

Dawn Francis-Chewning

Education Analyst III (Outreach Coordinator), Student Digital Life,
Emory University Libraries



What year did you join Emory? I came to Emory as a student in '75, from Miami and began working here in 1976 while in school. I was in search of seasons, wondered what a freezing temperature felt like, wanted to celebrate trees losing their leaves and be in awe of their spring return. I also looked to widen my horizons, and to experience academics of my own choosing so I could find my passion; Emory was the perfect fit.

Tell us a little about the work you have done at Emory throughout your career. I started in Housing as a Desk Coordinator in the Women's Residential Halls (they were dormitories then); fun fact, gentlemen callers had to be 'buzzed in' – we had an intercom system to every room to announce visitors. I then moved on to the Housing Office - making room assignments and managing the keypunch machine (my IT intro). I saw the advent of Campus Life and became the Office Manager. In 1981, I took a break to start a family and returned in 1996; first to Telecom> NetCom> UTS> OIT> LITS> now Libraries, and have had a number of titles; reinventing myself all along the way. I loved the feeling of 'coming home' for many I worked with were still there and we found new ways to connect in all my various roles through the years.

What are some of your favorite memories of your time at Emory? Wonderful Wednesdays and Dooley ending classes as a student; 'slow times' during the academic year as staff (nonexistent now); networking before it was 'cool'; now I am celebrating folks retiring that I was on interview teams for. I met and was mentored by many all along the way, becoming fast friends with some through the years. True too, coming back to work at Emory and discovering gratefully that the Courtesy Scholarship was still a thing and that my kids might attend (2 did, and graduated!).

What are some of the most significant changes you have witnessed over the course of your career?

Dooley really is the only thing that goes on forever...I have seen Presidents, Professors, Students, Buildings, even street names come and go. I confess I thought the Dobbs University Center was not fitting and felt the loss of Winship Hall irreparable (the original location of Rathskellar which also lives on – Emory's own 'SNL'). I do love the new Emory Student Center but still I yearn for Winship Hall--part of the threesome that included Dobbs and Alabama Hall, the original residence halls of Emory. I took swimming in school – in what was a plane hangar repurposed to be the gym and enjoyed the early days of using the WoodPEC! Just me and my happy memories.

Is there anything you miss from "back in the day"? I enjoy so much of what Emory has to offer, in the past as well as now! The Festival of 9 Lessons and Carols then and now resounds as an Emory tradition. I am grateful for my professors 'back in the day,' including the two I never had classes with but met in the basement of what was then the Sociology building where the 'museum' at the time was housed. They were so delighted to have a young student wander in, and I was so taken by their passion; something I too had with History!

What do you hope for the future of Emory? I want Emory to be the best it can be in public, social, academic, and healthcare service to the world. We are positioned to be positive gamechangers for sustainability, healthcare, science, business, and so very much more. May the empowering environment I've always experienced here be an intentional one for all.

Anything else you would like to share? I have seen Emory at its best, and we have never stopped working to be great for the right reasons. I know we can continue to break the ties of embedded racism, shatter glass ceilings, and truly embrace Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. May we empower all our students, staff, and faculty to see themselves and each other as the positive transformation that will change the world to better serve the earth and everyone on it.