

From the Pages of *North Carolina Libraries*, Vol. 6, No. 2-4 (1947)

Fairly early in the history of our journal, the tradition of having a column written by the president of the North Carolina Library Association arose. The earliest notice found so far was in a combination issue of the 6th volume published late in 1947. “From Our President” was written by Margaret H. Ligon to encourage North Carolina’s librarians to influence their communities in a positive manner by their “careful study and deep sense of responsibility.”

Ligon was the head librarian at Pack Memorial Library in Asheville from 1945 to 1965, during her term as president of NCLA (from 1947 to 1949). Her tenure at Pack was intertwined with the literary culture of Asheville. She supported the launch of the Thomas Wolfe Collection by colleague Myra Champion (Hill, 2023), and she authored *Letters Honoring Carl Sandburg in Pack Memorial Library, Asheville, NC 1950-1953*. Published by the library in 1953, this volume was composed of letters requested by Ligon from donors in celebration of Sandburg’s 75th birthday. During her tenure as NCLA President, Ligon helped establish the North Carolina Library Association Scholarship-Loan Fund to provide funding for library workers to attend library schools (Ligon, 1948). The Fund calls to mind Ligon’s own experience—she had begun working in Asheville’s library system in 1927 as a library substitute, then as a clerk and library assistant in the Sondley Library. Ligon paused her library employment to go to school, graduated in 1936 from Pratt Institute, then returned to the Sondley Library. She took a leave of absence to take a WPA appointment in 1937, returning to Asheville libraries in 1938 as a reference librarian at Pack Memorial Library. She was officially named new head of the City of Asheville Libraries in March 1945, though she had been acting head since January of that year. She served in that role until October 1965 (Carissa Pfeiffer, personal communication, July 28, 2026).

The North Carolina Library Association has active leaders who encourage our thoughtful participation in our profession and our communities. Having this column provides them one more place to raise their voice for us.

MARGARET H. LIGON • NORTH CAROLINA LIBRARY ASSOCIATION PRESIDENT

From the President

Today the responsibility of the librarian is greater than ever before. From the beginning of time, man has attempted to record through pictures and symbols his knowledge and ideas for the benefit of posterity. This urge for the preservation of man’s progress has made a very significant contribution to our present day culture, and these ideas and records naturally fall within the walls of libraries—both large and small.

World conditions have become so complex, individual opinions so varied, our country so overrun

with ‘isms, that it is very difficult to arrive at a real solution to any problems. As librarians, we can be, by careful study and a deep sense of responsibility, an influence for the improvement of society in our community. With the multitude of ideas before the world today, librarians, by knowing their material and their patrons, have the opportunity to render a definite service to society. North Carolina has librarians of this calibre and I feel that the result of our determination today will be evident in the years to come.



Figure 1: Margaret Ligon at desk, circa 1954. Photo by Juanita Wilson, courtesy of Buncombe County Special Collections, Pack Memorial Library, Asheville, NC.

References

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