



Barbara Ringer Hosted Gala Celebration of 1976 Copyright Act

JUDITH NIERMAN

With the enactment of the 1976 Copyright Act on October 19, 1976, the Copyright Office was inclined to celebrate. A committee of employees led by staffer Gayle Harris planned a

party. After the plans were far advanced, the funding source withdrew. Then-Register of Copyrights Barbara Ringer, one of the principal architects of the 1976 Copyright Act, assumed the expense.

“Barbara said not to worry. She’d pay for it,” recollected Harris. “And she did. To make the bill less painful, we went to a less expensive caterer and deep-sixed the plans for some elaborate decorations. Instead, Kevin Maricle [who was an examiner and then an attorney-advisor] used her calligraphic skills to produce supersized posters of funny quotes about copyright and mounted them on easels scattered about.”

The grand event took place in the Library’s Great Hall on a Saturday evening, February 26, 1977, with more than 450 current and retired staffers in attendance. Hostess Ringer, Librarian of Congress Daniel Boorstin and Mrs. Boorstin, Deputy Librarian of Congress William Welsh, and Copyright Office Executive Officer Michael Pew greeted guests.

The Copyright Office Chorale directed by staffer Joe Miranda presented traditional and contemporary music selections, including an original composition by Charles Sens from the Library’s Music Division. Guests were treated to an ample buffet, which retiree Gene Lehr remembers as “a great spread of food,” including large strawberries on a table decorated with ice sculpture. Cheryl Rich says there were large shrimp, and people dressed formally. “It was a unique

event,” she said. Guests danced to the music of the Vince Wintermeyer Trio. Wintermeyer was a long-time employee of the Copyright Office who retired three years later.

Ringer thanked the staff for its dedicated support during the years preceding the passage of the law. Boorstin spoke on the significance of copyright to human creativity and the important relationship between the Library and the Copyright Office.

The memorable event was a unique experience in the history of the Copyright Office. ©



Barbara Ringer (center) speaks with Librarian of Congress Daniel Boorstin (right) and an unidentified staffer at the gala event. At the far left is Assistant General Counsel Richard Glasgow and administrative official Mike Pew.