

in his special field. A further valuable hint be passed on here: Since on-line natural language systems work quite well in special searches but not in comprehensive generic searches, what deserves to be recommended in this latter case is a controlled vocabulary on the output side in the form of retrieval aids such as tables of synonyms and conceptually related terms. This adds to the natural language system advantages of vocabulary control, a method which in L.'s opinion offers much flexibility in retrieval strategy. The reverse procedure: control in input and natural language in retrieval does not, on the other hand, appear to make much sense.

Last not least, the contribution by John P. IMM-ROTH: "A Lexical Essay Towards the Development of the Theory of Indexes to Classification Schemes" (p.136-141) deserves to be mentioned. The study of alphabetic indexes to classifications so far having been neglected. He outlines fundamental thoughts on this matter and concludes by recommending 4 central areas for future index research.

Among the numerous Recommendations of the Conference that were confirmed at the final session the following deserve to be singled out as direction-setting in a wide sense!

(1) In future the needs and problems of developing countries must be given special attention and consideration in the construction and development of international information networks. Much was already said about this in the papers presented at the Conference. Moreover the Bombay Conference marked the fulfillment of one of the Elsinore recommendations: "The exploration and implementation of compatibility among classification systems and 'thesauri'" (sec.2.2,letter c). Needless to say that far from all of the likewise numerous 1964 recommendations could be realized.

(2) The training of specialists in the classification field must recognize the development trends and changes in classification research and practice and include them into the curricula. In my opinion this important theme might be made the subject of a special conference.

(3) Interdisciplinary communication and cooperation of experts from all branches of learning who are concerned with classification problems or interested in classification research must be improved and rendered more effective.

Major contributions toward the fulfillment of this demand may be seen in the founding of the journal "International Classification" and of the "Society for Classification" with its annual conferences, the sixth one of which - in Augsburg in 1982 - will be at the same time the Fourth International Study Conference on Classification Research. Its result may be awaited with keen interest.

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## Obituary

JESSE HAUK SHERA Dec. 8, 1903 – March 8, 1982

With the passing of Jesse Hauk Shera, the library profession and field of information science simultaneously lost one of their last truly articulate scholars. An era of great promise, which began with the foundation of the Graduate Library School at the University of Chicago, has come to an end. The replacement of the scholar by the technician and pragmatist is everywhere, even in academia.

Shera never lost his broad view of the ultimate intellectual merging of library/information science. His last paper, published appropriately in an Indian journal, was at once a reiteration of eternal values and an elegy for their apparent demise in the troubled world of the present day. One may hope, accepting Arnold Toynbee's view of the permanence of civilization as a cyclic phenomenon, for an eventual revival of active, humanistic scholarship when the present technological yen to digitize, measure and count has run its course. Great literary skill and flawless logic are still mandatory. The very existence of the journal in which this éloge appears holds promise for the eventual achievement of this goal.

Shera began his career as a librarian, despite the handicap of being legally blind from birth. His visual limitation quickened rather than dampened his other senses. Until the last few years of his life, it was almost impossible, in conversation, to be aware of any visual handicap at all. He was the easiest person to find at any gathering and the easiest with whom to converse. A conversation interrupted could be resumed in another place and another time without awareness of the interruption. Where he got all his marvellous jokes and stories remains a mystery and the fact that he rarely repeated them an even greater one. His fondness for cats mirrored his appreciation of their freedom and if he was an iconoclast, it was as a practitioner of a similar freedom.

Shera has left his mark on the world as a legacy. His work is timeless in scope and execution. His words will be read and re-read long after those who remember him are gone, whether the future is printless or bookless – but still intellectual life in another dimension, still evidence that we stand on the shoulders of giants.

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