University Librarian Richard C. Pollard, who is retiring July 31, worked shifts on the reference desk to keep in touch with patrons and their needs, enjoyed having a cup of coffee with a staffer and relished meeting with donors to talk about everything the Paulina June and George Pollak Library has to offer.

Retired Associate University Librarian Elizabeth Housewright recalled Pollard taking notes during those reference desk shifts.

"He always followed up, either to learn how to answer better next time or to correct mistakes on our website or catalog," Housewright said.

After nearly 26 years as University Librarian, Pollard is looking forward to a new chapter in his life.

"What I do enjoy the most is interaction with people — the library staff and the patrons," Pollard said. "I actually don't dread somebody coming up to complain about something because it presents an opportunity to educate and learn things that you didn't know."

Since 1987, Pollard has been at the helm of a library with modest beginnings in 1959 that grew to become a major institution serving 37,000 students and 2,100 full- and part-time faculty members.

Pollard's tenure featured advances in digital technology and e-books, a multimillion dollar expansion and renaming of the facility to the Paulina June and George Pollak Library, in recognition of the couple's $1 million donation.

Among his top accomplishments, he also points to building and shaping the library's faculty and classified staff to meet changing campus needs, as well as being the library's "ambassador" to the campus and the community.

Pollard is the fourth full-time University librarian. He started his career as a cataloger at Stanford University and then held administrative positions at the University of Tennessee and the University of Chicago before accepting the CSUF position.

When Pollard started at CSUF, electronic resources were just being introduced, and networking consisted of users swapping discs in and out of individual workstations, he said. "This environment has evolved to one supporting in-house and remote 24/7 access to a huge body of scholarly information resources.

Today, the Pollak Library's collection includes 1.3 million books and 58,520 electronic books. Its website attracted more than 900,000 visitors in 2011-2012. Pollard managed an annual budget of $6 million and directed a staff of 60 library faculty, staff and student assistants.

"Over the past few decades, the Pollak Library has been quite instrumental in keeping abreast of changes in information technologies and in providing the campus support for a rich and varied 'learning' environment," Pollard said. "Signs that this will continue are all around us, indicating a bright future for both the campus and its library — physical and virtual."

In his retirement, Pollard said he will pursue some of his intellectual interests, including tending to his large collection of political geography and maps, as well
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as spending time traveling with his wife, Simone; visiting his two sons and daughter; and enjoying his seven grandchildren.

"I would be less than honest if I didn't admit to some qualms about giving it all up," Pollard said. "I will miss the daily challenges and camaraderie that accompanies an academic life, especially as the campus is experiencing new and vibrant leadership."

Susan Tschabrun, presently the interim associate University librarian, will serve as interim University librarian. Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs José L. Cruz said a national search for Pollard's successor will begin in the fall.

By: Michael Mahi (mailto:mimahi@fullerton.edu), 657-278-5143