

## MSU Library -Director

Dr. Sylverna Ford joined the Mankato State University community as Director of Library Services and Information Technology in August. Ford came to Mankato from Pittsburgh, where she completed her Ph.D. in the School of Library and Information Science at the University of Pittsburgh. There she tailored her doctoral program to focus on library administration, including finance and personnel. Her cognate area, management of nonprofit organizations, included courses in areas such as training and strategic planning.

Ford has held a number of library positions since receiving her M.L.S. degree from the University of Maryland. She began her professional career at Washington Technical Institute, where she got into administration much sooner than she had anticipated.

"My boss was hired at the same time I joined the staff as a reference librarian," she explained. "After two weeks, my boss left, and I suddenly found myself the head of the Public Services unit. I had to supervise others at the same time I was learning how to be a professional librarian myself."

Ford discovered that she liked the planning and organizing that goes into management, and subsequent library positions provided her with additional administrative experience.

Most recently she served as the Executive Director of the Oakland Library Consortium in Pittsburgh. The Consortium is a cooperative comprised of the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh, Carnegie Mellon University Libraries, and the University Library System of the University of Pittsburgh. Because of the diverse nature of the library collections and users, she learned a great deal about the theoretical and practical aspects of forging meaningful library cooperation.

"A lot of talking and negotiating needs to take place to build a foundation of trust before cooperation can develop," Ford noted. Ford decided to come to Mankato State because when she interviewed, she saw a basic foundation on which to build and many possibilities in terms of library technologies and programs. In addition, she liked the size of the organization. "Mankato State is large enough to provide challenges and opportunities but small enough to be manageable," she commented.

She also looked forward to living in a different part of the country, especially near Minneapolis/St. Paul. "But I hadn't factored in the weather," she admitted.

Since her arrival, Ford has spent many hours in different library service areas to acquire a comprehensive picture of how the organization works currently before proposing changes. She has also been busy on a variety of university committees.

"I think this library has the potential to be a regional information resource," she explained. "I would like to see the library reach its full potential of providing services to this part of the state. We need to be funded to a level that allows us to fulfill that role."

When she manages to find time away from the library, Ford relaxes by biking, hiking, sewing and baking. She also enjoys tinkering with houses, which she will be glad to do once she finds the right one in Mankato.

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