

RULE NO 5: THE LIBRARY IS A GROWING ORGANISM

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TRANSCRIPT FOR "LIBRARY STEREOTYPES" ON "RADIO"

- I didn't actually know I wanted to be a librarian until I was about halfway through my first master's degree. I studied history as an undergrad. I even worked in the library as a senior in college. And even then, it didn't occur to me that I would wanna do that work. The librarians for me. I probably started building relationships with librarians in college because of the amount of research I was having to do in in my undergrad degree. I do remember Mr. Petit walking across campus reading books. He can get away with that. Everybody else, they'd be like "Why are you reading across campus?" But Mr. Petit could get away with it because he was a librarian.

- You are listening to WREK Atlanta and this is "Lost in the Stacks," the research library, rock and Roll radio show. I'm Charlie Bennett in the studio with Fred Rasco and Matthew and Will and a couple of hangers on who just won't leave after their shift. Each week on "Lost in the Stacks," We pick a theme and then use it to create a mix of music and library talk. Whichever you are here for, we hope you dig it.

- Our show today is called "We Know Who We Are." This episode...

- Thank You.

- Is concerned with what a librarian is what a librarian isn't, what librarians do in the 21st century and what people think librarians do.

- And our songs today are about stereotypes, freedom and knowing who you are. In fact, this whole show is an answer to the question, "Who are you?" So let's start with a song with that exact name. This is "Who Are You" by Ty Segall. Right here on "Lost in the Stacks."

- Ah, crank it.

- ♪ I see your number ♪ ♪ It's a flashing sign ♪ ♪ It says Hello come and take up my time ♪ ♪ I hear you're down there in the moss ♪ ♪ It says Hello that's the ♪

- Now, let's ask our guests, who are you?
- I'm Danny Wellemeyer, which sounds like a question. Wellemeyer, I do outreach and engagement for the University of Missouri, Kansas City Libraries.
- I'm Austina Jordan and I work at the University of North Georgia on the Gainesville campus doing collection management librarianship.
- I'm Jess Williams from Kansas City, Missouri an academic librarian and I am in outreach and engagement.
- Does your family understand what you do?
- Not even a little bit. I think it's still confusing to them that I don't do a lot of stuff with books. I have so many people, older people in my life who love me and are so kind and they do newspaper clippings for me every time the word library is mentioned and they collect them and annotate them and mail them to me and I'm so grateful for that.
- Oh, you read all the time.
- I think the popular conception of a librarian is still the person standing behind a desk and checking out a book. I think we've evolved some from that but don't have a really good idea of what exactly that is in a more nuanced way. I do think there is still a strong association between the written word, the book and the librarian.
- Oh, you read all the time. That's like the first thing or "What do you do all day?" It's interesting trying to convince people that I don't sit at a reference desk and read all day.
- I am real bad at Reader's advisory. I don't work in a public library and I do read tons of fiction, but I'm gonna talk to people about whatever they want, but I'm not super good at talking about the public library things that people are more familiar with. So I try and automatically steer the direction toward the part that I love which is just helping students all day.
- We'll be back with more from Danny, Jess and Austina, after a music set.
- File, the set under Z-682.L-537. And you just heard "Moth" by La La La La. Songs about deconstructing stereotypes.

- Our show today is called "We Know Who We Are," featuring Academic Librarians, Danny Wellemeier, Jess Williams and Austina Jordan. All talking about the image and the reality of librarians.

- Librarians in general are caricatured. If you Google image librarians they inevitably are wearing glasses and have a bun and they're wearing a really modest suit and they look mad or concerned. That's not how it is. Librarians are probably some of the wildest people out there. Come to our conferences.

- I think I had pink hair the first semester I worked at this library. So again, like feeding into the current stereotype with the tattooed librarian with the blue hair, I guess.

- What do you think of this new librarian stereotype of the tattoos? And everybody always says blue hair which I find very interesting because blue hair is also what old people are called you know, blue hairs. Dyed hair and tattooed librarian. What do you think of that new image or that new stereotype?

- I mean, I like it. I wish I had dyed hair and tattoos, if I'm really honest. It just makes me think of like a really cool punk rock band coming out of the UK or something. But I think that I make that connection in my head because it taps into the part of librarians that are revolutionary and progressive at the same time. And it's kind of the antithesis of the quiet librarian, right? It kind of gets to the work that libraries do where they are advocating for the rights of their people, for the protection of their privacy, and the freedom of their speech of all of those other really, really badass political things that libraries do. So I don't know. I like the stereotype I guess but maybe you're not supposed to like stereotypes.

- I think I had preconceived notions about what college librarians did and then the librarians I met were amazing and so resourceful in a way that I now know most librarians are. But that was new to me. And then one of my favorite librarians, actually, let's see, how do I describe this? Okay, so we have that picture of the absent-minded professor and the librarian in the red converse high tops and the bow tie with the wild hair and the crazy socks. And he literally was that guy. And so I guess in that way he was not musting stereotypes. Yeah, he made a big impression, that's for sure.

- I would never imagine my stereotypes to be the kind of the nerd cool. For me, a librarian was, you know, a really intense person who was behind the desk at the public librarian. So it's a different stereotype even that you feel like that librarian was fulfilling.

- You are listening to "Lost In the Stacks" and we'll be back with more on the left side of the hour.

- Hi, I'm Ashley Maynor and I'm a librarian by day and filmmaker by night and you're listening to "Lost in the Stacks," WREK, Atlanta. ♪ Bye ♪