

GEORGIA HICKS FAISON

By *PATTIE B. MCINTYRE**



Georgia Hicks Faison, Reference Librarian at the University of North Carolina, will leave Chapel Hill this Spring for a tour of Europe. This trip was a gift to Miss Faison by her many friends among the faculty, students, and alumni of the University of North Carolina. A check to cover expenses for her European trip was presented to Miss Faison in a ceremony on November 15, which was attended by the Chancellor and many other well-wishers. On that occasion there were numerous sincere expressions of gratitude to Miss Faison for her many years of scholarly, loyal service.

Reference Librarian since 1928, Miss Faison came to the University Library as Head of the Circulation Department in 1924 when the University had a student body of 2,300 and the Library collection numbered 175,000. Before entering the library profession Miss Faison had taught Latin, history, and mathematics for seven years in various North Carolina school systems.

In 1919, Miss Faison went to Brooklyn for library training at Pratt Institute of Library Science. Later she earned a degree in Library Science at the New York State Library School in Albany. Before coming back to her native state, Miss Faison held two positions. She was a cataloger at the Yale University Library for a year and a half, and Librarian at Randolph-Macon Woman's College for two years.

Miss Faison's work as Reference Librarian has paralleled very closely the growth of the University's Graduate School and the growth of the library collection. She has always believed strongly that the library must play an integral part in the instruction and research programs of the University and has never missed an opportunity to help bring this about. She has had, almost daily, through the years, consultations and discussions with faculty members and graduate students in her effort to help make available the materials needed for graduate work and research. Her close cooperation with librarians in other universities helped to set up the Interlibrary Loan system of borrowing which has extended the limits of research facilities so greatly.

Although a great deal of her time and effort has been given to building up the collection for research and in helping graduate students and faculty with their prob-

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lems, much of Miss Faison's interest has been centered on the undergraduate and his use of the library. For many years, she has investigated various systems of library instruction and worked with the teaching departments and officials of the University in order to arrive at the best plan of library instruction for the incoming freshman. The present system of two hours of instruction required of each freshman who has not passed a screening test was started by the Reference Department in 1949. The undergraduate, as well as the more advanced student, has been made to feel that he can expect understanding and willing assistance when he brings his problems to the Reference Department.

Miss Faison's contributions to professional organizations have been made chiefly through conscientious service on varied committees and her unfailing interest in new plans and projects. Librarians and students in Library Science are often grateful for the years of work which went into the preparation of the *ALA Glossary of Library Terms*, Chicago, 1943, prepared by the ALA Committee on Library Terminology, of which Miss Faison was Chairman from 1936-1938. Knowing that much ground-work was done in the Thirties on the ever-present problem of a clearing house or union list of German dissertations, we were interested to read Miss Faison's proposal on "The Care of German Dissertations" in the *ALA Bulletin* for July 1936. It is gratifying to learn that out of such thought and planning by many librarians, there is now the Midwest Interlibrary Center plan for a centralized depository of German dissertations.

She has been an enthusiastic member of the Southeastern Library Association, taking part in many discussions in the College and University Libraries Section. In 1947, she reported on "Reference Service in College and University Libraries in the Southeast" at the conference. This paper was included in the Papers and Proceedings of the Twelfth Biennial Conference. In 1951, she served as Secretary of the College and University Section of SELA. Last Fall, at the 1956 Roanoke meeting of the Southeastern Library Association, Miss Faison was a member of Dr. Kuhlman's panel which discussed the place of the library in the instructional program of the University.

She has been an active and interested member of the North Carolina Library Association, serving on various committees at different periods. An occasional contributor to the official publication, she wrote a delightful article on "Humor, a Librarian's Asset" in *North Carolina Libraries* for October, 1952.

The library staff and other bibliographers still find useful the two chapters which Miss Faison contributed to the University of North Carolina Sesquicentennial Publication, *Library Resources of the University of North Carolina*, 1945, "Bibliographical Apparatus", pages 55-67, and "Reference Resources", pages 68-82.

As Professor Richmond Bond of the English Department once commented on Miss Faison's accomplishments, "The evidence of her great work is found not in her

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own publications, but rather in the acknowledgments in scores of theses, dissertations, and books where one so frequently reads, '. . . and to Miss Georgia Faison I also wish to express my gratitude for valuable suggestions, generous encouragement, and patience'."

Librarians associate Miss Faison with her unfailing enthusiasm for the problem at hand, her willingness to cooperate with her associates, and her keen interest in all phases of librarianship.

Miss Faison has served as Reference Librarian at the University of North Carolina under the directorship of five librarians—Louis R. Wilson, Robert B. Downs, Carl M. White, Charles E. Rush, and Andrew H. Horn. University Librarian Andrew Horn recently remarked, "It has been one of the real rewards of my own service at the University of North Carolina to come within the direct, magnetic field of Miss Faison—whom I had known by reputation, of course, in the Far West. This great lady and great librarian has left an everlasting stamp on the work of the University of North Carolina."

Chancellor Robert B. House, speaking at the ceremony honoring Miss Faison, summed up some of what she has meant to this University community by saying, "If I followed normal University tradition on this occasion, I would not have written this speech at all. I would have gotten Miss Georgia to write it for me."

Werner P. Friederich, Professor of Germanic Languages, and Chairman of the Faculty Committee which presented the gift to Miss Faison, said in his presentation speech, "We are not assembled here in order to listen to long speeches, but rather to indicate through our presence and by means of a tangible gift, just how grateful we are to Miss Faison for her helpfulness during the past decades, for the kindness, the graciousness, the goodness she has shown to all of us; and to tell her, too, how very much we will miss her now that she will retire from her position as our Reference Librarian. I do believe that the Library is the most important building, the center of any great university—and you, Miss Faison, have most certainly been the very soul of our Library. Thank you, once more, for all you have done for us and for all you have stood for during all these years."