

Library director goes out fighting

Libraries 1980-1989

Charles Atkins' announcement of his retirement as Santa Cruz City-County library director ended in typical bickering and arguing between Atkins and library board president Jim Lee at Monday morning's library trustee meeting.

For several years, Atkins, who has served as library director since 1969, has continually fought with certain trustees over the authority of the board. Monday's exchange between Atkins and Lee, which ended in Atkins calling Lee "a lousy board chairman" was not out of the ordinary, but the library director later called the episode, "frightful and embarrassing."

Atkins, 61, will retire Dec. 31, not because of friction between himself and board members, he said, but because his retirement benefits from Santa Cruz and Sacramento county, where he was a library director from 1950 to 1969, are larger than his present salary. It costs him about \$80 a month to work as Santa Cruz City-County library director, Atkins said.

The library board is an advisory body to the city council, he said, but certain members feel the board has policy-setting powers.

"The board chairman insists the board is a governing board, and it isn't," said Atkins in a telephone interview this morning. "I have had the city attorney here several times to explain that they do not have the capacity to hire and fire people and make decisions that a governing board makes. Some of those directors are on the board for personal power, not for the good of the library."

"The status of the library board should be accepted by whoever

serves, and it wasn't by some people. The library system became a battleground."

Atkins said bickering over power and authority caused "a great many ill effects" on both library staff and public service. He said that in the time library directors agreed to build one library (Aptos branch) they should have been able to construct four others.

"It was difficult — impossible — to do any long-term planning, because they wouldn't cooperate," he said. "We just couldn't get together."

Atkins said he hopes "for the libraries' sake," that the powers of the library board be determined and agreed upon between the city, county and library trustees before a new library director is hired.

"It must be resolved," he said. "It wouldn't be fair to a new director to step into this trap."

"Me," he concluded, "I'm going to play some golf and grow some petunias. I don't worry about myself, but I do worry about our library system."

Atkins praised directors Charles Strudley, Al Reetz and C. Vernon Berlin for their "cooperation and support of the library system."

Open house Friday

Instructors at the learning skills program at Cabrillo College host an open house Friday from 3 to 6 p.m. in the ILC Building, room 1073.

The purpose of the event is to acquaint the public with the services available to students enrolling in the program, which teaches adults with learning problems the basic skills in math, reading, written expression and vocational skills.

If you
724-0
5:30 a
paper.

Pajaronian 10/5/82 p 11
Green Sheet 10/6/82 p 15 "Librarian's stormy departure"