Ngā mihi nui kia koutou katoa. Greetings.

Yesterday when Janet heard that I would be speaking, today she said to me - I hope you are not speaking for too long. There was a pause and then she repeated more firmly - don’t speak for too long. I’m not sure if that was an assessment of my public speaking abilities, or just Janet’s wish to limit the compliments. But hopefully I won’t be too long, nor too short in my reflection of her time her at the University of Auckland Library. Not just as University Librarian from 1998, but also her role as Associate University Librarian from 1994-1997.

Some of you may not be aware that there have only ever been four University Librarians in the past 100 years. And it is interesting to consider where Janet fits in that pantheon.

Miss Alice Minchin the first University Librarian from 1918-45 was described as “a stern lady who brooked no disturbance whatever” “she drove us hard” wrote one of her staff, “but drove herself harder”, “a courageous fighter for recognition of the Library and its staff”. So obviously then someone who had a lot in common with Janet.

The second University Librarian from 1946-69 was Arthur Sandall - “he would move down the long main room in a sort of glide, his arms folded high up in front of him, at first forwards, then with a foxtrot turn, backwards, glaring around him. If whispering and giggling continued, he would shout terrifiedly: Silence or I shall name you”. Mmm not so much similarity there. In fact Justene McNeice tells the story of returning to the General Library from a meeting and falling into step with Janet. They started chatting and Janet began to enthusiastically recount her recent travels abroad. As they entered, the Library Janet was still using her ‘outside voice’ and the security guard tried to shush her. With a wave of her hand in his direction, she briskly informed him “Don’t worry, I’m the boss’.

Peter Durey the third University Librarian, held the job from 1970-97. And he inherited a dominion of what seems now like dozens of divisional and department libraries. Although he oversaw the first online catalogue in the Library, he was very much a man of print and letters. And when Janet arrived at the Library in 1994 as Associate University Librarian we had a handful of CDROMs – PsychLit and ERIC I think, that could be fed into one or two database workstations (as they were called then). Her first job as Associate was to implement a review of the Library – and I was her first appointee as Electronic Resources Librarian.

We were very fortunate to have, in Janet, a new leader who had considerable IT knowledge – having set up an information management company, sold software and gained a postgrad diploma in IT. This made her unique in the company of other New Zealand university librarians, and I think generally among her generation of library managers. And the perfect leader in a period of extraordinary change – you could say the biggest changes in libraries since the printing press 500 years ago.

As an example, when Janet joined the Library, my role was Overseas Interloans Librarian – when an academic wanted an article or book chapter we didn’t have, I would check the microfilm of international library holdings, check the multiple volumes of the US National Union Catalogue Pre-’56, and then get the Department secretary to type up a letter requesting a photocopy and post it in the outgoing mail. Often we would get a reply back three or four weeks later from Harvard University or such like, saying – “sorry that issue of that journal is missing”. So I would locate another library and type up another letter.

It is extraordinary to think of the transformation that Janet has lead over the past 21 years. Libraries are about people not statistics, but if we were to judge that change and Janet’s impact by the numbers alone, from almost zero, today we have:

- 1,100 databases
- 100,000 hours of streaming TV and Radio
- 115,000 e journals
- 740,000 ebooks etc etc
This year the percentage of our collections budget spent on digital (as opposed to print), has risen to 89%. And bearing in mind that we still have two million volumes of print. And that over this period of great change and new services the Library staffing budget has not increased substantially as we have moved from managing a print to a much more complex hybrid print and digital library.

There has obviously been significant staff change over those 21 years as well. It is interesting to note that of the senior Library staff here when she started as University Librarian, only Hester, Eileen Tollan, Stephen Innes, Elizabeth McKenzie, and myself remain. Though Janet was well supported by Associates Chris Wilson and Helen Renwick for a number of years before their retirements last year. But at the core of the Library for several years was a daunting threesome of Chloe Steer (as Janet’s EA), Lynn Talaic our Business Manager, and Janet herself. And it was a brave soul who would venture up to the 6th floor and take those three on. (There was also a lot of laughter).

It is difficult to try and summarise a professional career and work relationships, but if I were to characterise Janet’s lengthy leadership in the University it would be six things:

(1) Her fierce advocacy for this Library - within the University, nationally and internationally. And I do mean fierce (at times). One long-standing publisher recently told me that Janet was the most effective negotiator and the most difficult librarian to bargain with that she had encountered in her long career. And she said this while also saying how much she admired her. I also remember going up to the Medical School with Janet in the late 1990s (I think) to convince academics there that we should cancel their print journal subscriptions with Elsevier and go e-journal only. This was several years before United States libraries did the same. And I remember Janet staring down Peter Gluckman who was the Dean at the time, and who eventually conceded that this was the right course of action.

(2) Her ability to see the possibilities of new technology and to adopt and adapt it quickly – from one of the first Library websites in New Zealand, to CD ROM networks, to large scale digitisation, RFID technology, virtual libraries, institutional repositories, research output systems, to mobile delivery (two years before the rest of the University), to cloud hosted services to MOOCS. And of course most importantly the new services that have always underpinned the technology - information literacy, learning services, research support services, reading lists support, refocused subject librarian and digital services.

(3) Her extraordinary memory – if the Library is a memory institution - then Janet is the memory of the Library. Even at 65, her memory is way better than almost all of her staff. Frighteningly so sometimes when she recalls a piece of work that was promised several weeks ago but not delivered… Her recollection of a meeting or a conversation is never wrong.

(4) Her legacy on the physical footprint of the University – firstly by reducing the number of libraries and eliminating reading rooms, developing the off-campus store, and the bindery, but particularly for the Kate Edger Information Commons (followed by smaller commons facilities on other campuses). Janet herself tells the story of walking across to Kate Edger in the first hour it opened, with John Hood, who was somewhat sceptical of the demand for the new building and service – only to find that it was already full of students. No empty seats.

(5) Her place as one the most influential librarians of her generation, both in New Zealand and internationally. From her work in developing a Library service for ADHB, as a Library and Information Commissioner advising the National Library and New Zealand government, her role in shaping the national bibliographic and interloans systems, as a Fellow of our professional body LIANZA, through to her place on the OCLC Global Council and as Chair of the Pacific Rim Digital Libraries Alliance – a group of the major research libraries in Asia and the west coast of North America.

(6) And lastly her role as a colleague and mentor – to a large number of librarians. I’ve learned so much from her about the business of librarianship, the importance of trusting your instinct, the attention to detail, and the unwavering focus on the big picture, challenging staff and fostering innovation, but also about valuing people. Li Wang tells the story of catching up with Janet by chance in New York when she was at a conference and Janet was on holiday there, and a day spent seeing the sites together - the top of the Empire State Building, an art gallery and lunch. As Li puts it “I felt that we chatted like old friends. She has been a supporter, a mentor AND friend... She will be greatly missed”
I think it is fair to say that university libraries often hold a central position as the heart of their institutions—both symbolically and in terms of physical location. And I believe that is true for our University. And Janet has been the heart and the soul of the Library for the last 21 years.

For myself, I can say that I am hugely proud of what we have achieved and I’m grateful for the career that she has given me, even if I may find it difficult to tell her so. And the adventures we’ve shared on a number of overseas trips together. You may not know that, despite her wide-ranging travel, Janet has a fear of flying – she knows the history of the airline she is travelling on, of every airline I suspect, the type of plane she is willing to fly on, and I’m guessing the safest seats etc... She also worries about her staff travelling and sometimes insists if more than one of us is travelling together that we go on separate planes – like the royal family!

I know Janet has struggled with her hip over the last several months (it is great to see her recovering so well). But I realised that she really had set her mind on retirement, when she stopped us midstream in a management team meeting a few months ago to show us the latest pics of her grandson (and there were several of them we had to admire). This was a new Janet.

I’m sure that children and grandchildren will fill up some of her time over the next few years. I also have a suspicion that, with all her energy, she won’t sit still for long, and we may yet see her again in a library context.

On behalf of all your colleagues and friends in the Library, I’d like to thank you, Janet, for the last 21 years, and to wish you a relaxing, adventurous, friend- and family-filled retirement.

One last thing, someone suggested that I finish with a poem for Janet, but I think even poet laureates struggle to write verse for formal occasions, so instead here is a song (with considerable help from Eileen and Jacob) about what it means to be a librarian – it’s called *Dreaming in Dewey*. 