

Debbi Schaubman tribute stories

I first met Debbi while serving on the committee to select the Statewide system that became MeLCat. It was such a privilege to work with her over the years, and I was in awe of her intelligence and understanding of all aspects of the system. We worked together many years in order to get NCIP working with our Symphony ILS, and she never gave up even though it often seemed that we would never achieve our goal. Because of her perseverance there are now a large number of libraries that are able to integrate more seamlessly with MeLCat. I will miss Debbi's insights and humor. I am so thankful that I had the opportunity to get to know and work with her over the years. She will always be remembered because of her many contributions to the library community.

—Shawn Andary

I had the pleasure of working with Debbi from afar as we went live with MeLCat in 2005 and the later as a member on the MeLCat Advisory Committee for two years. I appreciated her vast knowledge and the dry humor she brought to any situation. She could make boring topics interesting and exciting just by her comments and attitude. I appreciate how she valued everyone's contributions and was devastated to hear of her death. My thoughts are with you all at MCLS as you grieve.

—Gina Bolger

I spent 3 years working with Debbi while I was the MeL Coordinator at the Library of Michigan. She was one of the most intelligent and curious people I have ever had the pleasure of knowing. She asked thoughtful questions that kept the MeL Team on their toes. Her directness wasn't always easy to navigate but I grew to appreciate that more than she will ever know. I'm grateful for all she taught me and will definitely miss her.

— Liz Breed

I'm sorry to hear of Debbi's passing. I did not know her well, but I had a great conversation with her years ago about resource sharing software. She was incredibly generous with her time and expertise, and I'm sure this loss will be deeply felt.

—Nicole Brock

Debbi was one of the smartest people I have ever worked with! Her intelligence was intimidating to me, at first - and then I saw the kindness at the heart of her dry wit. We couldn't have gotten into MeLCat and navigated the many twists and turns of implementation without her. The Michigan library community - and so many others - owe her a tremendous debt of gratitude for all she has done. Personally, I will miss seeing her and catching up at events online and around the state. Rest well, my friend - you are amazing.

—Jennifer Dean

Debbi was always such a positive presence in Michigan Library World. Especially for those of us who worked with library automated systems and MeLCat. When my library was set to go live with MeLCat back in 2004 the library's full-time systems administrator had just left and somehow, I was tasked with getting us hooked up. Looking back, I cringe at the number of probably stupid questions I had to ask Debbi and her team, but she never made me feel stupid and answered each and every one of them. I experienced that same patience (and dry wit) whenever I turned to Debbi with a technical question, even the dumbest of questions. I already miss her tons.

—Lauren Douglass

Debbi and I worked together at Michigan State when we were young librarians. She was the Government Documents Librarian and I was Head of Monographic Acquisitions. I remember her coming by to complain the other selectors were purchasing U.S. documents for the rest of the library when we got a copy for free. To her credit, she got most of them to stop doing that! We learned about Innovative Interfaces systems together through the years and when she moved to work with MeLCat, we still got to see each other at Innovative Users Group meetings. Most recently, Debbi helped us pause MeLCat when we migrated from Sierra to FOLIO. I will think of her fondly when we are ready to resume.

—Kay Granskog, Associate Dean, Technical Services, Michigan State University Libraries

I knew Debbi through the library community. We often had reason to interact at library events or in relation to our jobs. She was always a pleasure to work with and a wonderful person. My condolences to her family.

—Ruth Helwig

Debbi is a towering figure in the development and striking success of MeLCat, Michigan's ground-breaking multi-type library resource sharing system. Her first role in MeLCat was in 2002 while at the Michigan State University Libraries, when she became Project Coordinator of InMICH, the precursor to MeLCat. As the system grew and transitioned to MCLS and the Library of Michigan, Debbi moved to MCLS to continue her work as MeLCat System Administrator and Manager of Shared Library Services. What a legacy she leaves! MeLCat now has more than 400 libraries, and Michigan residents borrow more than a million items each year. The entire state will continue to benefit from her contributions for years to come. I was privileged to work with Debbi in those early InMICH years. I knew her as a remarkable librarian and person, with a brilliant mind, a kind spirit, and a wide range of interests, abilities, and friends. We shared a love of cats, and they were her companions throughout her life. She is gone too soon!

—Colleen Hyslop, retired MSU librarian

I've known Debbi since she began working at Michigan State University and throughout her career at MCLS and MeL. She was a mentor to me when I worked in the Government Documents Department at MSU and decided to go to Wayne State's MILIS program. Her support meant so much to me. I will miss Debbi personally and professionally. I already miss her wry wit and charm. She was a fierce supporter of MeL and worked tirelessly to fully implement it. My fondest memories were having to cajole Debbi into presenting a MeL report at Michigan Innovative User Group (MIUG) annual meetings. She always acted like she needed to be talked into doing it, but in reality, we both knew that she was going to be the "star" of the event. She always managed to present MeL statistics and updates in the most entertaining way. I'm so sad that we've lost our "star."

— **Fran Krempasky**

I worked with Debbi when InMICH was just starting up in 2002-2003, and she was the coordinator. She was WONDERFUL to work with. We made an instant connection, and she was talented and intelligent go-getter. I had not had many interactions since then, except an occasional meetup at conferences, but she made a long-lasting impression on me. Grieving a colleague you see every day is very real, and I send my sincere condolences to her family and close workmates. RIP Debbi.

— **Deb Lambert**

I got to know Debi through our "Innovation Space" meetings held with staff from the Library of Michigan and MCLS. Debbi's passion for libraries and the important work they do in their communities was always clear as she shared thoughts and ideas in our group discussions. I will miss her voice at the table.

— **Cathy Lancaster**

Even in the online world of Michigan eLibrary, it was a privilege to have worked with such an outstanding individual as Debbi Schaubman. She was brilliant, knowledgeable, kind and caring. I admired Debbi deeply as a fellow librarian born & raised in New York City. May her memory be for a blessing ♥

— **Margaret Lincoln**

The Michigan library community was very lucky to have Debbi Schaubman working on our behalf! She was incredibly intelligent and diligent and helped us make MeLCat work "under the hood." It has been a very complex system to manage on the inside, but on the outside we can be very proud to have a resource-sharing system that works for all different types of libraries with all different types of automation. Debbi was clever and talented and she will be greatly missed.

— **Sheryl Mase**

For all the years I have worked with Mel, whenever I had to call Mel with an issue Debbi was always very helpful, kind and patient. I will truly miss her; she was a gem.

— **Denise O. Malevitis**

I meet Debbi back in the 1990s at a Michigan Library Association Leadership Training Camp at Sugar Loaf. She has always been a voice to listen to, providing guidance on all topics. I enjoyed many conversations with Debbi not just about work, but also about life in general.

*You will be missed,
Sandy*

— **Sandy McCarthy**

Debbi was a fierce advocate for libraries in her dealing with vendors. If things didn't work as well as they should, she was on the case. She knew how things could and should work and could tell developers how to make it happen. She could also be counted on to make conference meals much more fun. If Debbi was around, I was either learning, getting stuff done, or laughing. Michigan libraries serve better thanks to Debbi's service.

— **Maurine McCourry**

Every time I use MeLCat I can't help but think of Debbi's contribution to the success of that venture. I'm a retired librarian who relied heavily on Debbi's expertise when my own library loaded our records on MeL in 2009. Her encyclopedic knowledge of MARC records and NCIP attributes (among MANY other details) was critical in making MeLCat one of our state's most effective online services. As a cataloger I served on her work group on MeLCat matching algorithms, the driest of dry topics. And wow, could she keep a meeting on track. There's nothing more satisfying than a well-run meeting that produces results, and Debbi was a pro. The minute I met Debbi, I liked her. She meant what she said: no gimmicks, no games, and balanced with a wry sense of humor. My library life was all the richer for having known Debbi, just as MeLCat is all the richer for her competence and guidance.

— **Michele Montague**

I will always remember Debbi as the Original MeLCat Superstar! So bright, so knowledgeable & helpful! There never seemed to be a problem she couldn't solve. She made the years that I spent on the RIDES Advisory Board enjoyable and meaningful.

— **Carla Moyer Hotz**

As a Library Vendor I remember Debbi's kindness in connecting me with the appropriate internal MCLS contacts to work with the organization in getting competitive pricing for the group when it came to Library solutions. Always a bright and sunny voice. I am very sad to hear of Debbi's passing and know it will leave holes in many a MCLS heart. Godspeed Debbi, your kindness was much appreciated.

Sincerely,

— **Jane Potee, Ingenta/PCG**

Debbie was such a warm and caring person. She also made things happen. She participated in the MI PR Group which helps libraries market and collaborate. On a meeting we discussed how it would be easier to share information and pose questions between meetings if we had a listserv. Within a week we were working together on the logistics of setting it up. She will be missed.

— Kelly Rembert

Debbi was one of the very best systems librarians I have ever met. She had the patience to deal with all the MeLCat libraries in the state - something that is a very tall order. And while you could count on her to hold libraries to do their part correctly, she also had good humor and would be among the first to joke about something that was not working perfectly. I had a chance to work with her through MeLCat, through the Michigan IUG and the national Innovative Users Group. Her understanding of the Innovative INN-Reach system was among the best anywhere - including people inside and outside Innovative Interfaces, Inc. I always felt she was generous and patient with other librarians when dealing with systems librarian issues (and there were and are many)! She will be both missed and fondly remembered by librarians everywhere.

—Corey Seeman, University of Michigan

I've had the honor of working with Debbi across several roles, including as an instructor for MLC/MCLS and MeLCat. I was always in appreciation of her dedication not only to her responsibilities but also the library community. She always welcomed ideas, was glad to listen to suggestions, provided critical yet always outstanding feedback, was a tireless advocate for improvement, and made the tough decisions (deftly managing any fallout in the process)! Her influence—within the industry, the profession, and on my own growth in it—will certainly not be forgotten. I am a better librarian for having the privilege of working with her.

—John Sterbenz

Debbi and I, along with others, were on the committees set up at the inception of MeLCat. We hashed out the first MeLCat policies and made many decisions associated with that set up process. Debbi was a rock star then and continued to be that rock star for Michigan libraries who ventured into statewide resource sharing with MeLCat. She was persistent at meetings of the Innovative Users Group, when INN-Reach needed the attention of Innovative Interfaces. MeLCat would not be what it is today without Debbi's knowledge and attention to detail. I always appreciated her sense of humor and the fact that she was direct and outspoken when needed but she always did everything with a firmness and directness that had people listening. Rest in peace Debbi, you will be missed.

—Sheryl VanderWagen

I was so very sorry to hear of Debbi's passing. I will remember her guidance as she helped so many libraries migrate into MeLCat back in the early 2000s. She was very detail-oriented and appreciated when you did things by following her directions...which, by the way, were always spot on! Her talent and expertise will be missed by many.

—Kate Van Auken

Debbi was my first supervisor when I came to MSU Libraries. I was surprised and a bit taken aback when she set goals for me and tracked progress toward the goals - she shepherded me like a true supervisor! I was sorry when she moved on to MCLS only a year or two later.

— **Kathleen Weessies**

I worked with Debbie on the MeLCat committee from the beginning of its inception. I was always so impressed with her knowledge and professionalism. She had so many great ideas and made MeLCat happen!

— **Melissa White**

When I started working with Debbi on the ReShare project, she didn't waste any time establishing herself as a skeptic. It was because of that attitude that I came to respect and rely on her so deeply. She was so smart, so experienced, and always willing to share her unfiltered opinions. I knew that if Debbi approved of something, it was a good idea. She was one of my favorite ReShare colleagues. Her passing is a huge loss for MCLS and the library world.

— **Kristen Wilson**

I didn't have the gift of working with Debbi for very long as I have only been in my role as the Michigan eLibrary Coordinator for almost a year now. However, I'm forever grateful for her generosity in sharing her expertise, insights, and historical knowledge. Most of all, I appreciated her sharp wit. This world is not as bright as it once was when she was here with us. I will miss her very much.

— **Heather Wood-Gramza**

It was always exciting when I got to work on a project Debbi was involved in. I loved her kind and funny personality. Her work on MeLCat has enabled thousands of people to seek material they would not have had access to otherwise. What a legacy she leaves behind - I'm proud to be a part of it every day! She will be missed!

— **Michelle Yost, Hope College**