As founding director of the Savitt Medical Library, Joan Zenan, faculty emerita, continues to be a champion of the University Libraries, its collections and dedicated faculty and staff. Joan recently established an endowment to support professional enrichment activities for the faculty of the University Libraries. She also established the Joan S. Zenan Medical Library Endowed Discretionary Fund to support new or ongoing medical library projects and programs.

During her 28 years at the University, Joan was a tireless advocate for the medical library. Under her guidance, the library met the medical information resource needs not only of the School of Medicine, but also as the National Library of Medicine’s designated Resource Library for the state of Nevada.

Zenan completed her undergraduate and graduate work at the University of California, Los Angeles. In 1974, she moved to Alaska to be the founding librarian of the Arctic Environmental Information Data Center, a research institute funded by the Alaska Governor’s Office and affiliated with the University of Alaska, Fairbanks.

In 1976, she came to Nevada and spent a year as the Life and Health Sciences librarian before becoming the School of Medicine’s first librarian. Zenan spent one year at Columbia University Health Sciences Library completing a management internship in medical library directorship.

In addition to her library duties, Zenan was heavily involved in campus politics, serving as Faculty Senate chair in 1984-85 and dozens of committees over the years. In 2000, she received the Regents Award as Outstanding Faculty Member, and in 2008 she was honored with the Dean’s Distinguished Service Award from the School of Medicine.

Joan retired in 2004 and remains actively involved with the campus community and serves on the board of directors for the Friends of the University Libraries. She was named an Honor Court Silver Benefactor in 2010.

**What is your fondest memory from your days at Nevada?**

I have two. One was opening the new Savitt Medical Library in 1978. The second was being elected Faculty Senate chair and testifying in the Nevada Legislature about the University’s budget. I met the governor and many of the legislators—it was exciting and interesting, and a high point in my career at the University.

We opened the first library for the School of Medicine the day it became a four-year school. A library designed for a two-year program now had to serve a four-year program.

We found that 80 percent of what our faculty and staff needed was provided by 20 percent of existing information available, which the library housed or had access to via interlibrary loan, and a good, service-oriented staff. There was next-to-nothing that we couldn’t obtain for our patrons.

The Savitt Medical Library is now serving the four-year program, but it’s not the big collection—that’s important—it’s the service aspect of being able to get the information when students and faculty need it.

I was also fond of many promising medical students who worked at the library. It was an opportunity for them to earn some money and it helped the library immensely. Two of those employees later became my physicians.

**What have you done that you are the most proud of?**

I am very proud of opening the first library for the medical school, overseeing its two expansions, and later opening the new Savitt Medical Library in the Pennington Medical Education Building. Very few medical librarians get the opportunity to open one—not to mention two—libraries. Those experiences made for an exciting and very fulfilling career.

I am also proud that I was elected Faculty Senate chair. There had been only one other librarian elected to that office in the University’s Faculty Senate history. I was appointed or asked to serve on many committees, and I became quite involved in the University workings in an effort to build relationships between the School of Medicine and the rest of campus. I had a very broad connection with departments and colleges throughout the University because of all my committee work.

**What advice would you give someone just starting out after college?**

Start by building a network in your field, hopefully before you graduate. Complete internships and externships in your field. Join networking clubs in your area, such as the Reno-Tahoe Young Professionals.

Keep your resume up-to-date for your field or fields of interest and expertise.

If you don’t love what you are doing, change jobs or change fields.

*Joan S. Zenan*