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Research has been an integral component of my educational experience at Loyola Marymount University and having access to the unparalleled resources of the William H. Hannon library has been indispensable. During my time at LMU, I have cultivated a passion for understanding the experiences of gay and lesbian elders, and I have devoted a tremendous amount of time to researching this unique cohort. I had the opportunity to develop this research idea, originally for a class paper, into a year-long project that will culminate with the presentation of my findings at the Pacific Sociology Association's 2011 annual conference in March. Accessing information on this topic has been challenging; this segment of the population is doubly marginal and largely excluded from discourse on both LGBT and elderly individuals. Locating applicable sources has often been tedious. Yet during times of frustration, the plentiful resources at Hannon Library became my saving grace.

The librarians are not only incredibly knowledgeable and helpful, they are genuinely concerned about students' success. On numerous instances, I would seek assistance with search terms and the librarians would help me narrow or broaden my search as appropriate. And the Virtual Reference feature of the website is a literal lifesaver. Over the summer, the period during which I was most absorbed by my research, I often worked late into the night. As I feverishly perused journals in online databases, I was assured that research help, if needed, was only a click away. The Virtual Reference librarians were as personable and well-informed as their on-campus counterparts; my library queries were always swiftly addressed no matter the time of day or night. The convenience of being able to connect to the library's resources remotely was a tremendous help.

Link+ was another savior. While Hannon Library boasts an impressive selection of books, inevitably my searches occasionally yielded a book that was unavailable at LMU. But

because of the Link+ system, I did not have to frantically search all over the Los Angeles metropolitan area for the required titles. I was able to easily request the books online and have them delivered to LMU quickly, often within days.

Even the physical library building was a help. I have logged countless hours researching, brainstorming, and writing in study rooms and quiet corners. The study rooms provide an unrivaled study space. The dry erase boards covering the walls allowed me to map out the structure of my research paper. Being surrounded by my research topic—both literally and figuratively—helped me to absorb the content and clearly envision the end product. In the study rooms, inspiration sometimes seemed as easy as absorbing the spectacular views from the second and third floors. Yet when that wasn't enough, I could sneak down to Jazz Man for a quick sugary and/or caffeinated boost.

I am incredibly proud of the research I have produced. I was able to confirm my hypothesis that disclosing a homosexual identity drastically changes the family and community lives of gay and lesbian elders. The process of coming out is a strong determinant for the quality of gay and lesbian peoples' interpersonal relationships. It is especially helpful to interview elders because they represent a population whose experiences span a long period of time. These experiences are not only reflective of personal change and development, but also of societal and historical influences on the life course. By studying the intersection of family, community and coming out, which are all central to human identity, we can begin to address other social inequalities which plague these groups. While there is very little previous research on this topic, because of the extensive resources of the William H. Hannon Library, I was able to produce such important, groundbreaking work at Loyola Marymount University. I am forever grateful to each of the members of library staff who made my research possible. In the future, as I graduate from

LMU and move toward law school and beyond, I will fondly remember the Hannon Library as the place where my research interests were stimulated and my capabilities developed.