

TRIBUTE

Kate Spelman *

Interest in and love of libraries is not always a prerequisite to be a librarian, but in the case of Laura N. Gasaway, a childhood of loving libraries was the wellspring of what has galvanized and steadied her commitment through the years. Through and through, Lolly stewards, celebrates and values all the benefits and magic that libraries bring to communities and individuals on many levels.

A stellar mentor to many, Lolly succeeded not because a committee created a “mentor program” and not because students were assigned to her as “mentees.” Lolly is a mentor by example, and not just to the new or the young. Lolly Gasaway is a mentor, a trusted advisor and preceptor because she mentors by example. Lolly mentors the old fashioned way. She listens; she shares; and then she lives her commitment to being a library professional by making us self reliant by patiently teaching us how. She mentors by being active in her profession by demonstrating and by doing. I am one whom she has mentored, and it happens each time I am with her. I learn and she influences my thinking measurably.

Lolly has a particular skill in holding a disparate group of people together to execute a project. Knowing innately that people show up where they find meaning and feel valued, Lolly has a gracious way of helping people feel included and in keeping an atmosphere congenial as hard work needs doing in a enjoyable context, despite the hiccups in sorting through the tough issues. There are many stories that I invite you to explore with anyone who has served with Lolly on a group project. From Law School committee work, to the § 108 Study Group, Lolly is a colleague who goes the distance and brings others along through the rough bits as well as the easy parts.

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Reliable, thorough, humorous and unflappable, Lolly is a delightful and revered member of any team. Lolly has all the capabilities of a fine scholar and a healthy measure of a great sense of humor all grounded with a firm grasp on reality at all times, Lolly is a leader because she makes manifest the best of what Henry David Thoreau meant when he wrote: “To affect the quality of the day, that is the highest of the arts.”¹

Cheers to you, Lolly, you are a master artist.

¹ HENRY DAVID THOREAU, WALDEN: OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS 59 (Cosimo 2009) (1854).