



Norman Horrocks

NORMAN HORROCKS, OC, PhD, FCLIP, professor emeritus in the School of Information Management, Dalhousie University, was born in Manchester, England, October 18, 1927, and died Halifax, Nova Scotia, October 14, 2010, at the age of 82. He was also president of Scarecrow Press and an adjunct professor at Rutgers University from 1986 until 1995. He received honors and awards from the major Canadian, British and American library associations and was named an Officer of the Order of Canada in 2004.

Norman was active in many professional societies, all of whose members regarded him in a very special way. In ASIS&T, he seemed to be ubiquitous at every Annual Meeting. He made new friends easily and was loyal and warm to all the old ones. He was an inspiring leader and role model of generosity, kindness and inclusivity in the International Relations Committee and in SIG/International Information Issues (SIG/III).

Another SIG that claimed Norman as one of their own was SIG/HFIS (History and Foundations of Information Science). Norman actively supported and encouraged the formation of the SIG. One of the projects initiated by SIG/HFIS was a book, *Covert and Overt: Recollecting and Connecting Intelligence Service and Information Science* (2005), edited by Robert V. Williams and Ben-Ami Lipetz, and published for the American Society for Information Science and Technology by *Information Today* in cooperation with Scarecrow Press. In Norman’s chapter in the book, “Spies of the Airwaves,” he told about having worked during World War II as a library assistant in the reference department of the Manchester Central Library. Although only a teenager, he was a member of the staff fire-watching team – two nights a week he had to stay up all night and “be prepared to go on the roof of the library with stirrup pumps and bags of sand to extinguish any incendiary bombs that landed there” (p. 17). Later he served in the British Army’s Intelligence Corps and used his library background to good advantage. His story makes for fascinating reading, but my own personal connection to that service was an incident that happened in the 1980s at a conference. Norman sneaked a couple of us newcomers into a reception sponsored by a vendor. He did it by palming up extra invitation cards as he laid his own on the pile and

then slipping the cards back to us. He said it was just one of the little tricks he learned while serving in British intelligence. It was typical Norman – gracious and supportive to the younger generation, playful and fun, and irreverent about following the rules. He became an instant old friend and remained so for nearly 30 years.

His other many ASIS&T friends and colleagues noted his passing with fond reminiscences and testimonials. Here are some examples:

“Norman was one of the few people I’ve known who actually enjoyed meetings, and thought a well-run meeting was a thing of beauty. As a new faculty member I learned a lot from him when he was director at Dalhousie and especially from his tutorial on “How to Run a Meeting.” I still refer to that yellowed set of notes from time to time. Norman knew his Robert’s Rules very well, but didn’t apply them draconianly. However when chairing a meeting I would sometimes glance over and find him rolling his eyes and know that my imperfect technique had caused him pain.”

— *Edie Rasmussen, University of British Columbia*

“He had a unique talent for listening and understanding people, even non-native English speakers. He was the one upon whom one could count and rest. In short he was the kind of gentleman one would wish the world to be populated of, as old-fashioned as this may sound.”

— *Michel Menou, University College, London*

“Several years ago, I attended an ASIS&T session in which Norman, a panelist, recommended a book. I was so impressed with him that I immediately ordered the book online. I caught up with Norman at a later meeting to tell him how much I had enjoyed it. A lively conversation ensued. I was surprised that this man, who so vastly outranked me in experience and expertise, actually paid attention to what I thought. It was that modesty and charm, coupled with his formidable résumé, that made Norman a truly remarkable person.”

— *Steve Hardin, Indiana State University*

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