



Paul Evan Peters, 1947-1996

Paul Evan Peters, a charismatic leader in the development and expanded use of electronically networked information by the scholarly community, died suddenly on November 18 while walking on a Florida beach with his wife during a visit to his parents' home. He was 48. The cause of death was an asthma attack.

Paul was the founding director of the Coalition for Networked Information (CNI), which was formed in 1990 to promote the creation and use of networked information resources and services that advance scholarship and intellectual productivity. In the six years that he led the Coalition, he shaped it into a highly regarded and influential forum where the higher education (including virtually all major research universities), library, information science, and scholarly communities could effectively engage the challenge of networked information.

He sought common ground for many constituencies to develop global networked information resources. His sudden death stunned the communities where he was most admired and where his vision and ability to pull people together to utilize the new realities of the Internet were seen as unique.

Before founding the Coalition in March 1990, Paul was systems coordinator at the New York Public Library from 1987 through 1989, and was Assistant University Librarian for Systems at Columbia University, where he also earned a master's degree in sociology in 1986. From 1970 until 1978, he was principal in a variety of research and development projects and earned a master's degree in library and information science at the University of Pittsburgh. He earned undergraduate degrees in computer science and philosophy at the University of Dayton in 1969. Paul was a former president of the Library and Information Technology Association, was a former chair of the National Information Standards Organization, and served on the editorial board of a number of networking, networked information, and library technology journals.

Some of Paul's most outstanding accomplishments also included: his service on the council of the American Library Association; his position as curator for The Global Library Exhibit at the New York Public Library; and his work to develop the National Initiative for a Networked Cultural Heritage (NINCH). He was also a catalyst for electronic journal, theses, and archives projects as well as mentoring and providing vision to the library and information technology community. In short, Paul was an imagineer.

Paul was born on December 12, 1947 in Dayton, Ohio. He is survived by his wife Rosemarie Kozdron, his parents Austin and Mary Peters, and a brother Philip.

As a tribute to Paul's commitment, the Coalition Task Force meeting was held as planned December 6-7 in San Francisco. Over 320 representatives from the communities he served gathered to engage the agenda Paul had planned for the meeting --enterprise-wide information strategies.

A memorial service was held during the Task Force Meeting and a scholarship fund was announced. Memorial services are also planned in Pittsburgh on December 15, and in Washington, DC on February 18, 1997. An online record of condolence messages and details on the scholarship and future memorial services are available on the CNI Web server <<http://www.cni.org/prog-oview.html>>.

A Note From Paul's Colleagues at ARL

Those of us who work in the same building with the Coalition for Networked Information are holding on to our memories of Paul striding through our offices. There is a lingering anticipation that at any moment he will step off the elevator with his favorite coffee mug and, with his famous grin, deliver a greeting something like the following: "When I explain, I'm sure you will understand--(pause for maximum effect)--but first, tell me what *you've* been doing for networked information while I've been gone."

His absence feels artificial. His legacy, however, is very real. Remembering Paul's dogged determination to keep our communities working together for the good of society and for the joy of learning, we arrive at our office each day knowing his expectations of us, and eager to respond to his question. Thanks Paul, for giving the ARL staff and all the research library community a role model for addressing our expanded vistas.

© *ARL: A Bimonthly Newsletter of Research Library Issues and Actions* 189 (December 1996).
Washington, DC: Association of Research Libraries.

