transition of West Chester State College to West Chester University in 1983, and the naming of Madeleine Wing Adler as the first female president of West Chester University in 1992.



*Chris and her husband Dwight pose for a picture before her retirement party in Room 613 in FHG Library.*

## Retirement

Chris enjoyed 48 fulfilling years at West Chester. When asked for her advice to someone who is now considering a career in Library Science, she responded, "Great job! Go ahead and do it."

# A Library Life: Christina W. McCawley

## Retirement

The McCawleys are avid travelers. Just since May, 2019, they have taken an African Safari; enjoyed a Viking River Cruise ("Budapest to Bucharest"); visited the majestic Canadian Rockies; and made a stop to tour the beautiful new public library in Calgary, Alberta, Canada.



***Chris poses with West Chester University President Chris Fiorentino at her retirement party.***

She said one of the most important things she learned from traveling was to be more open with and more tolerant of people from different backgrounds and cultures.

We asked Chris what some of the highlights of her career at the Library were. She responded enthusiastically, "I loved my job. I loved coming to work in the morning. It's been a lot of fun."



***Chris poses with Assessment & Reference Librarian Clayton Garthwait at her retirement party.***



***Chris speaking with Michael Peich, Emeritus Professor of English at her retirement party.***



***Chris poses with former librarian Dianna Thomas at the 2003 Library Holiday Luncheon.***

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