



## ***Her-Story—How We Came To Be***

The organizational meeting of the NCLA Roundtable on the Status of Women in Librarianship occurred on March 20, 1981, at Meredith College in Raleigh, but groundwork for the event began much earlier.

Two of the women most instrumental to the group's founding, Judith Sutton of PLCMC, and Patsy Hansel, then of Onslow County Public Library, "decided it was time to try to do something about the blatant discrimination we so frequently saw" in hiring of library directors. According to Patsy, "we had ideas of helping boards of trustees learn how not to discriminate when they were hiring directors."

Sutton and Hansel met with Patrice Ebert and Nancy Massey, both then with the Hyconeechee Regional Library System, and Mary Hopper, also with PLCMC, to discuss organizing a group that would provide training and support from other women, as well as a forum for discussion. After agreeing to form a roundtable within NCLA, they circulated petitions throughout the state, easily acquiring the necessary two hundred signatures.

Funding for the organizational meeting in Raleigh arrived part from the Public Library Section of NCLA, but not without flack. One male librarian at the time complained about the lack of such a group for men. Lousie Boone, then director of the Albemarle Regional Library, quipped that he could start one himself; "then, we can have a dance."

Over one hundred people attended the Meredith College meeting in 1981 which featured a welcome by NCLA president, William O'Shea and a keynote address by library trustee, Alice Ihrig. A brief business session established a steering committee to guide the new roundtable until the NCLA Fall conference. This committee consisted of Patrice Ebert, Judith Sutton, Nancy Massey, Patsy Hansel, Lynne Henderson (Meredith College Library), and Valerie Lovett (Wake County Library).

In 2007, the Executive Board proposed that the Roundtable on the Status of Women in Librarianship consider a name change to better reflect the Roundtable's mission. The board voted to change the name to Women's Issues in Librarianship Roundtable with a mission to promote programming and provide a forum for the discussion of the concerns of women in libraries and how these concerns affect the profession as a whole.