

HILARY FENNELL

- o Children's Librarian at the
Cleveland Park Branch Library
since 1970
- o Resident from 1971-75

Libraries don't change very much, but the people have changed. Basically, the mothers have gone back to work. The children who come in in the mornings are brought by housekeepers. I don't find quite as many parent/child borrowers. Parents come in on their free time to pick a bunch of books. The children, as always, are very well read, perceptive, inquisitive.

One of the reasons that I like to stay at this branch is the rapport with the people. Any part of their community, whether it is the club, the cleaners, the Peoples, or what-not, is important to them. All of the children who come in here just seem very appreciative, very eager. They don't expect you to do the work for them. They want the help, but they're not demanding. This is one of the things that makes my job terribly fun. I do like to help the children. I think there might be some younger families here now. The picture book section here is very heavily used.

In this community I think that the children are brought up to be aware of institutions....to feel part of a whole. Many of them are brought down here very early to use the library. I imagine the people have this relationship with all kinds of things, the way they got involved with Tregaron and McLean Gardens. They're public-minded. It starts when the children see it as toddlers. They see their parents coming to the library. And this is a well-read community. I think they feel a social obligation, almost, to use the public facilities. They want to support them so they'll get better. That's why the Friends of the Library in this particular area are very, very strong. They have raised, I think, more money than any other Friends of the Library. It's not because they're the wealthiest, because the money that has come in has been from a broad spectrum and in small donations.

I feel as if I've gone to John Eaton....all the children that I recognize when I go up there that I know from down here....and the assignments, as well as the teachers. When there was talk of some of the teachers going to other schools, the parents, in the true Cleveland Park spirit, were not going to take it lightly. The students were going to fight not to lose their good teachers.