

## **SILVIA RODOVICA DUMITRU**

### **A Myth Born From Passion**

There are people whose destiny becomes one with that of the profession and the institution they serve. I have often asked myself why this happens but I have not found a completely satisfactory answer. However, I have observed that this phenomenon is quite unusual.

There has been such a person in our institution too. Although many of us felt her presence, her colleagues did not pay too much attention to her. She has always been preoccupied with the various problems of this library and became part of the everyday life of this institution.

We conjure up now such a destiny, that of our colleague known as Miss Vica, a name uttered with respect and goodwill by everybody. Her horoscope shows a change in her life; she is retiring after many years of hard work.

Dumitru Silvia Rodovica was born in Sibiu, on 19 July 1938. She was the only daughter of Professor Iulian T. Dumitru and Silvia Dumitru. His father came from the Someș Valley, the village of Runc; he was the first of the ten children of the Greek-Catholic Rector Teodor Dumitru, educated in the spirit of Christian faith and morality, Professor of Law and Economy at the Commercial College in Sibiu. He handed down the same principles of life to his daughter.

Dumitru Silvia spent her schoolyears in Sibiu at the *Regina Maria* School and the *Girl's Grammar School*, passing without the need for exams to the secondary school because she had outstanding school reports. She finished secondary school in 1956; this was the first class which graduated with ten years. She also went to the Music School. She was in the piano class of Professor Carmen Petra Bazacopol, now Professor and Composer at the *Ciprian Porumbescu* Academy of Music in Bucharest. She studied Romanian and History as her main subjects at the "Babeș-Bolyai" University, Cluj and graduated in 1960. Thereafter she became Professor of Romanian and History in the village Coruș (Cluj county); then she taught History, Geography and Romanian in the village Boian (Turda county).

Commuting was extremely difficult in those areas. In 1966 she was employed as secretary and typist at the Faculty of Arts, then as documentalist at the library of the English-German Department which was quite sizeable at that time.

In 1970 she was transferred to the Cataloguing and Classifying Department of the Central University Library, Cluj, by a decree of the Ministry of Education. After a period of librarianship training she worked at the Chemistry Library, then she came back to the Central University Library in January 1972. She remained at the Cataloguing and Classifying Department for ten years; old books became her speciality and her obsession.

She identified 15-18th century old books, old and modern Romanian books. She discovered two incunabula as well as other valuable national property books. She catalogued them, gave them inventory numbers, topographic numbers and arranged them in the book store.

As she was working with old books she felt the need for self-training. She took the Latin Paleography courses of Professor Jakó Zsigmond and became a specialist in old books. In addition to her librarianship activity she became a researcher of old books. She had a passion for books in general and old books particularly.

It was in 1974 that she began research in this field. She wrote more than twenty papers which were presented at librarianship conferences in the country and abroad. They were also published in specialist periodicals.

Her competence and interest in this field was recognised by the management of the Library and she was transferred to the Special Collection Department, first as caretaker then as Head of Department. Miss Dumitru was a real specialist: she transformed the Special Collections into a museum of books. She organised many thematic exhibitions presenting valuable publications and collections and these exhibitions caused great interest in the public. Her primary aim was to educate the studious youth, pupils and students as well as the general public in the spirit of high level of culture.

Being one of the librarians who distinguished herself in her field of activity she was co-opted in methodological training. She

attended the courses organised by the Ministry of Education on a local and national level.

As she always had a special status in the library she has often represented this institution on national and international forums. She has always met her obligations and became therefore a well known personality in the profession.

Her professional merits were recognised and she was co-opted to the National Council of Directors of the Association of Romanian Educational Librarians. She was also appointed President of the National Special Collections Council, where she still works. She attended the organisation of the Special Collections in the Central University Library, Timișoara. She offered professional help for all libraries which requested this.

This brief presentation of her personality and professional career contributes to the completion of her portrait.

During the thirty years spent in the library Silvia Dumitru displayed evidence of her great passion for books; this passion for the written word has made her one of the most remarkable personalities of the Central University Library.

Librarians who have known her and benefited from her professional knowledge will surely retain her memory. Her retiring is an "event" which will arouse reactions and commentaries worth remembering.

Finally I would like to praise Silvia Dumitru as a colleague who admires her. May she enjoy her retirement years in good health! I also wish her the full accomplishment of all her future plans.

Ioan Hentea