

Thank you so much for this honor. Thank you to the board, the awards committee, those who wrote letters on Anna and my behalf. I want to thank Anna for being such a fantastic partner. I'm humbled to receive this award when there are so many VRA members that have contributed to the professional I am today. VRA is the warmest, most welcoming professional organization I've ever been a part of. Though I now work in public libraries, VRA will always hold a special place in my heart. Everyone here has created a space where young professionals can thrive. Anna and I along with many others like Krystal Boehlert, Maggie Murphy, and Jasmine Burns simply created a structure to make official what was already happening. We wanted to make sure that other young professionals would have the same experiences we had in being welcomed to the organization.

Though I've participated in many official, structured mentorship programs both as a mentee and a mentor, I learned the most about mentorship through individuals at VRA. There are two people in particular who taught me how to include and advise those coming up behind me: Greg Reser and Sheryl Frisch. They included me on the adobe bridge embedded metadata add-on project. Through the project I learned a great deal about setting goals, professional generosity, failing happily and trying again. Greg was endlessly patient as both coding coach and cheerleader. Sheryl helped me navigate the complexities of the California State University system and coached me on asking for a raise for the very first time. Both taught me to value myself and my professional work.

Starting VREPS was an opportunity to pay forward the opportunities and mentorship I received through membership in VRA. I'm grateful that it continues today helping young professionals find their footing in the library world, and I'm confident that the generous spirit I found at VRA continues to welcome and develop its next leaders.