

MEMORIAL RESOLUTION

MURLIN CROUCHER

(August 24, 1941 – July 31, 2011)

Murlin Croucher was born on August 24th, 1941 in Rochester, New York. He graduated from high school in Rochester and studied the violin at the Eastman School of Music. Mr. Croucher attended the University of Chicago and the University of Montreal before entering the United States Army on June 30, 1963. While in the military, he studied at the Defense Language Institute in Monterey, California. He completed the arduous 37-week intensive training program in the Russian language on June 19, 1964. Mr. Croucher then spent the remaining years of his service in West Germany, leaving active duty with an honorable discharge on June 9, 1967.

After leaving the military, he studied at Arizona State University and completed his B.A. in Russian in 1968. Mr. Croucher then entered the graduate program in Slavic Languages and Literatures at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in the fall of 1968. He completed his M.A. in that department in 1972, writing his thesis on “The Relation of Genre to the Incidence of the Dactylic Caesura in the Russian Six-Foot Iamb During the Eighteenth Century.” Prior to completing his M.A., Mr. Croucher had obtained his M.S. in the School of Information and Library Science in 1971, writing on “A Selected, Annotated Bibliography of English Language Translations and Criticisms of Brazilian Prose Fiction and Drama of the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries.”

In 1971 Mr. Croucher began his career as a librarian, working at the Academic Affairs Library at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill as a Slavic language cataloger. Within a few years he became the Slavic Bibliographer there. Mr. Croucher spent time in the former Czechoslovakia between 1970 and 1980, enrolling twice in the Summer Program in Czech Language and Literature at Charles University in Prague.

In 1980 he left the University of North Carolina to become the Slavic Bibliographer here at Indiana University, Bloomington. As the bibliographer for the collection, Mr. Croucher continued to build Indiana’s strong Slavic collection. Today, due in part to his dedicated work, the general Slavic collection (including Albanian, Baltic, Hungarian, and Romanian language holdings) is one of the larger research collections in that area in the Western hemisphere. In addition to developing the Slavic collection, he was also responsible for strengthening the prestigious Central Asian and Tibetan collections for the Indiana University Libraries.

As part of his work to develop the collections, Mr Croucher established several successful book exchanges to support Indiana’s curriculum with major and minor libraries

throughout the Soviet Bloc, a difficult task during the Cold War. He made many book buying trips to Eastern Europe and Russia, and he used these trips as an opportunity to maintain and further develop the exchange programs. He also managed a flourishing duplicate book exchange with several academic libraries in the United States. As the Slavic bibliographer, he met with countless foreign guests, gave tours of the collection, and volunteered his time for many library and Russian and East European Institute activities.

During his tenure at Indiana, Mr. Croucher served on many library and university committees, working closely with the Russian and East European Institute and several academic departments. As an adjunct assistant professor of Library Science and an affiliated faculty member of the Russian and East European Institute, he taught the three-credit course L525/R525, "Soviet and East European Library Materials," cross listed in the curricula for the School of Library and Information Science and the Russian and East European Institute. Due to advances in the field it was renumbered and renamed as L620/R620, "Topics in Information Literature, Bibliography: Slavic." The course provided library science and other interested students the opportunity for greater in-depth study of the information and literature sources of the Slavic area. In addition to teaching this class several times, Mr. Croucher gave numerous guest lectures in other courses.

The Russian and East European Institute, a federally funded Department of Education Title VI National Resource Center, relied heavily on Mr. Croucher for his expertise in its periodic renewal of grant applications. In addition he was instrumental in the IU Libraries successful grant application to the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation for \$164,000 to prepare future Slavic librarians. He also played a primary role in a \$240,000 Department of Education grant to digitize a twenty-year run (1956-1975) of *Letopis' Zhurnal'nykh Statei*. This project converted citations from the Soviet index to journal articles into digital form, producing a keyword-searchable bibliographic database. He discussed the details of the project in "Digitizing and Making a Web Site for the Soviet *Letopis' Zhurnal'nykh Statei*, 1956-1975" in *Slavic and East European Information Resources*, volume 3, issue 2-3, 2002.

In addition to performing his numerous duties as Slavic bibliographer, Mr. Croucher was a productive scholar. He published translations and numerous book reviews. He frequently participated in the annual Slavic Librarians Workshop, part of the Summer Research Laboratory on Russia, Eastern Europe, and Eurasia held at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. He was a frequent presenter at national and international conferences.

He co-authored with Eliska Ryznar *Books in Czechoslovakia: Past and Present* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1989), the second volume of the series "Publishing, Bibliography, Libraries, and Archives in Russia and Eastern Europe" of the Association of Collection and Research Libraries' Slavic and East European Section. He wrote *Slavic Area-Studies Serials on Standing Order at Indiana University, 1994, July* (Bloomington: Indiana University Library Slavic

Office, 1994). With the help of Gregory Keller and Carlton Stokes, Mr. Croucher wrote *Polish Literature in Translation, 1976-1996: A Guide to Monographic Works Housed in Indiana University's Main Library* (Bloomington: Indiana University, 1998), an offprint of *Indiana Slavic Studies*, volume 9, 1998.

Mr. Croucher's most important work is the two-volume *Slavic Studies: A Guide to Bibliographies, Encyclopedias, and Handbooks* (Wilmington: Scholarly Resources, 1993). This is an essential reference work available at any institution seriously studying the region. Zdeněk V. David of the Woodrow Wilson Center for Scholars published a review of the work in *Slavic Review*, volume 53, number 1 (Spring 1994). David described the work as "the largest and most comprehensive reference work in its field." The review went on to say, "The two volumes do represent a unique and most welcome contribution to the area of Slavic reference work and should be used profitably by both scholars and information specialists for years to come." A revised and expanded edition was planned, but it was not ready for publication at the time of his death.

Mr. Croucher retired from the IU Libraries in August 2005 after twenty-five years as the Slavic Bibliographer at Indiana University and almost a total of thirty-five years in the field of Slavic librarianship. He remained in Bloomington until his death in July 2011. A festschrift was published to honor Mr. Croucher, "Books, Bibliographies, and Pugs: a Festschrift to Honor Murlin Croucher" (Bloomington: Slavica, 2006 – in *Indiana Slavic Studies*, volume 16). The book was edited by Gregory C. Ference and Bradley L. Schaffner, two of Mr. Croucher's former assistants in the IU Libraries. Contributions to the festschrift were also made by eight other Slavic librarians whose careers had been greatly influenced by Mr. Croucher.

Mr. Croucher will be fondly remembered by those who knew him as a kind and gentle man with a wonderful sense of humor. He was dedicated to his profession and to his beloved pugs, one of whom, Carlin, survived him and now has a new good home. His legacy will continue through the wonderful collections that he developed and through the work of all of the librarians whom he inspired and taught.

In recognition of his service to Indiana University and his profession, be it resolved that this resolution be a part of the minutes of the Bloomington Faculty Council and that a copy be sent to his sister, Shirley Hanlon from Enfield, CT, his nephew, Raymond Croucher from Rochester, NY, and to his close friend, Fred Clark from Chapel Hill, NC.

Respectfully Submitted By:

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