

# Information Link

A Community Newsletter of the Graduate School of Library and Information Science

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## Up Front **DeEtta Jones** **Moving from Margin to Center**

**D**eEtta Jones is the keynote speaker at the upcoming 3<sup>rd</sup> annual GSLIS Diversity Summit on June 10. As the director of organizational learning services at the Association of Research Libraries in Washington, D.C., she designed and launched the Association's national leadership and career development program to prepare minority professionals for leadership roles in research libraries. Her most recent article, "Evolving Issues: Race, Affirmative Action and Diversity," appeared this spring in *Unfinished Business: Race Equity, and Diversity in Library and Information Science* (Scarecrow Press).

**Talking earlier, you said that diversity was a hot topic for universities in the 1990s. What did you mean?**

Diversity in higher education has always been an issue, whether or not it was stated as such. But in the 1990s, a movement sort of started around sensitivity training. The approach to "sensitivity training" often focused on group affiliation and understanding the types of oppression different groups have endured in this country. There were a few diversity trainers who focused on blaming rather than ally-building, and their work went a long way to ostracize a lot of people—particularly white men.

Now, the majority of diversity work is much less marginalizing and more about understanding what each one of us brings to the table. Now, the conversation is broader than race or gender, and it's not just about differences but about finding common ground.

Something else that's changed is the way we see ourselves in relation to group identity. For example, how does one describe "Hispanic"? It's not really a matter of race. Hispanic people are from a variety of countries, cultures, socio-economic backgrounds. Moreover, many that are described as Hispanic according to U.S. government classification don't choose to identify themselves with that label.

What I'm saying is that it's difficult now to lump people according to groups because the groups have changed so much. Or rather the way we think about groups has changed. For example, I'm a member of a bunch of different subcategories. I'm multi-racial, I'm a woman, I'm 33 years old, I come from a lower socio-economic background. These categories are important aspects of me and they all have to do with group identification.

*"I got into this work for all the most selfish reasons—to understand who I am, to feed my own soul, to help me sleep at night."*

**You got involved in diversity issues at Colorado State University, is that right?**

Yes, I managed the Multicultural Training and Leadership Development Program while I was in graduate school. I prepared students to become diversity trainers and group facilitators. After finishing my degree, I worked for the City of Fort Collins in Colorado as the interim director of the Human Rights Advocacy and Education Office. In that position I did a lot of advocacy work.

**How would you describe the connection between who you are as a person and the work you've chosen to do?**

It's so strange for me, even years into it, to think about social justice as my "work." I got into this work for all the most selfish reasons—to understand who I am, to feed my own soul, to help me sleep at night. My intention was to just work on

myself. I never imagined a career growing out of it.

I'm a multi-racial woman who comes from a very poor background and grew up practicing an-out-of-the-mainstream religion in a city that was at one point known for its racial segregation. I was a first generation college student; so moving onto a college campus was a transition from a nearly all black environment to a nearly all white environment. By the time I got to college, I was desperate to make sense of my place in the world.

So my initial work was actually just about me finding language for all the categories of issues that existed around me. Over time, the issues and my relation to them started to make sense, and I started to focus on issues other than solely those that I identify with—I became a social justice advocate for others.

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## Folks on the Move

GSLIS students **Jacqueline Ball**, **Kristin Fowler**, and **Anna Popp** are among the winners of the Kay Bader Memorial Scholarship offered by the Massachusetts Library Association. Recipients of the award are invited to attend the MLA Annual Conference free of charge.

**Professor Ching-chih Chen** was an invited speaker at The 3rd China-US Library Conference, March 22–25 in Shanghai, China, organized by the National Library of China and Shanghai Library. Her talk, “Digital Libraries and Potential for US-China Collaboration,” appears in the *Proceedings of the Conference*, pp. 138–156.

GSLIS student **Vernica Downey**, after attending an introductory course at the Rare Book School at the University of Virginia, was awarded a scholarship covering tuition for the advanced bibliography course this March. The Rare Book School is a non-profit educational institute supporting the study of the history of books and printing and related subjects. For more information on the school visit <http://virginia.edu/oldbooks/>.

### Professor Terry Plum and Bonnie

**Isman** were both cited in the article “Massachusetts to Kyrgyzstan: The Library Connection,” which was published in the March/April 2005 issue of *MBLC Notes*, a publication of the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners. To read the article online, go to: [http://mbcl.state.ma.us/mbcl/publications/newsletter/2005/24\\_2/v24n2.pdf](http://mbcl.state.ma.us/mbcl/publications/newsletter/2005/24_2/v24n2.pdf).

The Simmons College website (the undergraduate and graduate school websites) has been awarded a silver medal from the national Council for Advancement and Support of Education (CASE). CASE awards honor outstanding achievement in higher education, independent school, and non-profit organization communications. Special congratulations to **Brian Talbot**, a current GSLIS student, who was a member of the web team integral to developing the websites.

Under the sponsorship of United Board of Christian Higher Education of Asia, GSLIS is pleased to welcome **Sheng Qiang Zhang**, head of the automation department of the Sichuan University Libraries in Chengdu, Sichuan, China. Zhang will be with us for five months as a visiting researcher, working with Professor Ching-chih Chen to explore possible collaborations between Chen's Global Memory Net and Sichuan resources.

### Correction

The cover story of the February issue of the newsletter (“Simmons and UMass-Boston Get High School Students Interested in Libraries” Vol. 9, Issue 2) incorrectly reported that the Diversity Internship in Libraries program was a direct result of the 2003 GSLIS Diversity Summit. In fact, planning and initial funding for this program had begun much earlier through discussions initiated by Daniel Ortiz, '94DA, Director of the Healey Library at UMass Boston and Daphne Harrington, Director of the Simmons College Libraries, as part of their participation in the Fenway Library Consortium. Attendees at the Summit provided enthusiastic support and contributed additional ideas for how the Simmons Libraries and UMass Boston could partner and begin implementing the project.

## May Events

Thursday, May 12–Friday, May 13, New Hampshire Library Association Annual Conference. The Radisson Center of New Hampshire, Manchester, NH. For more information, see <http://www.nhlibconf.org/>.

Saturday, May 14, Simmons 100th Commencement, Bayside Expo Center. This year's commencement features alumna and internationally respected public radio host Lisa Mullins as speaker. For more information visit [www.simmons.edu/commencement/info/2005/03/about\\_commencem.shtml](http://www.simmons.edu/commencement/info/2005/03/about_commencem.shtml)

## Diversity Summit at GSLIS

Friday, June 10, Simmons GSLIS Diversity Summit. Main College Building, C101. 1:00–4:00 p.m.

All GSLIS students, faculty, staff, alumni and area library professionals are invited to discuss diversity issues in the library science profession.

Keynote speaker: DeEtta Jones, ARL/OLMS Director of Organizational Learning Services at the Association of Research Libraries in Washington, D.C.

R.s.v.p to [gsasst@simmons.edu](mailto:gsasst@simmons.edu) if you plan to attend.

Wednesday, May 18, History of the Book Lecture: “From Texts to Books: Circulation and Authority of the Written Word in Greek Culture” presented by Christian Jacob (CNRS and EHESS, Paris). Harvard University, Cambridge. 5:00 p.m. Co-sponsored with the Seminar on the Civilizations of Ancient Greece and Rome.

Wednesday, May 18, Boston Public Library Lecture: “Collectors and Collecting in the Society of Printers.” Abbeey Room, Boston Public Library. 6:00 p.m.

Tuesday, May 24–Wednesday, May 25, Vermont Library Association Annual Conference: “Bridging Tradition and Technology through Storytelling.” Wyndham Hotel, Burlington, VT. For more information: <http://www.vermontlibraryconference.org/>.

## Scholarship Opportunity

The American Society for Information Science & Technology, New England Chapter (NEASIST) has announced the availability of two awards of up to \$750 each to reimburse expenses for attendance at the ASIST Annual Meeting (Oct. 28–Nov. 2, 2005). Applications must be received by Friday, May 20. For eligibility and application requirements, visit the website at: <http://www.asis.org/Chapters/neasis/awards/studentaward2005.html>.

## Information Link

*Information Link* is the monthly newsletter of the Graduate School of Library and Information Science at Simmons College. Its purpose is to provide school- and career-related information and to foster community among the many diverse people who make up the school.

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The *Link* welcomes your suggestions, comments, and especially your contributions. Please send comments and suggestions to [knowles@simmons.edu](mailto:knowles@simmons.edu). Send submissions to [alisa.libby@simmons.edu](mailto:alisa.libby@simmons.edu). Submission of items does not guarantee publication. For archived issues, visit <http://my.simmons.edu/gslis/>.

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Copy deadline for the June/July issue is Monday, May 16, 2005.