

# From the Editor

by Plummer Alston "Al" Jones, Jr., Editor

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## Honoring NCLA's Past Presidents

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On Thursday, November 11, 2004, at the joint meeting of the North Carolina Library Association and the Southeastern Library Association at the Charlotte Convention Center, a very special luncheon was planned under the direction of 2003-05 NCLA President Pauletta Brown Bracy. She enlisted the assistance of Leland M. Park, 1983-85 NCLA President, to identify living NCLA Past Presidents for special recognition.

From Annie Smith Ross, the first President (1904-06), to Pauletta Brown Bracey (2003-05), there have been fifty-two NCLA Presidents. It was fascinating to discover that several individuals served more than one term as president. Note that some terms were for a fiscal year and others were for a biennium, facts that indicate that the term of office was not set until 1917 with the presidency of Mrs. A. F. Griggs. Annie Smith Ross was President during the 1904-06 biennium, and the 1906-07 and 1907-08 fiscal years. Louis Round Wilson served during the 1909-10 fiscal year, and the 1929-1931 biennium. J.P. Breedlove served during the 1910-11 fiscal year and the 1911-13 biennium. Mary B. Palmer served during the 1915-16 and 1916-17 fiscal years.

Of the 52 NCLA Presidents, those present at the luncheon included Barbara A. Baker (1989-91) (Durham Community College), Pauletta Brown Bracy (2003-05) (North Carolina Central University), David Fergusson (1995-97) (Forsyth County Public Library), A. Beverley Gass (1997-1999) (Guilford Technical Community College), Ross Holt (2001-03) (Randolph County Public Library), Gwen G. Jackson (1993-95) (Southeastern Technical Assistance Center, Jacksonville), Plummer Alston "Al" Jones, Jr. (Catawba College, and East Carolina University) (1999-2001), Gene Lanier (1973-75) (East Carolina University), and Leland M. Park (1983-85) (Davidson College). Each past president was presented a beautiful plaque commemorating his/her presidency. Other living past presidents who were not able to attend included Charlesanna Fox (1953-55) (Randolph County Public Library), Janet L. Freeman (1991-93) (Meredith College), Patsy J. Hansel (1987-89) (Cumberland County Public Library), and Pauline F. Myrick (1985-87) (Moore County Schools). Charlesanna Fox, the oldest living past president, sent a video welcome to the assembled NCLA/SELA conference attendees. She was the president when the NCLA and the North Carolina Negro Library Association voted to merge.

At the end of a wonderful meal, a birthday cake for NCLA was ushered in, complete with sparklers. Leland Park led us in a celebratory toast in honor of NCLA's Centennial. The past presidents at my table also toasted each other and remarked about how much we had learned from the mentoring of other past presidents. We were all impressed by the fact that this collegial camaraderie had gotten us through the challenging years of our presidencies.

As I was leaving the luncheon, a Kentucky librarian spoke with me and thanked me for the *North Carolina Library Association Centennial Handbook, 1904-2004*, which was written for the occasion. She remarked that she and other members of the Kentucky Library Association had come to the joint NCLA/SELA conference to take lots of notes on how to celebrate their library association's centennial. She was very complimentary on how well the NCLA Centennial celebration was going and how impressive and appropriate the luncheon had been. Her compliments not only made my day but also were a testament to the excellent planning and hard work of John Via and the various conference planning committees. It is definitely the time to pat ourselves on the back for a memorable conference and a worthy celebration of NCLA's first 100 years!