

Profile:

Lenore Landry



Editor's note: Lenore Landry is a long-time friend of the campus libraries. As a strong advocate of outreach programs, she often finds creative ways to educate citizens statewide—through the libraries, through exhibits, and through community service.

Her classroom is the entire state

Lenore Landry is interested in "tentacles." While many people see libraries as vast repositories of books, periodicals, and other materials—"a place to go"—Landry sees libraries, especially in this era of rapidly advancing information technology, as "tools to get information out to Wisconsin's 72 counties."

"Library tentacles reaching out is what interested me in libraries," she says.

Reaching out to Wisconsin's 72 counties has been an important aspect of both Landry's professional life and her civic and community involvement. Now a professor emerita, Landry served as a UW-Extension specialist in textiles and clothing from 1956 until her retirement in 1979. During that time, she rose from assistant professor to full professor.

Landry was born on May 8, 1923, in Gilmanton, Wisconsin, the second child of Wallace and Cleo Landry. An older brother, John, had been born 16 months earlier.

Lenore Landry's involvement with the UW-Extension began early. "My father was the agricultural agent in Clark County, and that is how I got started," she says. He and Harry Steenbock, for whom the Steenbock Library is named, were cousins.

After earning a bachelor's degree in home economics education from Stout Institute, Landry spent several years teaching at the Racine County Agriculture School and as a home demonstration agent in Racine and Douglas counties.

In 1954, Landry earned a master's degree in textiles and clothing from the UW-Madison. Afterward, she spent a year as assistant state 4-H Club leader before joining the UW-Extension faculty for what was to be her "last and most important job."

"I never taught sewing as such," says Landry. "To me fashion begins with fabric."

"Fabric speaks; it has a voice. It tells you how it is going to look when you have finished with it," says Landry. "My car license plates still say FABRIC."

Landry says when she began her job at the UW-Extension, every county had an extension home economist. "We were always looking to

Landry, the photographer

Lenore Landry, professor emerita, School of Family Resources and Consumer Sciences, has traveled the world as a scholar/photographer. Here is one aspect of her recent Steenbock Library exhibit "Textile Traditions of the Orient." They show the process of making kasuri, a tie-dye method of decorating threads before weaving.



Banana fiber before tying and dyeing.



Stripped fibers joined with square knots.

the boundaries of the state and trying to give people an equal opportunity to learn," she says.

During her career as a specialist in textiles and clothing, Landry prepared dozens of circulars and fact sheets to distribute to the general public. She is especially proud of a booklet titled *The Textile Labeling Law and Clues for Its Use* and a book, *Creating a Tailored Garment*, published by American Publishing Company.

Some of the publications used photographs taken by Landry. "Photography was a teaching tool as well as a hobby to keep me out of mischief," she says. She also did all her own drawings for publications.

Landry was a pioneer in the use of the Education Telephone Network (ETN) as an educational tool to reach out to people throughout the state. "I started using ETN in 1968 because clothing leant itself perfectly to the medium," she says.

In 1967, Landry and her brother John, a nuclear engineer at Oak Ridge, Tennessee, until his retirement, built a house in Madison's Arbor Hills neighborhood. Spacious, high-ceilinged, filled with natural light and adorned with many special touches, the house was "designed over the telephone," says Landry.

Landry retired at 56. She and her brother, neither of whom ever married, lived together after their retirements until his death in 1993. After her retirement, they bought an RV and traveled extensively throughout the United States. They also traveled to New Guinea and many countries in Europe, Asia, and South America.

Like his sister, John Landry was an avid photographer. Lenore says the basement of their house is currently home to a 50-seat theater and 75,000 color slides for multi-media presentations.

"Awareness and education" have always been important concepts in Landry's approach to life, and they have not been abandoned in retirement. "I see a need to keep on teaching," says Landry. "To a degree it's a talent; I love to teach."

One of her current projects is the development of a statewide education program to combat the spread of oak wilt. The program is based on the same themes of awareness and education.



Yarns woven with tie-dyed warp and weft resulting in a perfect pre-determined design.



Finished fabric pressed with smooth stone.



Finished garments.

In 1994, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources awarded Landry the Wisconsin Urban Forestry Council Distinguished Service Award. While presenting the award to Landry, David Stephenson, DNR district forestry coordinator, noted that she had contributed over 3,000 hours of her own time to the project during 1994. "That figures out to 10-hour days, six days a week, all without monetary compensation," he said.

Landry says she's particularly proud of the award because she was the first woman to receive one. Throughout her career, other accolades stand out as well. She received the 1972 Distinguished Alumni Service Award from UW-Stout; the 1980 4-H Alumnus Textiles and Clothing Leadership Award to Wisconsin Youth, Their Leaders and Families; and in 1986 the Distinguished Alumni Award from the UW-Madison School of Family Resources and Consumer Sciences.

Among the numerous other honors she has received, Landry was named a YWCA Woman of Distinction for her work with the Hmong in marketing their needlework in the Madison area. As part of the project, Landry was able to provide a donated sewing machine to every participating family

Much has changed in distance education from the days when Landry traveled the state with a personal collection of photography and drawings as teaching materials. For one thing, educational prerequisites for both extension teachers and professionals have risen. Where requirements called for master's and bachelor's degrees in Landry's day, standards now expect doctorates and master's degrees.



Jean Gilbertson, director of Steenbock Library, Lenore Landry, and Kenneth Frazier, director of the General Library System.

"Today county personnel are so well-educated and prepared to do their jobs that they no longer need on-site visits as often from extension specialists," she says. "But we must develop appropriate support materials and have a way to get that information out to them, often overnight.

"That's where the library comes in. Our job is no longer to go out and train county people. Campus library resources, such as those at Steenbock, make it easier to get information to agents overnight, reducing demands on staff time," she adds.

And there are other needs across the state. "As an emeritus, it's wonderful not being restricted to a single topic. Here's a way I can keep going—by updating information available to the state on topics such as oak wilt.

"I may not be able to travel personally as often as before to the far reaches of the state," Landry says, "but I can use the 'tentacles' of the Electronic Library to reach even further "

Nadine Goff

About the author

Nadine Goff, a member of the Friends of the UW-Madison Libraries, is a freelance writer and critic for the *Wisconsin State Journal*. She is a lifelong Madison resident.