VELMA VENEZIANO
by Jim Aagaard

I cannot remember when I first met Velma Veneziano, but I do
remember when I first heard her name. I was an associate
professor of electrical engineering, but serving part time as
supervisor of systems for the new Vogelback Computing Center.
The center was under the direction of Ben Mittman, who recently
retired from KGSM. Velma, who was then working at the Chicago
Board of Education, had written to Ben asking about the
possibility of a position at Northwestern.

Ben didn't have any openings, but he had an alternative
suggestion. He was aware that John McGowan, Associate University
Librarian, was embarking on a project to apply computer
technology to the new University Library. Ben put Velma and John
in touch, and the rest, as they say, is history.

Velma started on the project in January 1967, and immediately
began an exhaustive (and probably exhausting) analysis of the
current operations (in Deering Library, of course). This
approach is one which Velma has continued to follow. Many
Library staff members who are associated with an area which has
been affected by NOTIS have had the experience of spending long
hours of discussion with Velma as she probes into what they are
doing and why it is being done in a particular way. She has
never started on a project with preconceived notions, but has
reached her conclusions after long hours of discussion,
reflection, and occasional pacing of the floor.

The earliest written record I can find of my involvement was the
first in a series of planning meetings in August 1967, while I
was still working at Vogelback. It is particularly interesting to
review the progress report as of December 1967. The list of
general requirements in that report is as valid today as it was
then. To me, this is clear evidence of the vision which Velma
has brought to the Northwestern University Library, and to the
library community at large. The following points, slightly
edited to save space, appeared in that report:

1.   The system must be based on a unified centralized computer
     file of records for books and serials. The file must

contain order, catalog, and locational data, captured as soon as possible after the initiation of a request for an item.

2. The file must be able to reflect change in the status of an item without delay; the user wants to know where a book is now.

3. It must be possible to interrogate the file from a number of different physical locations, within and without the main library building.

4. The time necessary to order, receive, pay for, catalog, and physically process a book must be substantially reduced.

5. The system must include provision for financial accounting and inventory control.

6. Computer files must be available for library use throughout the day and evening hours.

7. In addition to serving the needs of library operations, the files should be so constructed as to be useful for information retrieval.

8. The system must have provision for expansion and refinement, and must be reasonably compatible with systems being

developed by the national library.

9. The library system must be compatible with the overall university information system.

Point 8 does not do justice, however, to Velma's concern for adherence to standards wherever they exist. She demonstrated her commitment to standards as a long-time member and early chair of the ALA's interdivisional MARBI committee, and continues to monitor closely its activities.

I cannot claim to have always agreed with Velma's ideas, but the disagreement was usually over what was practical at that particular moment. As is apparent from the list of items above, everything Velma envisioned almost 25 years ago has come to pass. I can only hope that I and my successors can find ways to implement her recent visions with equal success. She is irreplaceable.

ELIZABETH FURLONG RETIRES
by Karen Horny

On Friday, May 31, Betty Furlong will be retiring from Northwestern University Library after nearly 24 years of service. When Betty arrived at NUL on November 1, 1967, she brought with her a wealth of experience in a