

Donald W. Keran
1921 - 1985
UNIVERSITY LIBRARIAN, EMERITUS

B.A., University of California, Los Angeles; M.S.L.S., University of Southern
California, January 27, 1961
California State University, Fullerton From September 1, 1961 To May 30,
1985
Birth: May 12, 1921; Death: December 28, 1985

At the age of 6 months, Don moved with his family to Los Angeles. He grew up in the Hollywood district, graduating from Fairfax High School in 1939. In 1940 he enlisted in the U.S. Marine Corps. Don once told us that before the Second World War, he had been sent to Iceland to guard geysers. After the war broke out, he was sent to the South Pacific Theater where he fought in a number of battles, including that at Guadalcanal. Following the battle of Guadalcanal, he was sent to Wellington, New Zealand to recuperate from malaria. When his family suggested that he might try to find something a little less dangerous, he transferred from the Marine Ground Corps to the Marine Air Corps and became a radio operator/rear gunner on dive bombers and torpedo attack planes. By the war's end he was stationed on Ulithi Atoll in the Yap Islands. Don rose to the rank of T/Sgt. during his years in the Corps and received an honorable discharge in 1946. After his discharge from the Marine Corps, he was employed by several companies in southern California, eventually returning to school at Los Angeles City College where he received his A.A. degree in 1957. He went on to earn his B.A. in history at UCLA in 1960 and an M.S.L.S. at USC in 1961.

Upon his graduation from USC, he came to work at CSUF as head of acquisitions at the rank of what now would be Assistant Librarian. He subsequently rose to the rank of Librarian, holding various positions enroute: Chair of Bibliographic Services, Coordinator of Collection Development and Control, as well as Acting Head of Technical Processes on several occasions.

Don took an active part in the fight to achieve faculty status for librarians in the CSU system and helped found the Librarians' Roundtable chapter of the California Library Association. No account of his activities would be complete without mention of his bravery in stopping the murderous rampage of an insane custodian at CSUF on July 12, 1976. Nine people were shot in a matter of minutes, seven of them dying. Had it not been for Don and Steven Becker tackling the killer, others would have died. Don was seriously wounded and Steve killed in that struggle. Ironically, or perhaps because of the violence he had been through in his youth, he was a gentle, kindly man opposed to violence. He had a quiet humorous wit.

Don retired from CSUF in May of 1985 and as far as anyone knew was looking toward a long happy retirement. He is survived by his wife Ruth Buck Keran and a daughter Alexandria Keran Malloy, who graduated from

CSUF in 1985 with highest honors, receiving the President's Award for that year. She is now attending law school at UC Berkeley's Boalt Hall. He is also survived by a sister, Mrs. Norma Cheatham.

The death of Don Keran came as such a shock to many of us that we are still having difficulty sorting out our memories. Amid the mosaic of my memories, I must remark first on his original kindness to me nearly twenty years ago when he obtained a considerable number of reels of microfilm for my use. I never quite figured out how he managed it within the library budget but he would only assure me that it was "no problem." As the time went by, I had always to reconcile the combat Marine he once was with the gentle man I had come to know, though none of us can forget his heroism under fire at the time of the shooting deaths in the library. We talked in his office, or wherever I might bump into him in the library, about his deeply loved wife and daughter, worrying with him about Ruth's health, rejoicing with him in her recovery and in Alexa's considerable achievements. He came sailing with me and the next thing I knew he bought a boat. We discussed the problems of rigging and sailtrim, and painted anchors together in his garage. We discovered to our mutual astonishment that he was an aficionado of detective novels written by a Methodist minister whose family and my own had been closely linked in the clerical life since we were boys. Don was the true bibliophile. He kept me supplied with delightful non-professional reading which he had spotted in his library rounds and then shared with me. But I will miss most our good laughs together. He laughed at my jokes. What more can I say?

Compiled by
Barbara E. Davis
Librarian and Chair, Reader Services Department
March 26, 1986

Submitted by
Danton B. Sailor
Professor of History
March 26, 1986