

# A force to be reckoned with

*By Linda Rolls, librarian and colleague*

In August of 1964, many things were happening in the country. On August 1st the Beatles' single "A Hard Day's Night" went to #1 & stayed #1 for 2 weeks. On August 5th the United States began bombing North Vietnam. On August 26th Lyndon B. Johnson received the nomination of the Democratic Party for president. And on August 29th the movie Mary Poppins was released.

At Western Michigan University, Sangren Hall was dedicated, but the seismic event of that August was that Laurel Grotzinger was appointed as an assistant professor. Two years after that she became Assistant Director of the WMU School of Librarianship, and later, Acting Director and Director. When I came to Western Michigan University

in 1968, Laurel had already achieved the rank of full professor in the span of four years. Since the library school was located on the second floor of Waldo, we library faculty interacted with most of the faculty in the library school.

Laurel was such a force to be reckoned with on so many levels that when she approached me about giving presentations to classes she was teaching in the School of Librarianship, naturally I was somewhat intimidated, and knew that I had better be at the "top of my game." I don't quite remember now what I taught, or how I did, but Laurel did invite me back several times. After Laurel made groundbreaking progress by becoming the first female dean at WMU as Dean of the Graduate College, and Chief Research Officer, our paths did not cross as often.

However, after she was appointed as

a professor in the University Libraries in 1993, I began to come to know and appreciate the many strengths and talents possessed by this amazing woman. I got to know her as a woman of scholarship with vast depths of knowledge that have been graciously shared with colleagues and students across campus and throughout the country.

In so many essential ways, she has been a role model not only for myself, but for many other women on campus, in the library community, and locally in the Kalamazoo community through her leadership, her work on prestigious councils and library committees state-wide and nationally, and her leadership in the local community.

Laurel's retirement will leave a void, a substantial loss of history and expertise. I wish her the very best, but she will be missed.

