UB Graduate School of Education
University at Buffalo *The State University of New York*

FACULTY SPOTLIGHT

Dagobert Soergel, Ph.D.
Professor

Department of
Library and Information Studies

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Dagobert Soergel received his doctorate in political science (with a dissertation on information retrieval in the social sciences) in 1970 from the University of Freiburg, where he also earned a B.S. in physics in 1960 and an M.S. in mathematics and physics in 1964 (with a thesis on the mathematical modeling of information retrieval systems). He developed several information systems in the social sciences in Germany before joining the University of Maryland as a faculty member in 1970, where he served for 39 years. Dr. Soergel has also held visiting professorships at universities in the U.S., Canada, and Germany, and is Professore Onorario at the University of Trento, Italy. He joined UB in 2009 as a professor in, and the chair of, the Department of Library and Information Studies.

Dr. Soergel's research has been in the area of classification (taxonomy, ontologies) and thesauri, both practically and theoretically for over 40 years, with an emphasis on meaningful structures that users can assimilate and modify to build structures in their own mind. This research helps users gain an understanding and insight into their problems, pinpoint the information they need to solve the problems, provide ways to look for that information, and then make sense of that information as a basis for formulating good queries.

His scholarly accomplishments include the still-standard text and handbook *Indexing Languages and Thesauri: Construction and Maintenance* (Wiley, 1974) and *Organizing Information* (Academic Press, 1985), which received the American Society of Information Best Information Science Book Award. Dr. Soergel has more than 100 papers and presentations in the area of classification/ontologies (including their development and change over time) and more broadly in information science. He was the chief architect for several thesauri, including the *Alcohol and Other Drug Thesaurus* and the *Harvard Business Thesaurus*. He was a member of the DELOS Working Group on the DELOS Digital Library Reference Model and is the scientific chair of the DL.org Functionality Working Group.

Dr. Soergel has received a number of awards, including the American Society for Information Science and Technology (ASIST) Award of Merit, the society's highest award, in 1997; the Contributions to Information Science Award of the Los Angeles Chapter of ASIST in 2009; the ASIST Best Book Award in 1986; and the *Journal of the American Society for Information Science and Technology* Best Paper Award (with his doctoral student Peiling Wang) in 1999.

Outside of academia, Dr. Soergel helped found a preschool in Virginia that provides caring, high-quality, free education and related services to at-risk children and families in their own neighborhoods. After 25 years, he still serves as the treasurer of this organization, now named the Child and Family Network Centers. Since 1983 he has also organized, with his wife, a toy drive for his church in Virginia that brings educational toys to 400 children every Christmas and school supplies to 100 children each August.