

# From the President

Pauletta Brown Bracy, President

---

## Productive Engagement in Professional Commitment

---

*A*t the Biennium Conference of 2003, a second award program (in addition to Literacy) was inaugurated with the announcement of the first recipient of the Marilyn Miller Award for Professional Commitment. Named for Marilyn L. Miller, a longtime supporter of the Roundtable on the Status of Women in Librarianship and a legendary state and national leader in our profession, the purpose of the award is to recognize a North Carolina professional librarian who has provided outstanding leadership and service in furthering the status of women in librarianship, the mission of the library in the community, and/or the support of women colleagues in the workplace. I am pleased to feature the winner as an exceptional example of “productive engagement” which reflects professional productivity.

Sandra M. Neerman, Executive Director of the Greensboro Public Library, personifies success through her consistently progressive and visionary leadership. She assumed the interim directorship in 1996 facing a troubled building project gravely over budget. From this critical dilemma, two and a half years later, a new central library emerged that exceeded the expectations of the community. Observers concluded that she was so successful, in part, because she went to the citizenry and sought its input and listened. She profitably created a library *built* by the people. Currently, she is deeply involved with two branch projects with anticipated openings in 2004.

Equally important, Neerman’s commitment to the Greensboro community information needs extends *into* the community through her active involvement in local groups and organizations, including the United Way Campaign, Leadership Greensboro, and the Family Life Council. In 1998, she was presented the Greensboro Chamber of Commerce Joe Cannon Award for service to the City of Greensboro through public dedication and leadership in government and within the community; and, in 1999, she won the Greensboro Commission on the Status of Women’s Woman of Achievement in Government Award.

Her judicious approach to management has supported varied talents of her staff by creating opportunities for them to incorporate these special skills into their professional duties. An employee who is a freelance writer was summoned by Neerman to discuss ways in which the administration could assist in incorporating this passion for writing into her managerial duties.

As a Greensboro Public Library Trustee noted, she leads by example. She cultivates leaders in an inclusive style that assures diversity in many dimensions. In extolling the benefit the city has enjoyed because of her leadership, a Greensboro City Manager asserted that she is “an outstanding example for other women within our organization — and outside of it — who are striving to achieve personal and professional success.”

Clearly, the Roundtable on the Status of Women in Librarianship is to be commended in its decisions: to create the award and name it after one who has so admirably created a model of leadership and presence for women in our profession; and to recognize one who has so admirably fulfilled the essence of that model.