

Introduction

The Federal Bureau of Investigation was the catalyst that established the theme for the Twenty-First Allerton Institute, held at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign's Allerton House, October 29-31, 1989. The FBI's Library Awareness Program, if it had any merit, did raise a significant ethical conflict between the librarian's responsibility to preserve the confidentiality surrounding use of library materials and his or her responsibility as a citizen of the United States. The FBI's activities, along with an apparent increase in interest in ethical matters in society as a whole, suggested "professional ethics" as an appropriate theme for a conference of librarians in 1989.

Of course, confidentiality of records is not the only ethical issue facing the library profession. In organizing this conference, members of the planning committee endeavored to identify speakers who could cover a wide range of ethical issues—in relationships with the public, with vendors, with city officials, in the management of human resources within the library, in the reference function of libraries, in how the library's resources should be allocated in order to satisfy minority as well as majority interests, in how ethical issues should be presented to students of library science, and so on. The committee also attempted to bring in some ethical questions more peripheral to the library profession, as exemplified by the keynote address by Clifford Christians and the paper by Robert Hauptman. Since the sessions were received with enthusiasm by the participants, the planning committee feels that the conference itself was very successful, and hopes that the published proceedings may be of interest and value to a wider community of librarians.

The author is grateful to the other members of the planning committee, Professors Terry Weech and Robert Burger, for their help in designing the program and otherwise contributing to the success of the Institute.

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Editor