

Mrs. Sanders Takes Florida Library Post

(Editor's Note: The following article appeared in the November 24 edition of the Roanoke Beacon in the Shepard-Pruden Memorial Library in Edenton in the region served by Mrs. Sanders.)

One of Nellie Sanders' professional goals has been to change the image the public has of a librarian.

And it is safe to say that in her seven years as director of the Pettigrew Regional Library she has been successful in achieving that goal here.

The energetic golfer, lover of owls, and grandmother to four will leave her mark in the four-county library region when she leaves this week to assume a new post in Pensacola, Fla.

Beginning December 1, she will take over as library director of the West Florida Regional Library, a position she secured over 66 other applicants.

While having directed 18 employees, four libraries and one bookmobile for the some 36,000 residents of Washington, Tyrrell, Chowan and Perquimans counties, she will now tackle the management of a library system serving 300,000 people with 50 employees, five buildings and two bookmobiles.

And she is looking forward to it.

"This will be a new beginning for me," she said in a recent interview. She came to Plymouth where the Pettigrew Region is headquartered seven years ago with the idea of staying maybe two years, but she liked it so well and found the job such a challenge that two years just wasn't enough.

"I certainly have nothing but good thoughts about this area," she said, noting the many friends and acquaintances she will leave.

She praised local library supporters, government officials and especially the public for the help the library has received during her tenure here and justifiably feels that this area has one of the best library systems found anywhere.

And the records prove it. The Pettigrew Regional Library is at the top of the list in almost every professional and service category when compared to the 15 library regions in North Carolina.

And the Gray Owl is largely responsible. Her efforts at carrying the library story to the public, stressing service to the public and encouraging more professionalism among her staff has brought the regional system to a point of prominence in the state.

The director of the state library summed it up in a recent letter when he said "Nellie's contribution to library service in the Pettigrew Region and in the state has been significant. The library community wishes her much success in her new undertaking."

In noting major accomplishments over the past seven years, Mrs. Sanders pointed to the merger of Perquimans County into the region last year as probably the most outstanding event.

Also an increase of 40,000 books in the region and major additions of other research volumes and aids were major milestones along with increasing professional staff members, adding an active children's program and obtaining increased funding from local, state and federal sources.

"I don't take full credit for this," Mrs. Sanders said, "but it has happened while I was here with the tremendous support of the library board. I have worked toward these goals. I have stressed staff development, attendance at both state and college workshops and career education. And this has proven to pay off," she

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