Sherri Thomas Joins Library, Utton Center Staffs

W hen Sherri Thomas came to the UNM School of Law, she already knew that what she enjoyed most about the field was the opportunity to help people find what they need. By the time she graduated last spring, she was just as certain she wanted to be a law librarian or a policy analyst, building on her pre-law career.

Prior to law school, she had worked as information manager for Environmental Risk Analysis in San Mateo, Calif., where she was the firm's only librarian. She organized their collection of 1,000 books, conducted research and restructured and maintained their database. Before that, she was a cataloguer and database analyst for a large Palo Alto law firm.

Last October, she returned to the UNM law school as a visiting law librarian and lecturer, with a one-year position divided between the library and the Utton Transboundary Resources Center. At the library, she helps out on the reference desk and with collection development, which involves assessing how the library can most effectively spend its resources. A member of Taos Pueblo, Thomas, who grew up on the edge of the Navajo Reservation in Fruitland, N.M., is especially interested in building up the Indian Law collection.

Thomas also helps the library manage its large collection of databases and she serves as web coordinator – updating links and consolidating resources to make it easier for people to find information.

At the Utton Center, Thomas is building a comprehensive database for water law policy research as part of the center’s role in Sandia National Laboratories’ Energy-Water Nexus project (See page 15). Faced with creating a database that includes research from around the world, broken down by minute categories, she feared she would be overwhelmed, considering the time constraints of her one-year part-time appointment. That is, until she thought of using an existing law library database with a capacity to link to annotations, books, films, articles and dissertations. She discovered that the Utton Center database could be built with the law library database, which would provide a framework for Thomas to build upon. This would save her countless hours of work and the Utton Center thousands of dollars in database consultant fees and maintenance costs.

Staff on the Move

Beth Gillia (’97) has been promoted to senior attorney at the Institute of Public Law. In her new position, she will conduct a feasibility study for the New Mexico Motor Vehicle Division to determine where there is justification for the Taxation and Revenue Department to rewrite and reorganize the state Motor Vehicle Code.

Tom Huesemann has retired from the staff of the UNM Law Library after 27 years. Most recently, he has been a member of the technical services staff, working behind the scenes to purchase, receive, catalog, file, process and preserve materials for the library’s collection.

Carolyn Johnson has been promoted to program specialist at the Institute of Public Law. Through a contract with the New Mexico Department of Transportation’s Traffic Safety Bureau, she develops programs, plans of action and materials relating to the control and prevention of drinking and driving in New Mexico.

Pam Lambert (’84) has been named director of the Judicial Education Center at the Institute of Public Law. She has been with the center for eight of her 18 years with the Institute of Public Law, the public service arm of the UNM law school. Among her many accomplishments, Lambert has written judicial benchbooks, developed online resources and training and overseen legal writing projects.

Michelle Rigual has been promoted to assistant director for collections, electronic resources and technical services at the UNM Law Library. In her new position, she manages the library’s electronic resources and plays a key role in library collection development.

Ron Wheeler has been promoted to assistant director for faculty, research and instructional services at the UNM Law Library. He oversees library archives and directs library outreach and instructional programs.