

# NORTH CAROLINA LIBRARIES

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# From the President

On March 14, 2024, the American Library Association (ALA) reported a record number of unique book challenges in 2023.<sup>1</sup> The press release went on to note a 65% increase in challenges of unique titles with 4,240 unique book title challenges and a total of 9,021 title challenges. These numbers represented a 92% increase in title challenges at public libraries, which accounted for nearly half of all book challenges occurring in 2023. Interestingly, the sharp increase in the sheer number of titles being challenged was related to groups and individuals challenging numerous, sometimes hundreds, of items at once rather than one specific title. Unfortunately, North Carolina was amongst 17 states who experienced attempts to censor more than 100 titles for the year.

Intellectual freedom, defined by ALA as “the right of library users to read, seek information, and speak freely as guaranteed by the First Amendment,”<sup>2</sup> is at the heart of what it means to be a library professional and is a pillar of a democratic society that values a well-informed citizenry. As can be seen in the trend to target multiple books rather than one title at a time, those who are engaging in title challenges are clearly organized and strategic in their efforts. As such, it becomes more imperative than ever for library professionals to be active participants in organizations that support the values of their profession and actively work to champion intellectual freedom. Fortunately for us, librarians are awesome at organizing!

The North Carolina Library Association (NCLA), with more than 1,000 members, is the only statewide organization that serves the needs of all library types. Members include public, school, academic, and community college librarians as well as paraprofessionals and librarians working in other private and govern-

ment sectors. NCLA does not operate in isolation and has partners at the state, regional, and national levels with which to share ideas and information. NCLA is an affiliate of ALA and the Southeastern Library Association



*“Intellectual freedom...is at the heart of what it means to be a library professional and is a pillar of a democratic society...”*

(SELA), benefiting from the combined resources and support of these organizations. Participation in these organizations is crucial for NCLA, as evidenced by the existence of executive board positions specifically dedicated to engagement with them: ALA Councilor and SELA Representative. At the state level, NCLA maintains a close relationship with the State Library of North Carolina (SLNC). Active involvement in these associations ensures that NCLA and its members stay well-informed about legislative matters, advocacy initiatives, and emerging trends in the profession, particularly in areas concerning intellectual freedom.

NCLA has long been an advocate of intellectual freedom and has taken many steps to demonstrate this commitment. We have the Intellectual Freedom Committee and the Library Advocacy and Legislation Section (LALS), both devoted to supporting

<sup>1</sup> “American Library Association reports record number of unique book titles challenged in 2023,” American Library Association, March 14, 2024. <http://www.ala.org/news/press-releases/2024/03/american-library-association-reports-record-number-unique-book-titles> (Accessed April 12, 2024)

<sup>2</sup> “Support for Intellectual Freedom,” American Library Association, December 18, 2017. <http://www.ala.org/tools/challengesupport/selectionpolicytoolkit/intellectualfreedom> (Accessed April 12, 2024)

libraries in defending intellectual freedom, staying up to date on legislation affecting intellectual freedom, and engaging in actions to impact key decision makers across various levels of government in passing legislation relevant to libraries. At the encouragement of Intellectual Freedom Committee Chair, Anne Mavian, and with the support of the NCLA Executive Board, in September 2022 NCLA became an organizational partner of [Unite Against Book Bans](#), a national non-partisan grassroots campaign to engage the public in the fight against censorship. The website offers a number of free resources, such as toolkits, Book Resumes to defend particular titles, news and updates, and more. In order to advocate for legislation and funding related to libraries, each year NCLA sends leaders of LALS and the executive board to join SLNC in Congressional fly-ins to connect and share stories about libraries with U.S. senators and representatives from our state. Finally, having been aware of the rising threats to intellectual freedom in more recent years, NCLA issued a Censorship Statement stating:

*The mission of the North Carolina Library Association (NCLA) is to promote libraries, library and information services, and librarianship; and to champion intellectual freedom and literacy programs. NCLA further acknowledges that one of our own goals is to identify and help resolve special concerns of minorities and women in the profession. With this, we recognize the pain and harm that challenges of this nature inflict on the LG-BTQIA community – a minority community. We also recognize that the challenges raised recently speaks to the heart of intellectual freedom and why it is so important for libraries to have access to materials that cover all points of view.*

*We encourage all libraries to review and update selection processes to ensure collections are diverse, equitable, and inclusive. Public libraries have a responsibility to represent a broad range of materials in their collections and to meet the needs of everyone in the community, including those who may be marginalized or part of a minority. While*

*individual library users have the right to voice their concerns about a library book and select different materials for themselves and their own families, those objecting to a book should not be given the power to restrict other users' right to access those books. Library selection policies should reflect these concepts. (rev April 2023)<sup>3</sup>*

*“Despite any differences in our political views, library professionals are clear in their unified stance toward the value of intellectual freedom.”*

Although 2023 saw a record number of title challenges, escalation in the level of organization involved in title challenges, and further politicization of intellectual freedom, library professionals are fortunate to have the skills and resources to respond in thoughtful and effective ways that benefit our users. Becoming involved in a professional organization, such as NCLA, is one way that every library professional can play a role in the fight to support intellectual freedom. The level of involvement can range from being a member to serving as the leader of a section or committee on the NCLA Executive Board.

As we enter an election year, there is a risk of increased polarization in our communities and workplaces. Despite any differences in our political views, library professionals are clear in their unified stance toward the value of intellectual freedom and our role in serving the needs of our users. And not just individual users, but our communities writ large. In 2012, R. David Lankes tweeted, “Bad libraries build collections, good libraries build services, great libraries build communities.” As library professionals, our communities extend beyond our places of employment into the broader scope of our membership and service in the professional organizations that help keep us all connected, informed, and inspired. The most important thing is that we stand together, support one another, and continue to lead a united charge in protecting the intellectual freedom that our communities are built upon.

<sup>3</sup> “Intellectual Freedom Committee,” North Carolina Library Association, April 2023. <https://nclonline.org/Intellectual-Freedom-Committee>

# Celebrating April

I write this column at the end of April—April that some poets would have us sorrow for: “When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom’d,” in which Whitman “mourn’d, and yet shall mourn with ever-returning spring,” or T. S. Eliot’s famous beginning “April is the cruellest month, breeding / Lilacs out of the dead land, mixing / Memory and desire, stirring / Dull roots with spring rain.”



Image by LtPowers, Wikimedia Commons

Not me. I would rather celebrate Spring—after all, even in his elegy Whitman acknowledges that “every leaf” of the lilac bush is “a miracle.” And there is much to celebrate this spring, including this issue of *North Carolina Libraries*! In addition to the Biennium minutes, the encouragement of our association President to protect intellectual freedom, and a well-researched and enthusiastic history of Carnegie public and academic libraries in North Carolina, we have in this issue an article describing the creation and use of a multi-sensory and sensory inclusive library space and two new columns.

The first new column is “In Step with Library Leaders,” and the inaugural article provides responses to three questions asked of three library

leaders, one each from an academic, public, and school focus. Future articles in this column may range from “why I stepped up for library leadership” to “deciding when to say ‘no’” or from how to handle difficult conversations to how to bring people together in support of a strategic vision.

The second new column is “On the Front Lines,” and it is intended to provide a venue for sharing experiences, suggestions, and encouragement from library staff who work directly with patrons. Many thanks to ECU’s Head of Interlibrary Loan William Gee for contributing the first article in this column, “Welcoming the Next Patron.”

I hope our readers will join me in soaking in this first 2024 issue of *North Carolina Libraries* and look forward to a second issue in the fall. Feel free to contact me at [editor@nclaonline.org](mailto:editor@nclaonline.org) or 252-737-2728. In the meantime, listen to an April Rain Song play “a little sleep song on our roof at night” and then get outside and enjoy this puddle-wonderful spring!

Letters to the editor should be addressed to the editor and mailed to: Joyner Library, 1000 E Fifth Street, Greenville, NC 27858, or by email to [editor@nclaonline.org](mailto:editor@nclaonline.org).

We reserve the right to edit all submissions. If you are interested in writing for *North Carolina Libraries* or would like consideration for news and product information, please send brief information to the editor at the above address.



# Multi-Sensory Environments and Inclusive Sensory Engagement at Durham County Library

“An important bit of advice for evaluating your library’s services...seek the guidance of the community you are aiming to serve.”

Durham County Library was one of the first public libraries in the country with dedicated Multi-Sensory Environments for patrons of all ages. Durham County Library’s Multi-Sensory Environments are modeled after those that were originally designed in the Netherlands in the 1970s for therapeutic use, particularly for people with autism, developmental disabilities, traumatic brain injuries, and/or dementia. Originally known as Snoezelen Rooms, or *snoezelroom*,<sup>1</sup> these spaces quickly gained popularity due to their beneficial nature for everyone, regardless of disability status.<sup>2</sup>

After several years of bringing limited library programming to the disability community, Durham County Library was awarded a two-year LSTA project grant for July 2018 through June 2020. The initiative “Practicing Inclusivity” was in part to develop these dedicated sensory spaces.

Durham County Library’s journey toward becoming more inclusive originally began in April of 2012, in the Project Manager Sarah Alverson’s first week as a children’s librarian. An adult with disabilities and his caregiver came to the library. Alverson said hello and actively engaged with the adult, much to the caregiver’s surprise. The pair were longtime patrons of the branch and typically had little interaction with staff during their visits. At the end of the conversation, the caregiver asked if Alverson would be willing to start a weekly program for adults with disabilities. And thus began a multi-year partnership for weekly Sensory Storytimes. The program was a wonderful experience with painting, stories, cooking, dancing and singing!

When Alverson transitioned out of her Children’s Librarian role into the role of Community Engagement Administrator, she brought her experiences and all she had learned. Too aware of how individuals with disabilities were underserved within Durham’s library system, there was now an opportunity to make a change on a system-wide scale. The first step in defining the need in Durham County Library’s system, and obtaining information on how to address it, was to pull together a team to evaluate the programs, services, spaces, and resources for serving this community.

An important bit of advice for evaluating your library’s services when you hope to create a culture shift: seek the guidance of the community you are aiming to serve. It is pointless to aim to serve a community if their voices are not represented in determining the services and resources meant for them.



A young child engages with Durham County Library’s Multi-Sensory Environment bubble tubes and colorful lights.

<sup>1</sup> “Snoezelen Multi-Sensory Environments – Sensory Rooms and Therapy Explained,” Snoezelen Multi-Sensory Environments, accessed January 19, 2024, <https://snoezelen.info/history/>

<sup>2</sup> “Incorporating Sensory Spaces in Interior Design of Public Buildings,” Sensory One Sensory Room Specialists, accessed January 19, 2024, <https://sensoryone.com/incorporating-sensory-spaces-in-interior-design-of-public-buildings/>



An inside look at Durham County Library's Multi-Sensory Environment shows bubble tubes, mirrors, textured wall panels, and projections.

Do not assume you know how best to serve them, especially if you have no experience with that community!

To ensure that Durham County Library was responding directly to the community, and not just what was perceived as a need, the team had a series of conversations with individuals with disabilities, their family members, caregivers, and friends. They asked questions about library usage, and what improvements could be made to the library with specific emphasis on serving individuals with disabilities. From those focus groups came the overwhelming response to create more inclusive and welcoming environments, primarily through physical spaces and programs. The recurring needs were then developed into a proposal for a two-year LSTA project grant, “Practicing Inclusivity: Establishing a Multi-Sensory Environment, Inclusive Playroom, and Mobile Adaptive Technology and Sensory Units for Transformation at Main.” The “Practicing Inclusivity” initiative was a three-tiered approach to making Durham County Library more inclusive, focusing on library

spaces, programs, and staff training. This proposal was awarded funding, and much of the work towards improving the library system’s spaces, programs, and services was accomplished through the generosity of funding from the Institute of Museum and Library Services under the provisions of the Library Services and Technology Act as administered by the State Library of North Carolina, a division of the NC Department of Natural and Cultural Resources.

In the conversations the team had with individuals with disabilities, their parents, caregivers, families, and friends about the library, a common theme quickly arose. Many parents, specifically those with children with autism, expressed concern about the possibilities of their child experiencing a meltdown due to overstimulation in a new or overwhelming environment. From those conversations, the team learned that the “what if” of a meltdown in the library, traditionally viewed as a quiet space, was a huge barrier to families and their use of the library’s resources. This information was taken into account when designing Main Library’s sensory spaces, with

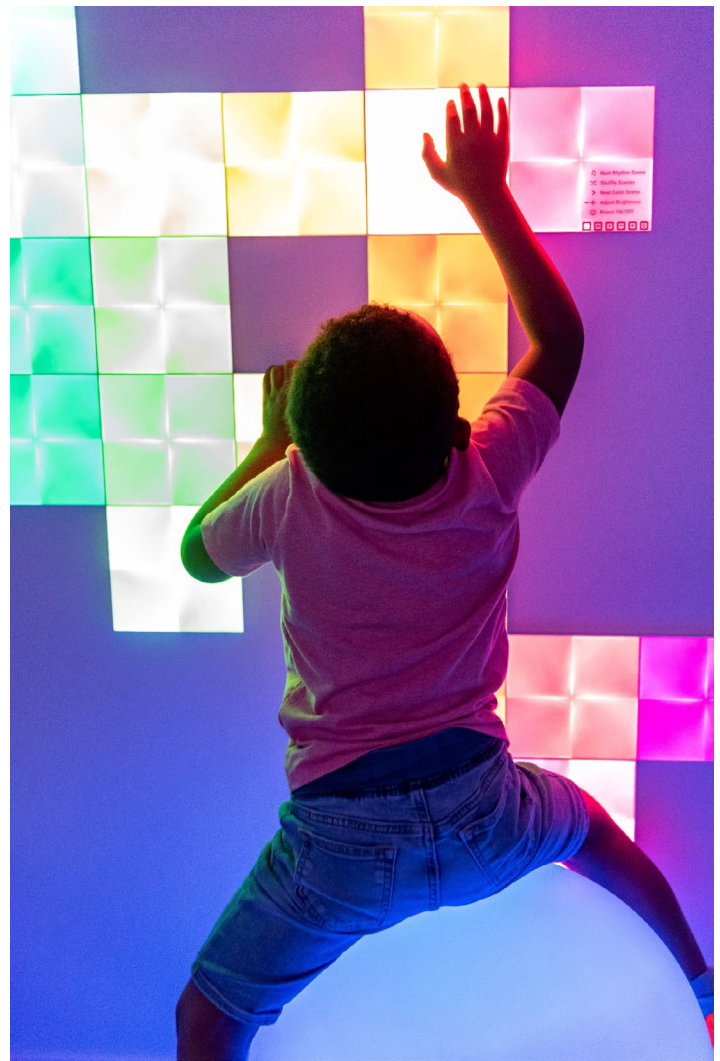


the end result being the creation of a separate Sensory Calming Room for patron use on an as-needed basis.

In 2021, Durham County Main Library opened two sensory spaces to the public: the Multi-Sensory Environment and Sensory Calming Room. The Multi-Sensory Environment is available by reservation for up to two hours per day. It includes music, projections, bubble tubes, fiber optic lights, and even a vibroacoustic waterbed that vibrates to the beat of music. Visitors can adjust light and sound to meet their specific needs and preferences. Since the Multi-Sensory Environment has been open, the library averages over 50 reservations per month. While Durham County Library does not track demographic use, conversations with users have shown that a diverse range of Durham's community has utilized the space, including but not limited to families with individuals with disabilities, college students needing a relaxing space after study, and occupational therapists and teachers working with their clients and students.

The Main Library's Sensory Calming Room is the library's smaller sensory space. It includes items such as a cozy cave, bubble wall, and soothing music, as well as a variety of fidget tools and toys. The Sensory Calming Room is available without reservation any time the library is open to the public, as library staff determined it would be beneficial to have a space readily available for anyone needing to self-regulate when overstimulated. The primary purpose of this space is to address that "what if" concern that the community shared repeatedly during the early research for the project initiative. For example, a child having a meltdown during story time can use the space with their guardian to calm their emotions and refocus, allowing them to rejoin the story time when they choose. Since the Sensory Calming Room has been open, patrons of all ages have been observed engaging in the space.

In February of 2022, Jennifer Jamsky was brought on board as the Accessibility Services Coordinator to continue to grow and expand the original efforts of the initiative. In addition to her other job duties, Jamsky also serves as the point person for the sensory spaces and as such, often receives feedback from patrons on their positive sensory room experiences. One patron who is a developmental counselor re-



A young child presses colorful light panels in Durham County Library's Multi-Sensory Environment.

cently shared that a client of hers was more engaged and vocal than ever while using the Multi-Sensory Environment. Another patron noticed that her infant daughter would happily enjoy tummy time while watching the bubble tubes and wall projections, instead of the normal tummy time behavior of screaming and agitation.

Durham County Library's sensory inclusion reaches beyond the physical walls of the library building, as staff strive to make the benefits of sensory engagement available to the wider community, including those who cannot visit library locations. The "Practicing Inclusivity" initiative included funding for a mobile sensory unit, which is utilized at library locations and with community and outreach partners to provide sensory engagement for all ages, in Durham County and beyond. Durham County Library also developed Sensory Bins and Sensory Kits. Sensory

Bins are available at each library location and are filled with fidget items as well as calming and focus tools (such as headphones and sunglasses) and are used by library staff during programming and events. Sensory Kits are available for checkout to the general public and include a wide range of tactile and fidget tools so that patrons can sample a variety of items to help them discover what types of sensory engagement work best for them.

The Accessibility Services Coordinator also leads outreach sensory and disability programming system-wide. Since joining the library, Jamsky has created outreach partnerships with multiple disability-centered organizations, enabling the library to provide accessible, interesting, and inclusive programming for the historically underserved disability community. Accessibility Services also provides sensory based programming at all library locations. In collaboration with STEAM and other library departments, Jamsky has developed programs such as Make Your Own Sensory Kit and Immersive Art Experiences. Sensory offerings are always very popular with patrons, especially when they are able to create sensory objects,

such as texture panels and fidget bracelets, for their own use.

While the current practices have been popular, Durham County Library is still constantly growing and changing. Public libraries must constantly evolve to meet the needs of the greater community, as the needs of the community are constantly changing. Durham County Library found that for Durham's disability community, sensory engagement has been vital to bridge the gap in services and strengthen the connections with organizations, families, and individuals.

As interest in sensory inclusion and engagement continues to grow, Durham County Library has had the opportunity to provide training and guidance to other library systems and organizations as they develop their own spaces' best practices and unique sensory programming, and they are always open to collaborating with other library systems and organizations to provide encouragement and guidance in the development of programs, services, and resources for the community.

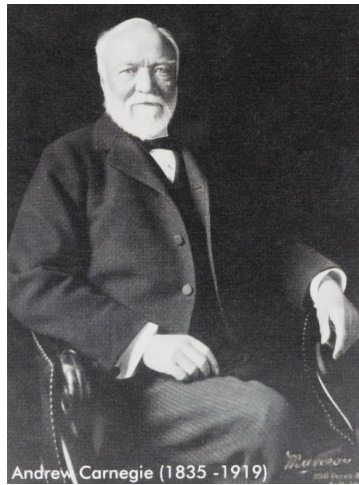
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Durham County Library patrons engage with projection lights as they work on a community photography project.



# Andrew Carnegie (1835-1919) and His Philanthropy to Public and Academic Libraries in North Carolina



Andrew Carnegie Postcard, Image used by permission of the author.

In 1848, Andrew Carnegie, his parents, and younger brother left economically depressed Scotland for the United States. They settled in Allegheny, Pennsylvania (known today as the North Side of Pittsburgh). While working in a cotton mill for twelve hours a day for six days a week, Carnegie received his early education by reading books in the J. Anderson Library of Allegheny, set up by Colonel James Anderson, a retired manufacturer and War of 1812 veteran. Colonel Anderson gave access to his 400-volume library to local working boys, many of whom were immigrants like himself. Remembering those heady days in Allegheny in September 1887, Carnegie praised Colonel Anderson in a speech given in Grangemouth, Scotland:

“Colonel Anderson opened to me the intellectual wealth of the world. I became fond of reading. I revelled [sic] week after week in the books. My toil was light, for I got up at six o’clock in the morning, contented to work until six in the evening if there

was then a book for me to read. Can you wonder that I have thought that when I have made wealth, the noblest use to which that wealth can be placed is to imitate Colonel Anderson and set up free libraries?”

Imbued with the mindset that the rich had an obligation to give back their wealth to society, Carnegie believed that to die rich was to die disgraced. Therefore, he resolved to give away the bulk of his fortune made in the sale of his Carnegie Steel Company to financier J. P. Morgan in 1901 to found public and academic libraries throughout the United States for two reasons. First, he believed that in America residents with access to books and the desire to learn could self-educate themselves and be as successful as he had been. Second, libraries would help him and other immigrants to get cultural knowledge of their adopted country and lead them on the path to full US citizenship.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Burton J. Hendrick, *The Life of Andrew Carnegie*, Vols. I-II (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, Doran & Company, 1932), I: 67 (quote), II: 138-139 (sale to J. P. Morgan); Theodore Jones, *Carnegie Libraries Across America: A Public Legacy* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1997), 4-5; Abigail A. Van Slyck, *Free to All: Carnegie Libraries & American Culture, 1890-1920* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 8-9; George S. Bobinski, *Carnegie Libraries: Their History and Impact on American Public Library Development* (Chicago: American Library Association, 1969), 12; *Carnegie Grants for Library Buildings, 1890-1917*: Durand R. Miller, *A List of Library Buildings, Public And Academic, Erected With Funds Provided by Andrew Carnegie And Carnegie Corporation of New York* (New York: Carnegie Corporation of New York, 1943), 8.

## Library Philanthropy Across the United States, 1886-1924

Carnegie began his library philanthropy in the United States in 1886, approximately 15 years before he ended his career as the world's wealthiest steel magnate in 1901. From 1886 to 1924, Carnegie donated public library construction grants to 1,419 US communities that resulted in the construction of 1,681 public libraries at a cost of \$41,233,853.47. Only Alaska, Rhode Island, and Delaware did not receive Carnegie public library grants.

During the period from 1886 to 1897, a period Carnegie dubbed the "retail" era of his philanthropy, he gave a total \$1,860,869 for fourteen buildings to six communities in the United States. His method for awarding gifts was informal and personal. He donated four public libraries to the communities of Allegheny (1886), Pittsburgh (1890), Braddock (1895), and Homestead (1896), all in Pennsylvania, to serve the employees of the towns in which his steel mills were found. In 1890, he donated funds to replace the Johnstown, Pennsylvania, library that was destroyed in the Johnstown Flood of 1889. In 1892, in response to a personal plea from Senator James Wilson of Iowa, he donated a public library construction grant to Fairfield, Iowa. In 1897, he donated funds for the completion of a public library in Gardiner, Maine.<sup>2</sup>

After 1897, in the period Carnegie dubbed the "wholesale" era, his library construction grants to communities were better organized and awarded not out of personal interest but due to a more rigorous process involving facts gathered in a questionnaire from both public and academic library applicants. Once the public was alerted to the fact that Carnegie was giving away money for libraries, applications began to pour in from across the United States. Carnegie and his personal secretary James Bertram

worked together to approve public library construction grants. Bertram was Carnegie's personal secretary for seventeen years from 1897 to 1914, and secretary to the Carnegie Corporation of New York from 1911 to 1934.

In 1900, Carnegie and Bertram began to accept applications from colleges and universities for the construction of library buildings. The requirements for public and academic library grants were similar. Public library construction grants required that the requesting community supply a site for the library and pledge a 10% annual maintenance fee. The amount of money donated was dependent on the population of the community according to the latest official U.S. census, the standard being about \$2 - \$3 per capita. Academic library building matching grants required that the requesting institution supply an endowment amount equal to that of the building grant.<sup>3</sup>

In 1900, when Carnegie began to donate grants for academic library buildings, only 62 U.S. colleges and universities had freestanding library buildings that were designed and built specifically to be used as libraries. From 1904 to 1917, Carnegie donated matching grants to 109 colleges and universities for library buildings, totaling \$11,781,592. These grants aided 10 percent of all institutions of higher learning in the United States.<sup>4</sup>

Although all United States colleges and universities were eligible to apply for academic library building grants, Carnegie was particularly interested in funding what he called "freshwater" or "small, struggling" colleges and universities rather than larger state-supported and more established institutions. Carnegie was particularly interested in funding libraries that served African American residents and students. Fourteen of the 109 grants for academic library buildings went to Historically Black Colleges

<sup>2</sup> Jones, 10-13, 103, 127-30. The Fairfield Iowa grant marked the first time Carnegie funded a library in community where he had no personal ties or investments and where there were no disasters. The grant to Johnstown was given out of guilt because Carnegie and other Pittsburgh elites in the South Fork Fishing and Hunting Club owned property on the earthen dam that collapsed causing the flood. Robert M. Lester, *Forty Years of Carnegie Giving: A Summary of the Benefactions of Andrew Carnegie and of the Work of the Philanthropic Trusts Which He Created* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1941), 93; Miller, 7-8; Bobinski, 13-14.

<sup>3</sup> Bobinski, "Appendix A: Samples of Standard Letters and Forms as Found in the Carnegie Library Correspondence," 203-206; "Appendix B: List of Communities in the United States Receiving Carnegie Grants for Public Library Buildings," 207-242.

<sup>4</sup> Donna K. Cohen, "Andrew Carnegie and Academic Library Philanthropy: The Case of Rollins College, Winter Park, Florida," *Libraries & Culture*, 35, no. 3 (Summer 2000): 389, 390, 395; Shaundra Walker, "A Revisionist History of Andrew Carnegie's Library Grants to Black Colleges," Georgia College and State University, Ina Dillard Russell Library (2017): 31-51, accessed Jan. 10, 2024, <https://kb.gcsu.edu/lib/3>; Lester, 60.

and Universities (HBCUs). Over a three-year period from 1904-1907, Carnegie invested \$240,490 into the physical plants of HBCUs to incorporate central heating and electric lighting. At some colleges, particularly in the South, the new buildings prompted the hiring of the first full-time librarians. The matching endowment stipulation required by Carnegie also assured that the purchase of books occurred in a planned and organized manner.<sup>5</sup>

## Final Years of Carnegie Library Philanthropy

In 1910, at the age of seventy-five, Carnegie was in a race with time to dispose of his wealth and to reach his goal of not dying in disgrace. Elihu Root, then US Secretary of State and President of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, suggested that Carnegie deposit the bulk of his remaining fortune in a philanthropic foundation and leave the work to others.

Carnegie took Root's advice. In November 1911, in the Music room of his Fifth Avenue mansion, Carnegie presided over the first meeting of the Carnegie Corporation of New York, which he endowed with \$125 million. Special guests included Carnegie's wife Louise and their daughter Margaret. From 1911 onward, the Corporation would administer all Carnegie programs, including the public and academic library construction grants program, which furthered the Corporation's mission "to promote the advancement of and diffusion of knowledge and understanding among the people of the United States."

Charter members of the board of trustees were Elihu Root, Henry S. Pritchett, Charles L. Taylor, Robert S. Woodward, William N. Frew, and Samuel H. Church, all former associates of Carnegie. The executive committee of the Corporation, including Carnegie as president, Bertram as secretary, and Robert Franks as treasurer, met often to conduct the business of philanthropy. The annual meetings of the Corporation's board of the trustees merely approved the actions of the executive committee. In 1914, the

Carnegie Corporation set up its headquarters in offices at 576 Fifth Avenue, and Bertram continued to take care of day-to-day operations.<sup>6</sup>

In late 1915, Carnegie Corporation trustees were made aware of problems with the library grants program. The League of Library Commissions had reported that the 10 percent library maintenance pledge was not always enough. On November 18, 1915, Henry S. Pritchett, chair of the board of trustees, called upon Alvin S. Johnson, an economics professor at Cornell University, and authorized him to visit Carnegie-funded libraries, and draft a report on their effectiveness in promoting the mission of the Corporation.

Johnson took a ten-week tour through the Middle West to the West Coast, back through the South, up the Middle Atlantic states, and finally through New England, visiting some 100 Carnegie public libraries of many sizes. Johnson's instructions were to evaluate the buildings, maintenance pledges, community intent in asking for a library building, and the current state of academic training of librarians. Bertram aided Johnson by suggesting the libraries to be visited, a third of which were in Texas, a third in Massachusetts, and the remaining third in Oklahoma, Iowa, Nebraska, Michigan, and New York.

On November 18, 1916, Johnson sent a devastating report to the trustees of the Corporation. His report indicated that buildings in general had been poorly planned but had gotten progressively better as more control had been exerted by Bertram, particularly after 1911 when Bertram's Notes on the Erection of Library Buildings was made available to applicants. Johnson confirmed the report from the League of Library Commissions that many libraries he visited were not in compliance with the 10% maintenance pledge required by their grants.

Johnson concluded his report with the recommendation that the Corporation assist the American Library Association in projects of mutual interest, such as the collection of statistics and other general information relating to library conditions; the prepara-

<sup>5</sup> David Kaser, "Andrew Carnegie and the Black College Libraries," in *For the Good of the Order: Essays in Honor of Edward G. Holley*, ed. Delmus E. Williams, John N. Budd, Robert E. Martin, Barbara Moran, and Fred Roper, Foundations in Library and Information Science, 33 (Greenwich, CT: JAI Press, 1994), 119, 131; Hendrick, II: 261; "List of Historically Black Colleges and Universities," in *Wikipedia*, accessed Jan. 10, 2024, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_historically\\_black\\_colleges\\_and\\_universities](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_historically_black_colleges_and_universities)

<sup>6</sup> Bobinski, 26; Jones, 99; Van Slyck, 24, includes a photograph of the attendees of the first meeting of the Carnegie Corporation in 1911.



ration of lists of books analyzed and appraised for the use of small libraries as book selection aids; and the coordination of library demand for books with a view to influencing publishers to prepare editions in paper and bindings suitable for library use. In the final analysis, Johnson concluded that the Corporation should approve no more library grants to public or academic libraries.

On November 7, 1917, almost a year from the date that Johnson's report was first sent to the Corporation, the board of trustees, chastened by Johnson's recommendations, voted to end the library building construction grants to public libraries and the matching grants to colleges and universities for library buildings. No new applications for the erection of library buildings would be considered; however, exceptions to this policy would be made for already committed funds into the 1920s.

From 1917 onward, the Carnegie Corporation would instead focus its efforts on evaluating and improving existing libraries, rather than building new ones. By 1917, two years before his death in 1919, Carnegie had given away more than \$350 million to fund projects not only for public and academic libraries, but also for world peace, education, teachers' pensions, hero funds, and other issues he held dear.<sup>7</sup>

## Carnegie Public Library Philanthropy in North Carolina

In North Carolina, from March 12, 1902 to May 3, 1917, Andrew Carnegie funded the construction of ten Carnegie free public library buildings from nine grants totaling \$165,696. The order and year of grants were Charlotte (1901), Greensboro (1902), Winston-Salem (1903), Rutherford College (1907), Hendersonville (1911), Andrews (1914), Murphy (1916), and finally Durham and Hickory both in 1917, the same year that the Carnegie Corporation suspended its public library construction grant program. Grant amounts ranged from the smallest grant

of \$2,500 to the tiny community of Rutherford College in Burke County to the largest grant of \$40,446 to Greensboro in Guilford County.<sup>8</sup>

Carnegie library construction grants were donated to five Piedmont communities (Charlotte, Durham, Greensboro, Hickory, Winston-Salem) and four small communities in the Mountains (Andrews, Hendersonville, Murphy, and Rutherford College). Communities in the less populous Coastal Plain region of the state received no Carnegie library construction grants.

North Carolina received only a modest share of Carnegie funds. North Carolina ranked 34<sup>th</sup> in amount of funding for the construction of Carnegie public libraries. North Carolina ranked 35<sup>th</sup> in the number of communities receiving Carnegie grants (with 9) and 36<sup>th</sup> in number of library buildings constructed (10).<sup>9</sup>

All North Carolina Carnegie grants were to the segregated communities of Andrews, Charlotte, Durham, Hendersonville, Hickory, Murphy, Rutherford College, and Winston-Salem. Two libraries were constructed in Greensboro, the segregated main library, and the branch library for African Americans. Although Durham and Charlotte did not receive grants from Carnegie to construct libraries for African Americans, their grants spurred these cities to set up respectively the Durham Colored Library in Durham, and the Brevard Street Library in Charlotte.

By the early 1980s, four of the ten Carnegie public library buildings, Andrews, Charlotte, Greensboro (segregated), and Rutherford College, were demolished. Two, Durham and Hickory, are now in private hands. Two are still being used as educational facilities: the Murphy building is now the Cherokee County Historical Museum and Greensboro's library for African Americans is used as offices on the Bennett College campus. The remaining two Carnegie buildings are used as a church (Winston-Salem) and as a Chamber of Commerce (Hendersonville).<sup>10</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Miller, 16; Jones, 100-102; Van Slyck, 22-24, 34-40, 44-45, 103; Bobinski, 57-63, 143-60.

<sup>8</sup> Eileen McGrath, "Carnegie Libraries," in *Encyclopedia of North Carolina*, ed. by William S. Powell (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), accessed Jan. 10, 2024, <https://www.ncpedia.org/carnegie-libraries>

<sup>9</sup> Bobinski, 17-20.

<sup>10</sup> Patrick Valentine, "Steel, Cotton, and Tobacco: Philanthropy and Public Libraries in North Carolina, 1900-1940," *Libraries & Culture* 31, no. 2 (Spring 1996): 272-298, Table 1: Carnegie Public Library Grants in North Carolina, 279; Helen Snow, *The Greensboro Public Library: The First 100 Years* (Virginia Beach, VA: Donning Company Publishers, 2003), 19; Scott, 28.

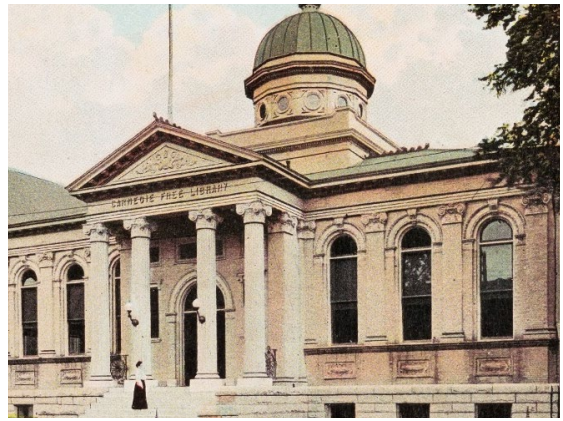
## Andrews Public Library

On April 13, 1914, the small mountain community of Andrews in Cherokee County, received a \$5,000 Carnegie grant to build a public library. A brief digital file on the history of this library survives, consisting mostly of a photocopy of the *Dictionary of American Biography* entry on Carnegie, written by Carnegie biographer, Burton Jesse Hendrick (BJH). The hand-written history revealed that the library was built on June 9, 1914, and that the city board had to promise to offer a lot to build on and then to give \$500 annually for upkeep and the employment of a librarian. The history also revealed that the Carnegie grant was received because one of the residents of Andrews, a Mr. Croyard, was a long-time friend of Andrew Carnegie. This brief history proved that Carnegie was swayed by acquaintances and prominent citizens rather than strictly following the official guidelines he and Bertram had required.

The original Andrews Carnegie Public Library was demolished in 1979 to make way for the present 1979 library which is part of the Nantahala Regional Library System that serves Cherokee, Clay, and Graham counties with public libraries in Andrews, Hayesville, Murphy, and Robbinsville.<sup>11</sup>

## Charlotte Public Library

The first Carnegie public library construction grant in North Carolina went to Charlotte in 1901. The founding of the Charlotte Public Library can be traced back to January 1891 when a citizens group organized the Charlotte Literacy and Library Association. It was a subscription library, open to those willing to pay 50 cents per month. The library was run in rooms above the Stone and Barringer bookstore at 22 South Tryon Street for nine years under the direction of librarian Bessie Lacy Dewey. In 1900, the library's board of directors turned over management of the library to a group of upper-class women who had been the library's regular patrons. When after two months this effort did not generate enough support, the board of directors turned over library books and equipment to the City School Commissioners. The library became the Charlotte Public School Library, found in two rooms in City Hall at



Carnegie Free Library, Charlotte Postcard. Image used by permission of the author.

the corner of North Tryon and East Fifth Streets. This arrangement, lasting two and a half years under the supervision of librarian Sallie H. Adams, was supported by public taxes but stayed a segregated library.

Thomas S. Franklin, a manufacturer of cotton presses and a member of the City Board of Aldermen, heard that steel magnate Andrew Carnegie was offering communities money for public library construction. On his next business trip to New York City, Franklin met with his friend James Bertram, secretary of the Carnegie Corporation and Carnegie's righthand man, and asked for his help. Arrangements were made for Charlotte to receive a gift of \$20,000, later increased to \$25,000, and the grant was received on March 12, 1901. The grant required the city to give a building site and taxes of at least \$2,500 per year for operations. Charlotte citizens approved the tax on May 6, 1901.

The Charlotte Public Library, which opened in July 1903 at 310 N. Tryon Street, was the first free public library in Charlotte and the second one in North Carolina, the first being the Durham Public Library. Architects Oliver D. Wheeler and J. M. McMichael constructed a classically designed structure that featured a pediment, four Ionic columns, pilasters, a flight of stairs, and a domed copula. The interior was furnished in deep oak furniture and divided into five rooms: a reading room, a book room, a children's room, an office, a room holding historical materials and memorabilia, and a basement.

Despite a small collection of only 2,526 volumes, librarian Annie Smith Ross inaugurated an ambitious

<sup>11</sup> Miller, 21; "A Short History of the Andrews Carnegie Library," accessed Jan. 10, 2024, <https://lib.digitalnc.org/record/107364>; Bobinski, 163; Snow, 19; Valentine, "Steel, Cotton, and Tobacco," 277; Scott, 26.

program of events and activities, including lectures, children's book programs, and benefit concerts. Due to her initiative, the North Carolina Library Association held its first meeting at the Charlotte Public Library in 1904.

In 1915, the Carnegie Corporation granted \$15,000 to the Charlotte Public Library to build an annex at the rear of the building to house a separate Children's Department and in the lower level a meeting room with a small stage where the Little Theater of Charlotte first performed. The original grant of \$25,000, plus the \$15,000 for the annex, made the total Carnegie Corporation appropriation to Charlotte \$40,000.

Although Carnegie was happy when provisions were made for African Americans, he never attempted to foster integration with his donations. Charlotte, however, had an active African American community and soon the city built a library for Black people with their own governing board. In early 1904, the City Aldermen bought a lot at the corner of Brevard and East 2<sup>nd</sup> Streets, only six blocks from the segregated Carnegie Library. The Brevard Street Library, named for its location, never received equal funding, but it was the first free public library for African Americans in North Carolina. It received part of the city's annual appropriation of \$2,500 dollars with its share averaging around four hundred dollars. The new Brevard Street Library was a small 2,500 square-foot red-brick building in the heart of the Brooklyn neighborhood near all the Black churches and most of the Black-owned businesses and professional offices. The library opened to the public on February 2, 1906.

The Brevard Street Library was independent of the segregated 1903 Carnegie Library and overseen by a separate board of African American citizens. It stayed an independent organization until 1929 when it was placed under the administration of the Charlotte Public Library and continued its operation as a branch library and cultural center for Charlotte's African Americans. When the Charlotte Mecklen-

burg Library system integrated in 1956, the city engaged in an extensive urban renewal project in the Brooklyn/Second Ward community. These two circumstances together spelled the end for the Brevard Street Branch, which was closed in 1961.

The original 1903 building for the segregated Charlotte Public Library was remodeled around 1940 and served as a public library until April 1954. Later that same year, the library was torn down and replaced by the Public Library of Charlotte and Mecklenburg County building that was constructed on the same site. The newly remodeled library opened to the public in November 1956. Later Charlotte Public Libraries were built in 1956 and 1989 on the same site as the original 1903 Carnegie library. The Charlotte Public Library changed its name in 1945 to Public Library of Charlotte and Mecklenburg County and in 2009 the name was shortened to Charlotte Mecklenburg Library.<sup>12</sup>

### **Durham Public Library**

The Durham Public Library, the first free, tax-supported public library in North Carolina, began as an idea discussed by Professor Edwin Mims of Trinity College (now Duke University) with the Canterbury Club, a local literary club, in June 1895. Lalla Ruth Carr was instrumental in getting her father Julian Shakespeare Carr, who carried the honorary title of General, to spearhead the fund-raising campaign for the library. General Carr, who had made his fortune manufacturing the famous Bull Durham chewing tobacco, along with Mrs. Thomas H. Martin, donated \$2,500 for a lot at Five Points as the building site. Local citizens then raised over \$1,300 and the city appropriated fifty dollars a month. On March 5, 1897, an act incorporating the Durham Public Library was passed by the North Carolina General Assembly. The library was finished in January 1898 and opened its door to the public the following month.

In 1905, over the objections of General Carr, the library board applied for a grant from Carnegie to build a larger library. On July 1, 1911, Lillian Baker

<sup>12</sup> Miller, 23; Valentine, "The Origin of College Libraries in North Carolina, 96; "Charlotte Mecklenburg Library History," accessed Jan. 10, 2024, <https://www.cmstory.org/exhibits/turn-20th-century-life-charlotte-1910-views-city/carnegie=library-charlottes-first>; Patrick M. Valentine, "Steel, Cotton, and Tobacco: Philanthropy and Public Libraries in North Carolina, 1900-1940, *Libraries & Culture*, 31, no. 2 (Spring 1996), 275-276; Jones, 59, 67-69, photograph on p. 68; Van Slyck, 57-59; Ralph Lee Scott, "The Carnegie Public Library movement in North Carolina," *North Carolina Libraries*, Fall 1981, 25, 27.



Briggs, a professionally trained librarian began her tenure as librarian of the Durham Public Library. On September 14, 1917, the library board of the segregated Durham Public Library, with the encouragement of Griggs, received a Carnegie public library construction grant of \$32,000. The entry of the United States into World War I delayed construction, but four years later, in 1921, the new Durham Public Library, designed by master library designer Edward L. Tilton of New York, opened to the public.

Library services for Durham's African American community did not begin until 1913 when Dr. Aaron McDuffie Moore set up a library of 799 donated books for African American residents in the basement of White Rock Baptist Church, where he was superintendent of the Sunday school. On August 14, 1916, the Sunday school library moved into a building owned by John Merrick at the corner of Fayetteville and Pettigrew Streets and the Durham Colored Library was set up.

In 1917, the city of Durham began granting the small library a meager monthly appropriation, but the library still relied heavily on community financial support. That same year, James E. Shepard, President of the National Training School in Durham, wrote Carnegie about the dire situation in Durham for African Americans. Despite Shepard's plea for books and operating expenses, the Durham Colored Library received no funds from Carnegie due to his policy of donating grants only for the construction of libraries and not for book purchases or operational expenses. In 1918, the library received an additional appropriation from Durham County and that same year the North Carolina General Assembly incorporated it as the Durham Colored Library. Hattie B. Wooten was hired as the librarian and only employee.

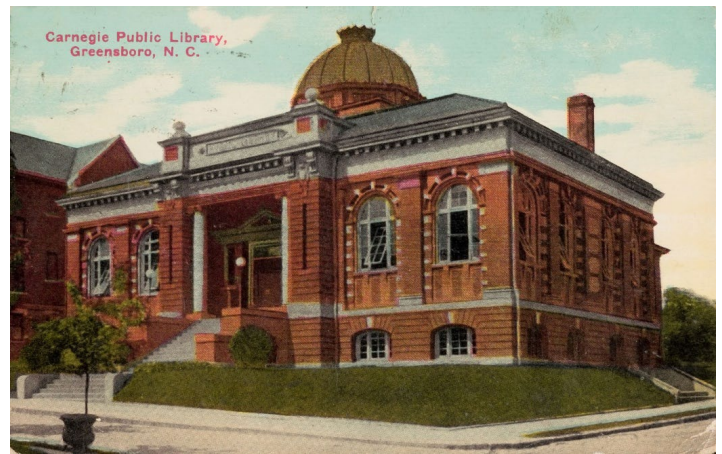
In 1940, the Durham Colored Library moved into a new building and was named the Stanford L. Warren Public Library. In 1966, the segregated library and the Durham Colored Library merged. The

Stanford L. Warren library became a branch of the Durham City-County Library. In 1973, the Durham Public Library became an agency of Durham County, and, in 1976, Durham County voters overwhelmingly approved a bond issue for the construction of a newly named Durham County Public Library, which opened on March 17, 1980. The 1917 library building was then closed and later renovated for county offices.<sup>13</sup>

## Greensboro Public Library

On February 4, 1902, the city of Greensboro formally opened its first library, three rooms on the third floor of City Hall, located at the northwest corner of North Elm Street and Gaston Street (now Friendly Avenue). The library opened to the public one day later, February 5, with 1,490 books, thirty-two periodicals, and three daily papers. The library was open twelve hours a day. The City aldermen selected Miss Bettie Caldwell as the first librarian. The library operated in the City Hall until 1906.

In March 1902, concurrently with the opening of the library in City Hall, Mayor W. H. Osborn and Dr. C. D. McIver asked Andrew Carnegie for a grant to build a new library. On April 26, 1902, Carnegie offered Greensboro \$30,464 for the construction of a



Carnegie Public Library, Greensboro, N. C. Postcard. Image used by permission of the author.

<sup>13</sup> Miller, 24; Scott, 25-26; Valentine, "Steel, Cotton, and Tobacco," 273-274; "History of the Durham County Library," accessed Jan. 10, 2024, <https://durhamcountylibrary.org/history/>; "The History of the Stanford L. Warren Library," accessed Jan. 10, 2024, <https://durhamcountylibrary.org/exhibits/slw/timeline.php>; Betty Young, "Griggs, Lillian Baker (8 Jan. 1876-11 Apr. 1955)," in *Dictionary of North Carolina*, ed. by William S. Powell (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 1986), accessed Jan. 1, 2024, <https://www.ncpedia.org/biography/griggs-lillian>; David Stick and Jerry L. Cross (additional research provided by Anne M. Berkley, Faye Terres Blalock Rusty Rains, and Katherine Zeisel), "Public Libraries," in *Encyclopedia of North Carolina*, ed. by William S. Powell (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 2006), accessed Jan. 10 2024, <https://www.ncpedia.org/public-libraries>

segregated library, with the requirement that the city provide a building site and pay for maintenance support in the amount of 10% of the gift each year. The City aldermen formally accepted Carnegie's grant on December 8, 1903. The community raised the money for a building lot on what is now Commerce Place, in the spot where the education building of West Market Street United Methodist Church currently stands.

The building, designed by architect Charles Christian (C. C.) Hook of Charlotte, opened on Easter Monday, April 16, 1906, at Library Place (now John Wesley Way) and West Gaston Street (now West Friendly Avenue). Greensboro's population at that time was 10,035 people; just over 40% (4,086) of the population were African Americans.

The segregated main library of the Greensboro Public Library had run out of space by 1939. The Richardson family of Vicks VapoRub fame offered Greensboro \$100,000 to buy the former First Presbyterian Church on Church Street (now Summit Avenue). The Richardson gift also included \$125,000 for remodeling. On May 15, 1939, Greensboro Public Library moved into the renovated facility, the Richardson Civic Center, which it shared with the Greensboro Historical Museum, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Community Chest, Art Center, and other organizations. The 1906 segregated library was razed in 1950 to allow more space for the educational program of the West Market Street Methodist Church,

which had bought the property when the library moved to the Richardson Civic Center.

On December 8, 1905, two years after the City aldermen accepted Andrew Carnegie's offer to finance a building for the segregated Greensboro Public Library, E. P. Wharton, the same man who made the largest donation for the founding of the Greensboro Public Library in 1902, informed the aldermen that he had applied to the Carnegie Corporation for funds to build a library for the community's African American population. The Corporation had responded with an offer of \$10,000. Wharton asked the aldermen to accept the offer since the Agricultural and Mechanical College (A&M College, now A&T University) would pay half of the annual amount for maintenance. On March 12, 1906, James B. Dudley, president of A&M College, came before the aldermen and asked that the city share the cost of maintaining the library for African Americans. They promised to give the matter immediate consideration. Finally, after almost ten years, Mayor J. T. Murphy asked the Carnegie Corporation to carry out the longstanding promise. The Corporation wrote a letter on September 29, 1915 promising the funds. The city had apparently never formally accepted the 1905 offer, a possible reason being that the racial climate of 1905 was extremely volatile.

Although Murphy's letter had stated that a site had been selected, a lively debate about the ideal site continued. A lot on East Market Street had many



Carnegie Negro Library, Greensboro, NC. Source: Carnegie Negro Library, Greensboro, North Carolina (1924-1963) • (blackpast.org).

supporters since it would be in the heart of the African American business district. Others favored 900 East Market Street on the Bennett College campus, where the Freedman's Aid Society, under whose authority the College then functioned, offered a lot. Those opposing this proposition considered that being on a Methodist Church-affiliated college campus might make the library a sectarian institution instead of a truly public institution. The possible site on the A&T University campus had been rejected because the library was to be for the public, not primarily for the A&T students. The supporters of the East Market Street location considered that site more conveniently located for the library's users, since Washington Street at the time was not even paved. There were many meetings as well as petitions by interested citizens and members of various churches. Protests continued even after the City Council eventually selected the East Washington Street location in 1916.

In April 1917, Mayor Murphy sent the Carnegie Corporation a copy of the resolution adopted by the Board of City Commissioners, agreeing to furnish the site and to pay for maintenance. He also sent plans and specifications as required by the Corporation and sent a bid that came in under \$10,000. Although Carnegie died in 1919, the Corporation continued to handle his donations for library buildings. Still construction did not begin. Funding was available; the city had approved the maintenance costs; plans had been drawn; a bid received; and a site selected. The reason for the delay is still not known.

Greensboro's Mayor received a letter from James Bertram, secretary of the Carnegie Corporation, on May 14, 1920, warning that if evidence of progress in construction was not provided, the promise of the Carnegie Corporation would be considered as having lapsed. With no evidence forthcoming, the Corporation in 1921 finally lost patience and canceled the offer, but fortunately renewed it in 1922, the only renewal on record, after a personal plea by Andrew Carnegie's widow, Louise.

Due to inflation, it was no longer possible to build a suitable library for \$10,000, but the Carnegie Corporation declined to increase its donation. When the branch was finally built, the \$10,000 original grant had to be supplemented by \$4,375 from the Board of Education for Negroes of the Methodist Episcopal

Church, \$250 from the City, and \$250 from E. P. Wharton and C. H. Ireland, to make up the \$4,875 necessary to build the library.

Construction began in the winter of 1923 and the library opened on October 1, 1924. It had the distinction of being North Carolina's only Carnegie library for African Americans and it was also the only library in Guilford county available for their use. The building was disappointingly small, only about 2,500 square feet. The collection too was small but carefully selected by Mrs. Martha O. Sebastian, who served as librarian from until 1948.

Although the Greensboro Public Library was opened to all users in 1957, Greensboro Public did not merge with the Carnegie Negro Library until July 1963. After many years of being entirely independent, with a governing board of African American trustees, it became the Southeast Branch of the Greensboro Public Library, governed by that library's all-white Board of Trustees. Helen Walden became the branch librarian. The Carnegie Building was used until February 20, 1966, when a new building at the corner of East Lee Street and Benbow Road made possible by a 1960 bond issue for \$100,000, was dedicated. The Carnegie building is now used for Bennett College offices.

In 1964, the City of Greensboro funded a new library to replace the Richardson Civic Center Library. On July 12, 1964, the move to the new library located at 201 North Greene Street was completed. The Greene Street Library served Greensboro until 1998 and now houses city offices. The 1964 new building began to seem outmoded as early as 1974. In 1983, the City bought a 15,000 square foot building at 211 North Greene Street, next to the Central Library, with the expectation of using the space for future library expansion. In 1988, a library planning committee recommended that a new downtown library with adequate parking be found or built as early as 1994.

In January 1996, the City Council approved the North Church Street site, ending all thought of expanding the existing library. Downtown was chosen for its accessibility to all citizens. The final cost of the building was \$14.7 million, well within budget considering the interest that the money had earned during the long period of waiting. The library opened



on Saturday, October 31, 1998 at 219 North Church Street and has served Greensboro since.

In 1963, when the city integrated its library system, the Carnegie Negro Library became the Southeast Branch of the Greensboro Public Library, with Helen Walden as its head librarian from 1963 to 1980. In 1966, the Southeast Branch moved from the Bennett College campus to its current location at 900 S. Benbow Road and in 1993 was renamed the Vance Chavis Library to honor of longtime Greensboro educator and civil rights advocate Vance Chavis.<sup>14</sup>

### **Hendersonville Carnegie Library**

On May 2, 1911, the resort town of Hendersonville in Henderson County received a Carnegie public library construction grant although the town did not meet the requirement of 10% for annual maintenance. Carnegie saved the day by donating \$10,000 of his personal funds to build the public library as a favor for a business associate. Republicans in Hendersonville had appointed the associate, Colonel Sylvester Everette of Cleveland, Ohio, as an alternate delegate for North Carolina to the Republican National Convention. Using his influence as a fellow

Republican, Everette showed his gratitude to Hendersonville Republicans by requesting a grant from his fellow Republican, Andrew Carnegie.

Also, in 1911, a local lawyer, Charles French Toms, persuaded his father, Captain Marion Columbus Toms, to donate a site at the corner of King Street and 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue as the building site for the Carnegie public library, which opened in 1914. The Hendersonville town commissioners agreed to support the library by hiring a librarian and a janitor. The town soon requested an added five thousand dollars from Carnegie to accommodate the flood of summer visitors to Hendersonville, but the Corporation refused. The Hendersonville Public Library, designed and built by master architect Edward L. Tilton of New York, closed in 1970 to become the home of the Henderson County Partnership for Economic Development.<sup>15</sup>

### **Hickory Library**

Hickory's first library service, a rental library, began operation in 1893 to meet the growing needs of the town. The rental library lacked a permanent space, though it was often set up on Union Square and was run by volunteers. The rental books were bought by a group of townspeople, and the added funding came from contributions and a series of ice cream suppers and theatricals.

By 1907, the Hickory Library Association was formed, which actively worked to create a permanent home for the library, and membership fees helped fund the purchase of more books. In 1915, under the leadership of J. Worth Elliott and his wife Lillie Burns Elliott, the Association started a movement to secure a grant from the Carnegie Corporation of New York. Various negotiations delayed the grant for the next couple of years while building costs continued to rise. In the spring of 1917, J. Worth Elliott and his wife pledged to contribute a lot for the Carnegie library.



Carnegie Public Library, Hendersonville, N. C. Postcard. Image used by permission of the author.

<sup>14</sup> Miller, 27; Valentine, "Steel, Cotton, and Tobacco," 276-277; Scott, Snow, 13, 17, 31, 41-42., 47-57, 59-60, 69; Matthew Griffis, (2019 November 17), "Carnegie Negro Library, Greensboro, North Carolina (1924-1963)," accessed Jan. 10, 2024, <https://www.blackpast.org/african-american-history/institutions-african-american-history/carnegie-negro-library-greensboro-north-carolina-1924-1963/>; Bobinski, 72, 81-82; "Library's 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Gives Cause for Celebration/The Chavis Branch Library Has Evolved, But Its Role Remains the Same," Oct.19. 1999, accessed Jan. 10, 2024, [https://Greensboro.com/libraris-75th-anniversary-gives-cause-for-celebration-the-chavis-branch-library-has-evolved-but-its/article\\_11bc807b-de17-5a16-a42a-fd9daa0a7da5.html](https://Greensboro.com/libraris-75th-anniversary-gives-cause-for-celebration-the-chavis-branch-library-has-evolved-but-its/article_11bc807b-de17-5a16-a42a-fd9daa0a7da5.html)

<sup>15</sup>Miller, 27; Scott, 26; Valentine, "Steel, Cotton, and Tobacco," 277; "Carnegie Library in Hendersonville, North Carolina," accessed Jan. 10, 2024, <https://www.greetingsfromthepast.com/2016/03/carnegie-library-in-hendersonville/>

Finally, on May 3, 1917, Hickory received a grant of \$13,250 from the Carnegie Corporation. After raising an added \$3,750, some of which came from a pageant event, the City of Hickory approved a tax to cover the final cost of \$17,000 for the library. Construction of the library was superintended by former city manager R.G. Henry. Worth Elliott died in 1918 and in 1919 his widow transferred the property to the city in his memory. Elliott had been a prominent member of Hickory's business community, a director of the First National Bank, an officer of Elliott Building Company after 1908, and an original stockholder of the *Hickory Daily Record* in 1915.

The Worth Elliott Memorial Library, a small one-story brick-veneered Georgian Revival/Colonial Revival style building, opened on August 15, 1922 at 415 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue NW. It was the last public library in North Carolina and the last of 2,507 facilities to receive a grant from the Carnegie Corporation, which ceased the public library construction grant program officially on November 7, 1917.



Elliott Carnegie Library, Hickory, NC. Source: Elliott Carnegie Library, Hickory, North Carolina - List of Carnegie libraries in North Carolina - Wikipedia.

The library grew in popularity and circulation reached 72,668 volumes in 1937, some of which may have been the result of the public's need for inexpensive entertainment during the Great Depression. Due to the small size of the library, the growth of the book collection was restricted until the Elbert A. Ivey Library was constructed in 1952.

In the same year, 1952, the Elliott-Carnegie Library was sold to the Catawba Valley Broadcasting Company and the building became the studio of station WHKY, which moved out in 1969. Inform Properties Inc. bought the building in 1970 to house the company's advertising public relations firm. On March 15, 1985, the original Elliott-Carnegie Library was placed on the *National Register of Historic Places*.<sup>16</sup>



Murphy NC Carnegie Library. Source: The Murphy NC Carnegie library building now houses the Cherokee County Historical Museum - List of Carnegie libraries in North Carolina - Wikipedia.

## Murphy Public Library

Murphy, a larger Cherokee County town close to Andrews, received a Carnegie grant of \$7,500 on May 15, 1916. Building costs soared by the time the library was built, and the town requested an added \$2,500. Without a personal connection to Carnegie, however, Murphy had to absorb the cost overrun. The town completed the library in 1922 at a cost of \$9,500.

The original Carnegie library building located at 87 Peachtree Street survives as the Cherokee County Historical Museum. The new Murphy Public Library is part of the Nantahala Regional Library System serving Cherokee, Clay, and Graham counties with public libraries in Andrews, Hayesville, Murphy, and Robbinsville.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>16</sup> Miller, 27; Valentine, "Steel, Cotton, and Tobacco," 277; "Elliott-Carnegie Library," accessed Jan. 10, 2024, <http://www.theclio.com/entry/90131>; "Elliott-Carnegie," accessed Jan. 10, 2024, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Elliott-Carnegie\\_Library](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Elliott-Carnegie_Library); Laura A.W. Phillips and Jerry L. Cross, (June 1983), "Elliott-Carnegie Library," *National Register of Historic Places-Nomination and Inventory*, North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office, accessed Jan. 10, 2024, <https://files.nc.gov/ncdcr/nr/CT0177.pdf>

<sup>17</sup> Miller, 31; Scott, 27-28; Valentine, "Steel, Cotton, and Tobacco," 277; "Cherokee County Historical Museum," accessed Jan. 10, 2024, <https://www.blueridgeheritage.com/destinations/cherokee-county-historical-museum/>



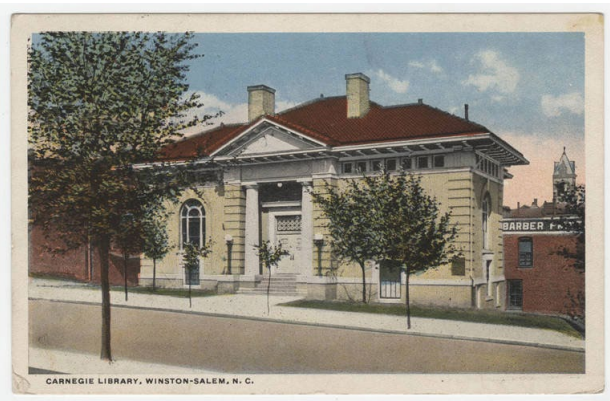
## Rutherford College Public Library

The tiny community of Rutherford College in Burke County, named for the college that was founded there in the late nineteenth century, received a Carnegie grant of \$2,500 on February 21, 1907 to construct a public library serving fewer than three hundred residents in the area where the Valdese General Hospital is now found. The library was demolished in the 1950s. The last remaining college building was torn down in May 2007 for the expansion of this hospital.

Rutherford College the school ran until 1933, when the Methodist Conference was forced to merge its schools due to the Great Depression. Rutherford College merged with Weaver College in Buncombe County, North Carolina, and Brevard Institute in Brevard, North Carolina, to become Brevard College, which still operates. The town of Rutherford College was dissolved in March 1933 and reincorporated on June 1, 1977.<sup>18</sup>

## Winston-Salem Public Library

On February 12, 1903, the city of Winston received a \$15,000 Carnegie grant. Three years later, in 1906, the Winston Carnegie library building opened on the corner of Cherry Street and 211 W. 3<sup>rd</sup> Street. Architect Edward L. Tilton of New York designed the building. Winston invited its twin city of Salem to share the library, but the latter declined since Salem's town officials did not feel they could meet the 10% annual maintenance obligation needed to receive the grant. In 1913, when Winston and Salem merged, li-



Winston Carnegie Library, Winston-Salem, NC. Source: Carnegie Library, Winston-Salem, N.C. :: North Carolina Postcards (unc.edu).

<sup>18</sup> Miller, 34; Grady L. E. Carroll, Sr., "Rutherford College," in *Encyclopedia of North Carolina*, ed. by William S. Powell (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), accessed Jan. 10, 2024, <https://www.ncpedia.org/Rutherford-College>; Scott, 26.

<sup>19</sup> Miller, 37; Jones, 59; Valentine, "Steel, Cotton, and Tobacco," 276; Scott, 26.

brary service was extended throughout the joint city. After the Forsyth County Public Library was built on W. Fifth Street in 1953, the old Carnegie library was bought in 1954 to serve as a church. The 1953 Forsyth County Library was demolished in 2013 and the new library was built on the same site in 2017.<sup>19</sup>

## Carnegie Academic Library Philanthropy in North Carolina

From February 4, 1904 to April 30, 1908, six college and university library buildings in North Carolina were constructed using Carnegie grants at a total cost of \$127,868. Of the six libraries, five were segregated and two, Biddle University (later Johnson C. Smith University) and Livingstone College, supplied library services to African Americans at their inceptions. The largest academic library grant of \$55,000 went to the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in Orange County, a state-supported university. The smallest academic library matching grant of \$9,000 went to Guilford College, a private Quaker institution, in Guilford County.

Guilford College was the only one of the six to be coeducational at its start. The State Normal and Industrial College (now UNC Greensboro) was all-female at its start. The other four (Davidson College, Livingstone College, Johnson C. Smith University, and the University of North Carolina) were all-male at their inceptions. By 1963, all six institutions were coeducational. Both Johnson C. Smith University and Livingstone College were Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), two of the eleven in North Carolina.

Despite Carnegie's bias against funding state-supported institutions, the University of North Carolina Chapel Hill and the State Normal and Industrial College (now UNC Greensboro) were granted donations. Despite his stated bias against funding church-affiliated colleges, he funded Davidson and Johnson C. Smith (Presbyterian), Livingstone (AME Zion), and Guilford (Quaker). Carnegie was biased toward funding "freshwater" colleges, a description that applied to all four church-affiliated institutions.



Four of the original Carnegie academic library buildings are now not in use as a libraries, but still survive (UNC Greensboro, UNC Chapel Hill, Johnson C. Smith, and Davidson College). The Walter Clinton Jackson Library of UNC Greensboro replaced the original Carnegie Library. The Louis Round Wilson Library and, later, the Walter Royal Davis Library at UNC Chapel Hill, replaced the 1915 Carnegie Library. The Carnegie Library at Johnson C. Smith still stands, but the James Buchanan Duke Library is the current main library. The Davidson Carnegie Library was replaced by the Grey Library and later the E. H. Little Library. The Carnegie library buildings at Livingstone College and Guilford College are still in use with renovations and additions.

bly approved changing the school's name to Biddle University. In 1891, Daniel J. Sanders became the first African American to head Biddle University. Dr. Sanders met with Booker T. Washington to discuss the need for library building. Washington in turn discussed the need with Andrew Carnegie. Fourteen years later, on December 23, 1905, President Sanders received a letter from James Bertram informing him that Carnegie had approved a gift of \$12,500 for the construction of Biddle's first library building. Carnegie's requirement that an equal amount be raised in new endowment delayed the project for years.

After the death of Dr. Sanders in 1907, Dr. Henry Lawrence McCrorey became Biddle's new president. Under his administration the University raised the



Carnegie Building, Biddle University, Charlotte, NC. Source: Carnegie-Library-Building-Old-SR.pdf (landmarkscommission.org).

### **Biddle Institute (Biddle University, Johnson C. Smith University)**

Named in recognition of a \$1,400 gift from Philadelphia Mary Deborah Baird Biddle, widow of Union major Henry J. Biddle, Biddle Institute was founded in 1867 by the Catawba Presbytery in Mecklenburg County to help newly-freed black men to obtain an education, learn a trade, and prepare for the ministry. Colonel W. R. Myers, a former Confederate officer, donated eight acres of farmland on Beatties Ford Road, west of downtown Charlotte.

In 1876, the school's charter was amended and on March 21, 1923, the North Carolina General Assem-

added funds necessary to match Carnegie's donation. Finally, on May 12, 1910, the Presbyterian Church's Board of Missions for Freedmen informed Carnegie that it had fulfilled the matching stipulation, and construction moved ahead. The new library at Biddle University was built in 1911 at a cost of \$15,000. The rectangular brick building with a flat roof and smaller center portico with two Doric columns supporting the pediment was opened in 1912. After a tragic fire in the 1920s, Biddle University received \$720,000 from Jane Berry Smith, widow of prominent Pittsburgh pharmacist and industrialist Johnson Crayne Smith. On March 21, 1923, in response to

the Smith family's generosity, the trustees changed the name of Biddle University to Johnson C. Smith University.

The library continued to improve with more renovations in 1955 but eventually the library was no longer adequate to serve the needs of Johnson C. Smith University. In 1967, a new library was built in memory of James Buchanan Duke and continues to serve as the University's library. Although the 1911 Carnegie building is still standing, it is no longer used as a library.

Beginning as a school for black men, Johnson C. Smith was not coeducational until 1932, when the University entered into an agreement with Barber-Scotia Junior College, a historically black college for women in Concord, Cabarrus County, whereby Barber-Scotia sent its graduates to Johnson C. Smith University to complete their degrees. This arrangement lasted until 1941, when Johnson C. Smith University began admitting female first-year students.<sup>20</sup>

## Davidson College

Davidson College in Mecklenburg County, once the richest private college in the South, was founded in 1837 under the auspices of the Concord and Bethel Presbyteries as a manual training school for men. The college was named for General William Lee Davidson, a Pennsylvania native who was killed in the Revolutionary War Battle of Cowan's Ford near Charlotte. His son, also named William, supplied 469 acres upon which the college now stands. On April 18, 1905, Carnegie offered a matching grant of \$20,000 to build a library for Davidson College. College President Henry Louis Smith oversaw raising funds to match Carnegie's investment. Construction began in 1909, and the building was dedicated on September 12, 1910.

The new library replaced the original Union Library found in the Chambers Building. In October 1941, the old Carnegie library's growing collection and lack of space resulted in the moving of the library to the recently finished Hugh A. and Jane Parks Grey Me-



Carnegie Guest House, Davidson College, Davidson, NC. Source: [Carnegie Guest House](#) | [On the campus of Davidson College, Da...](#) | Flickr

<sup>20</sup> "Biddle University (Now Johnson C. Smith University)," accessed Jan. 10, 2024, <http://www.cmstory.org/exhibits/turn-20th-century-life-charlotte-1900-1910-schools/biddle-university-now-johnson-c-smith>; James I. Martin, rev. by SLNC Government and Heritage Library, "Johnson C. Smith University," in *Encyclopedia of North Carolina*, ed. by William S. Powell (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2023), accessed Jan. 10, 2024, <https://www.ncpedia.org/johnson-c-smith-university>; Kaser, 128; Walker, 44, 45; Patrick Valentine, "The Origin of College Libraries in North Carolina: A Social History, 1890-1920," *Information & Culture* 47, no. 1 (2012): 79-112, 96; "North Carolina's Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs)," in *NCPEDIA*, accessed Jan. 10, 2024, <https://www.ncpedia.org/education/hbcu>; "Johnson C. Smith University History," accessed Jan. 10, 2024, [library.jcsu/history](http://library.jcsu/history)



morial Library. In 1972, the 1910 Carnegie building became the temporary college union until a new one was constructed. In 1976, the Carnegie library building was permanently remodeled as a guesthouse. In 1974, the \$4.2 million E. H. Little Library replaced the Grey Memorial Library and continues to serve as the main library of Davidson.<sup>21</sup>



Hege Library, Guilford College, Greensboro, NC. Source: Hege Library- List of Carnegie libraries in North Carolina- Wikipedia.

## Guilford College

Guilford College in Greensboro, Guilford County, is affiliated with the Society of Friends. The school was opened in 1837 by the Quakers as the New Garden Boarding School. The school was a station on the Underground Railroad as well as a center of resistance to Confederate conscription during the Civil War. During Reconstruction, the school reorganized with the help of the Society of Friends and was renamed Guilford College under a charter issued in 1887.

Guilford College was at its start the oldest coeducational college in the Southeast and today is still the only Quaker school in the South. In 1902, Guilford hired a librarian and Quaker historian, Julia S. White, to catalog Guilford's approximately five thousand books, but a fire in 1908 destroyed or ruined most of them. Guilford College was later granted

a Carnegie library construction matching grant of \$9,000 on April 30, 1908. The library, which was not built until 1910, was located at 5800 W. Friendly Avenue in Greensboro where it is still in use as a functional part of the Hege Library complex.<sup>22</sup>

## Livingstone College

Livingstone College, in Salisbury, Rowan County, was founded in 1879 by the African Methodist Episcopal Zion (AME Zion) Church. Its two predecessors were the Zion Wesley Institute and Zion Wesley College. In 1880, the college was granted the right to supply post-secondary education. In 1887, the school awarded its first degrees and changed its name to Livingstone College in honor of Dr. David Livingstone (1813-1873), missionary, philanthropist, and explorer in Africa.



Andrew Carnegie Library, Livingstone College, Salisbury, NC. Source: Carnegie Library Livingstone- List of Carnegie libraries in North Carolina- Wikipedia.

In 1905, Carnegie donated a matching grant of \$12,500 for the construction of the library building at Livingstone College. Named the Andrew Carnegie Library in honor of the benefactor, the library was completed and dedicated in 1908. The fund-raising campaign for the \$12,500 matching grant was spearheaded by Dr. Booker T. Washington of the Tuskegee Institute, Dr. W. H. Goler, Livingstone College presi-

<sup>21</sup> "Carnegie Library of Davidson College," accessed Jan. 10, 2024, <https://davidsonarchivesandspecialcollections.org/archives/encyclopedia/carnegie-library-of-davidson-college>; "Libraries of Davidson College," accessed Jan. 10, 2024, <https://davidsonarchivesandspecialcollections.org/archives/encyclopedia/libraries-of-davidson-college>; Valentine, "The Origin of College Libraries in North Carolina," 90-91; Joseph I. Martin, "Davidson College," in *Encyclopedia of North Carolina*, ed. by William S. Powell (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), accessed Jan. 10, 2024, <https://www.ncpedia.org/davidson-college>;

<sup>22</sup> "List of Carnegie Libraries in North Carolina," accessed Jan. 10, 2024, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_Carnegie\\_libraries\\_in\\_North\\_Carolina](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Carnegie_libraries_in_North_Carolina), includes a thumbnail photo of Guilford's Carnegie Library; Valentine, "The Origin of College Libraries in North Carolina," 91; "List of Earliest Coeducational Colleges and Universities in the United States," accessed Jan. 10, 2024, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_earliest\\_coeducational\\_colleges\\_and\\_universities\\_in\\_the\\_United\\_States](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_earliest_coeducational_colleges_and_universities_in_the_United_States); Julia S. White's article "The Quakers of Perquimans," was published in *The North Carolina Booklet*, vol. 7, no. 4, accessed Jan. 10, 2014, <https://digital.lib.ecu.edu/12770>



dent, and AME Zion Bishop George W. Clinton. Many of the bricks for the erection of the building were fired on the campus and laid by Livingstone students. The library was designed by Robert Robinson Taylor, the first academically trained African American architect in the United States and native North Carolinian. The Andrew Carnegie Library at Livingstone College is the only Carnegie-endowed HBCU library that remains in use today as a library. Additions have been made to the original Carnegie library using funds from three \$500,000 grants, in 2018, 2020, and 2021, from the Historically Black Colleges and Universities program of the Historic Preservation Fund managed by the National Park Service. Although not Carnegie academic library

grants, a program which was ceased by the Carnegie Corporation of New York in 1917, these grants were used to make improvements and repairs to the original Carnegie building, which is listed on the *National Register of Historic Places*. Beginning with a single building and 40 acres of land, as of 2010, Livingstone's campus has grown to 272 acres consisting of 21 brick buildings.<sup>23</sup>

### **State Normal and Industrial College**

**(North Carolina College for Women, Woman's College of the University of North Carolina, UNC Greensboro)**

On February 18, 1891, the General Assembly of North Carolina passed "An Act to Establish Normal and Industrial School for White Girls" under the



Carnegie Library, State Normal and Industrial School (now Forney Building, UNC Greensboro), Greensboro, NC. Source: [The University of North Carolina at Greensboro- Timeline of UNCG History](https://www.uncc.edu/timeline-of-uncg-history).

<sup>23</sup> "National Park Service Awards \$8.6 Million in Preservation Grants to Historically Black Colleges and Universities," (Aug. 27, 2018), accessed Jan. 10, 2024, <https://www.nps.gov/orgs/1207/nationalpark-service-awards-8-6-million-in-preservation-grants-to-historically-black-colleges-and-universities.htm>; Valentine, "The Origin of College Libraries in North Carolina, 96-98; Kaser, 127; Walker, 43, 45; Alyssa Franz, "Livingstone College [Salisbury] (1879- )", Mar. 11, 2020), accessed Jan. 10, 2024, <https://www.blackpast.org/african-american-history/livingstone-colleg-1879/>; Charles W. Wadlington (additional research provided by Kelly Agan), "Livingstone College," in *Encyclopedia of North Carolina*, ed. by William S. Powell (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 2006, rev. 2021), accessed Jan. 10, <https://www.ncpedia.org/livingstone-college>

corporate name “The Normal and Industrial School.” This Act created the first public institution in North Carolina with the sole purpose of higher education of women. After much debate, Greensboro was chosen as the site for the school, based on its central location in the state and the more than \$30,000 in bonds pledged by the city. The site consisted of over 10 acres of cornfields bought from R.S. Pullen and R.T. Gray of Raleigh. A board of directors was selected, and Dr. Charles Duncan McIver was appointed the institution’s first president.

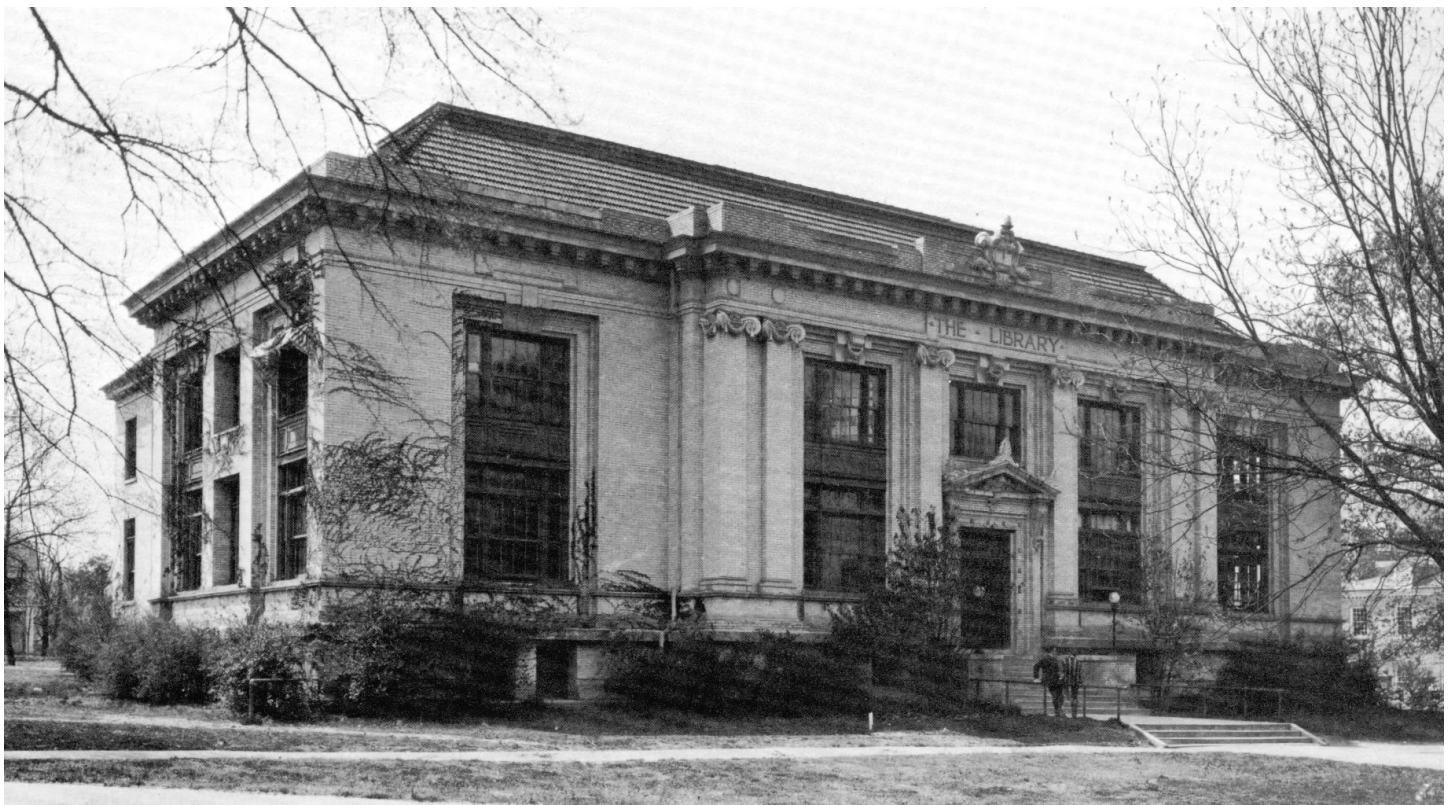
On October 5, 1892, the State Normal and Industrial School opened its doors to 176 female students. By 1896, the school was called the State Normal and Industrial College. Annie Petty, who ran the original college library, became the first trained librarian in North Carolina following a one-year leave of absence in 1898 when she studied at the Drexel Institute Library in Philadelphia. Petty was a pioneer leader in the North Carolina Library Association and, later, in the North Carolina State Library Commission.

On February 4, 1904, the State Normal and Industrial College applied for a Carnegie library construction matching grant of \$18,868 which was received on October 2, 1905. The original library

moved from a small room in the Main Building (now Foust Building) to the newly constructed Carnegie Library (now Forney Building), designed by Hook & Sawyer of Charlotte.

The Carnegie library of Woman’s College of the University of North Carolina mysteriously caught fire on September 15, 1932. The final damage to the building and its contents was estimated to be approximately \$98,000. After the fire, Charles H. Stone, the College Librarian, began the task of rebuilding the damaged library collections. The Carnegie library was rebuilt in 1933 and stayed the primary library on campus until June 1950, when more than 124,000 books were moved to the new, larger Jackson Library, named in honor of former Chancellor Walter Clinton Jackson, which was named in honor of former Chancellor Walter Clinton Jackson and which is still the main library of UNC Greensboro. In 1955, the Carnegie library building was extensively renovated for classroom use. Two years later, in 1957, the building was named for Edward Jacob Forney.

The State Normal and Industrial School (1891-1896) was succeeded by State Normal and Industrial College (1896-1919), North Carolina College for Women (1918-32), Woman’s College of the Univer-



Carnegie Library (now Hill Hall), UNC at Chapel Hill, Chapel Hill, NC. Source: [Hill Hall - Names in Brick and Stone: Histories from UNC's Built Landscape](#).



sity of North Carolina (1932-63), and, finally, UNC Greensboro (1963), when the university became coeducational.<sup>24</sup>

## University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

The University of North Carolina (UNC) at Chapel Hill, the oldest college library in the state, was an all-male state-supported school at its start in 1795, when it became the first state institution of higher learning in the nation. On March 21, 1905, UNC received a Carnegie library building construction grants of \$55,000. The UNC Carnegie Library was built in 1907, when the University's enrollment stood at 764 male students and the library held only 45,822 volumes.

When the Carnegie Library was no longer adequate, a study to investigate options for renovation showed that an addition to the Carnegie library was not possible due to the building's design and small overall scale. This finding led to the decision to build the Louis Round Wilson Library in 1929. The old Carnegie Library became Hill Hall, named for John Sprunt Hill, who was instrumental in the building of the Wilson Library. Hill Hall serves today as the primary facility for the University's music program.

The 1929 Louis Round Wilson Library is still in use but is no longer the main library for UNC Chapel Hill. The current Walter Royal Davis Library was opened on February 6, 1984. It is the largest academic facility and state-owned building in North Carolina. In 1931, UNC at Chapel Hill, joined Woman's College at Greensboro (later UNC Greensboro) and North Carolina State College at Raleigh (later North Carolina State University) to form the consolidated University of North Carolina System.<sup>25</sup>

## Impact of Carnegie's Philanthropy in North Carolina

Out of 1,681 public libraries in the United States funded by Carnegie, only 10 were constructed in North Carolina. Out of 109 academic libraries funded by Carnegie matching grants, only 6 were constructed in North Carolina. It must be remembered that the right to apply for a Carnegie grant was open to all who met the 10% annual maintenance requirement for public libraries or the matching grant requirement for academic libraries. The North Carolina Library Association (NCLA) was perplexed by the lack of response from communities needing funds for the establishment of public libraries and colleges and universities needing academic library buildings. The NCLA discussed the issue at a 1921 conference, but by that time the Carnegie Corporation of New York had already ended the library construction grant program officially on November 7, 1917.<sup>26</sup>

Andrew Carnegie donated a grand total of \$293,564 (\$9,698,442 in 2023 dollars) for 10 public library buildings and six academic library buildings in North Carolina. Although North Carolina's share of Carnegie philanthropy was modest in comparison with other states, Carnegie library grants both to public and academic libraries promoted cultural and educational development of residents and students who experienced self-improvement and self-education by taking advantage of increasing library services statewide, goals that Andrew Carnegie would have heartily supported.

<sup>24</sup> "Carnegie Library Fire (1932)," (Sept. 11, 2015), accessed Jan. 10, 2024, <https://encyclopedia.uncg.edu/carnegie-library-fire/>; "North Carolina State Normal and Industrial College Campus," accessed Jan. 10, 2024, <https://gateway.uncg.edu/islandora/object/mss%3A163243>; Valentine, "The Origin of College Libraries in North Carolina," 94-95; James Stewart. "The University of North Carolina at Greensboro: A Brief History to 1945," accessed Jan. 10, 2024, <https://gateway.uncg.edu/islandora/object/highlights%3A2?james%2520stewart>; "Annie Petty (1871-1962)," in *Encyclopedia of UNCG History*, accessed Jan. 2024 from <https://encyclopedia.uncg.edu/annie-petty/>

<sup>25</sup> "Names in Brick and Stone: Histories from UNC's Built Landscape," accessed Jan. 10, 2024, from <https://unchistory.web.unc.edu/building-narratives/hill-hall/>; Joe A. Hewitt. "Louis Round Wilson Library: An Enduring Monument to Learning," accessed Jan. 10, 2024, <https://library.unc.edu/wilson/about/wilsonhistory/>; Valentine, "The Origin of College Libraries in North Carolina," 83-88, 99-100; "University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill," in *Wikipedia*, accessed Jan. 10, 2024, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/University\\_of\\_North\\_Carolina\\_at\\_Chapel\\_Hill#Libraries](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/University_of_North_Carolina_at_Chapel_Hill#Libraries)

<sup>26</sup> Valentine, "Steel, Cotton, and Tobacco," 278.



**Appendix I:  
Carnegie Public Libraries in North Carolina**

<b>Community</b>	<b>Date granted</b>	<b>Grant amount (2023 currency)</b>	<b>Notes</b>
Andrews	Apr. 13, 1914	\$5,000 (\$153,510)	Demolished in 1979
Charlotte	Mar. 12, 1901	\$40,000 (\$1,443,864)	Demolished in 1954. New library building opened on the same site in 1956, a third in 1989.
Durham	Sept. 14, 1917	\$32,000 (\$766,865)	Closed in 1980. Building, renovated in 1984, used for offices.
Greensboro ♦ Main (Segregated)  ♦ Negro Library	Apr. 26, 1902	\$40,446 (\$1,442,634)  \$30,446  \$10,000	Demolished  Built 1924, now part of Bennett College campus
Hendersonville	May 2, 1911	\$10,000 (\$322,891)	Closed in 1970, now Henderson County Partnership for Economic Development
Hickory	May 3, 1917	\$13,250 (\$317,530)	Closed in 1952.
Murphy	May 15, 1916	\$7,500 (\$211,064)	Now a museum
Rutherford College	Feb. 21, 1907	\$2,500 (\$81,581)	Demolished
Winston-Salem	Feb. 12, 1903	\$15,000 (\$522,863)	Closed 1954, now a Catholic church
<b>TOTAL</b>		\$165,696 (\$5,262,311)	

**Appendix II:  
Carnegie Academic Libraries in North Carolina**

<b>Institution</b>	<b>Date granted</b>	<b>Amount (2023 equivalency)</b>	<b>Notes</b>
Biddle University	Dec. 23, 1905	\$12,500 (\$435,719)	Closed in 1969, now houses student services of Johnson C. Smith University
Davidson College	Apr. 18, 1905	\$20,000 (\$697,150)	Built 1910, closed in 1941, now College guesthouse
Guilford College	Apr. 30, 1908	\$9,000 (\$300,078)	Built in 1910
Livingstone College	Mar. 15, 1905	\$12,500 (\$435,719)	Built in 1908
State Normal & Industrial College (UNC Greensboro)	Feb. 4, 1904	\$18,868 (\$650,302)	Closed c. 1950, now Forney Building, houses IT services
UNC Chapel Hill	Mar. 21, 1905	\$55,000 (\$1,917,163)	Closed in 1929, now Hill Hall, music department facilities
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>\$127,868 (\$4,436,131)</b>	

\*Original dollar amounts adjusted for 2023 inflation dollars using Consumer Price Index Inflation Calculator, <https://www.officialdata.org/>



North Carolina  
Library Association



The 65th Biennial Conference of the North Carolina Library Association presents

October 16-20, 2023 • Benton Convention Center • Winston-Salem, NC

# Cultivating Community: Strengthening Roots, Supporting New Growth

## NCLA Executive Board Biennial Reports, October 2023

### Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) - NC Chapter

Highlights: Over the 2021-2023 biennium period, the ACRL-NC Chapter hosted a half-day virtual conference, two webinars from ACRL, and a membership meeting, conducted a membership survey, and provided multiple scholarships for the NCLA biennial conference. Detailed report: On September 22, 2022, the ACRL-NC Chapter partnered with NC LIVE to present a mini virtual conference, "Virtually Together: Enlightening the Future." This conference featured two presentations, a session of lightning rounds, and an opening keynote by Amy Harris Houk, Assistant Dean for Teaching and Learning at the University of North Carolina Greensboro. Topics included online instruction, online research objects, reflexive practices, and more. During Spring 2023, we hosted two webinars from ACRL: "Programming Library Spaces for Institutional Impact" on February 9th and "Strategies for Teaching Adult Learners" on May 11th. We also surveyed our membership to get both a better idea of who our members are and what they might like to see from us. On July 11, 2023, we hosted a virtual membership meeting which was the first of its kind in past years. Members came together to talk about issues affecting them, particularly artificial intelligence. For the NCLA Biennial Conference, in addition to our business meeting, we hosted a breakfast social with NC LIVE. We also provided four student scholarships and provided a registration scholarship to one member of our section. Submitted by Breanne Crumpton.

### Business Librarianship in NC

Highlights: Over the 65th Biennium, the Business Librarianship in North Carolina (BLINC) Section endeavored to not only create a community for and by information professionals interested in business information, but also create opportunities for information professionals across the state, nation and world to engage with and develop professional skills around the topic of business information literacy. The leadership team for this Biennium consisted of Morgan Ritchie-Baum, Wake Forest University (Chair); Nancy Lovas, UNC Chapel Hill (Vice-Chair); Hannah Hemphill, Durham Co. Public Library (Secretary 2021-2022); Steve Cramer, UNC Greensboro (Secretary 2022-2023); Ophelia Chapman, UNC Wilmington (Treasurer); David Ernsthausen, UNC Chapel Hill (Director-at-Large 2021-2022); Kassie Ettefagh, Greensboro Public Library (Director-at-Large); and Shaun Bennett, NC State University (Director-at-Large). We held seven free and open-to-all half-day workshops covering a broad-range of topics related to business information literacy, including developing community partnerships, networking as an information professional, the role of AI in business information literacy, and supporting innovation within entrepreneurship. We advocated for and worked with NC LIVE to identify potential subscription library resources that support business information literacy during the biennial resource update. We provided administrative and structural support for six Entrepreneurship and Libraries Conference (ELC) events including librarian pitch



competitions and an international two-day virtual ELC event. Numerous members supported workshops, presentations, and special events for organizations such as NC LIVE, Boston Library Consortium, and the 65th NCLA Biennial Conference. Submitted by Morgan Ritchie-Baum.

### **Community & Junior College Libraries**

During this biennium, the Community and Junior College Section (CJCLS) focused on collaboration and developing meaningful professional development opportunities for community college librarians across the state. Section membership has remained steady, and the section has strong financial support. Due to solid financial backing, the Board voted to donate funds to support the 2023 NCLA Leadership Institute. CJCLS collaborated with the North Carolina Community College Library Association (NCCCLA) in 2022 by creating a non-voting liaison position on their Executive Board to facilitate the exchange of information and ideas between the two groups. Thus, the Chair of CJCLS now attends all NCCCLA board meetings as a non-voting liaison. The section bylaws were updated to reflect this additional responsibility and to represent the section's operation better. During the past biennium, CJCLS hosted several professional development opportunities, including sessions on The Future of Community College Library Spaces, Programming for Pennies, and What is CJCLS? Why Join? During the 2023 NCCCLA conference, we hosted two sessions on Intellectual Freedom in collaboration with the Intellectual Freedom Committee. These sessions were Reboot. Reconsider: Selection and Reconsideration Policies and Prepare to Defend Intellectual Freedom. At the request of NC LIVE, these sessions were also included as part of the 2023 NC Live Conference. The section hosted two panel sessions during NCLA's 65th Biennial Conference in Winston-Salem. These sessions offered opportunities for participants to learn more about community college librarianship. The section also supported a conference scholarship for a library school student interested in community college librarianship to attend the Biennial Conference. On the fun side of the conference, we provided a raffle basket for the biennial raffle. The basket's theme was "Let's Taco about Librarians." Funds

raised from the basket raffle benefited the NCLA Endowment and the section. Finally, CJCLS Board elections were held in August 2023. The following were elected to office: Chair, Dana Glauner, Library Director at South Piedmont Community College; Vice-Chair/Chair-Elect, Laurie Robb, Instruction/Outreach Librarian, Rowan-Cabarrus Community College; Treasurer / Secretary, Jenny Thomas, Library Director, Randolph Community College; Director, Cara McConnell, Director of Academic Enrichment, Johnston Community College; Director, Maria Luisa Saldarriaga Osorio, Library Director, Surry Community College; and Past-Chair, Tim Hunter, Library Director, Rowan-Cabarrus Community College. The new Board was installed during the business meeting at the conference. Submitted by Tim Hunter.

### **Conference Planning**

The 65th Biennial Conference, Cultivating Community: Strengthening Roots, Supporting New Growth, was held at the Benton Convention Center in Winston-Salem October 16-20, 2023. Coming out of the COVID pandemic, this conference marked the return to a primarily in-person event following the hybrid 2021 conference. To facilitate attendance and participation by those unable to attend in-person, a one day virtual only track was offered. The event management platform Whova was utilized to provide the conference schedule as well as live-streamed keynotes, virtual-only presentations, and virtual posters. For those attending in-person, a variety of live presentations were available along with therapy dogs, Zen Den (with guided meditation, tea tasting, etc.), social events, and exhibit hall. There were 765 registrants, with 91 being virtual-only attendance. The conference had 39 exhibitors with 79 leads generated as registered by Whova. There were 14 sponsors with a total commitment of \$20,250.

The following programming was provided: 15 concurrent virtual sessions; 5 pre-conferences (in-person); 3 keynotes (in-person); 3 birds of a feather sessions (in-person); and 75 concurrent sessions (in-person). There were 39 in-person posters and 8 virtual posters. Attendees were given the opportunity to view any recorded sessions for the six months following the conference. The keynote speaker was David Campt, founder of The Dialogue Company,

who presented “Using Dialogue to Fight the Forces of Repression” which was intended to “give encouragement and guidance to people in the library sector who are unsure how to keep their humanity while fighting forces that seem dedicated to fighting key democratic principles such as free speech.” The Ogilvie Lecture honors the late Phillip S. Ogilvie, who served as State Librarian for North Carolina from 1965-1976. It was given by State Librarian, Michelle Underhill, and Annette Taylor, Main Library Manager of Durham County Library. Their lecture, “Cultivating Community and Digital Equity: Strengthening and Extending Roots, Supporting Growth,” involved “a discussion about North Carolina’s past, present, and future initiatives concerning digital access, literacy, and equity.” The closing keynote, “Everybody Needs a Story,” was presented by bestselling author Kwame Mbalia who shared, “a conversation about the need for stories in all forms for people of all ages, cultures, and backgrounds.”

The All-Conference Reception was held on Thursday evening and was hosted by the Forsyth County Public Library. Awards for attendees of NCLA’s Leadership Institute were presented. The following awards were also given at the conference: Life Membership- Dr. David Wright; Distinguished Library Service- Dr. Julie Herberger and Joel Reese; REMCO Roadbuilder Awards-Dr. Latesha Velez (UNCG), LaJuan Pringle (CMPL), and Forrest Foster (NCA&T); Constance Hill Marteena Diversity Award (REMCO)-Jayzmyne Baylor (WCU); Marilyn Miller Award for Professional Commitment (WILR)-Mollie Peuler (AppState); Meralyn G. Meadows Scholarship (NCLPA)-Joy Hollingsworth (AMYRL); Ray Moore Award-Dr. Al Jones (ECU); William H. Roberts Public Library Distinguished Service Award (PLS)-was Pat Familiar (ARL). Scholarships provided by NCLA were: Appalachian Scholarship-Sarah Costello Dwyer; NCLA Memorial Scholarship-Natalie Goretti; and Query-Long Scholarship-Anna Louise Kallas. The All-Conference Luncheon was held on Friday at the Marriott with officers for the 2023-2025 biennium inducted by Lorrie Russell, Assistant Director at High Point Public Library and 2019-2021 President of NCLA. The State Library gave 30 conference scholarships and NCLA sections provided 25 scholarships for library science students

with winners being recognized on social media and at the All-Conference Reception. Librarians Build Communities partnered with the Smart Start Network to collect early childhood books. As of this writing, the financial statements and invoices from the conference have not yet been resolved; however the association remains fiscally strong in its ability to fund special projects and provide seed money for the 2025 conference. Submitted by Dawn Behrend.

### **Constitution, Codes and Handbook Revisions**

**Highlights:** The NCLA Executive Board Handbook was completely revised and posted to the NCLA website. The conference webpages have been updated with a PDF of the “NCLA Conference Handbook.” Almost all Section Bylaws have been added to the “Documents and Links” footer of the section’s homepage. CJCLS, GRS, NMRT, PLS, and YSS revised their Bylaws after consulting with the committee. Lorrie Russell graciously agreed to take the role of chair for the Constitution, Codes, and Handbook Revisions committee during the upcoming biennium. Mark Sanders will stay on as a member. Submitted by Mark Sanders.

### **Diversity, Equity and Inclusion**

**Assessment:** The NCLA DEI Committee presented a poster at the 2023 65th Biennial Conference of the NCLA. The scope of this initiative was to introduce the committee to the wider community, present some of the work we have done, and collect information related to areas of DEI our constituents believe we should prioritize. The group gathered this information and will now work on synthesizing it to inform future decisions. **Partnerships:** The group is exploring the possibility of strengthening and operationalizing internal partnerships. We are in conversations with REMCO and the NCLA Intellectual Freedom Committee to explore potential collaboration opportunities. **Newsletter:** The group is exploring the possibility of disseminating a newsletter to promote content related to EDI initiatives, tools, and opportunities for NCLA members. This would include events, resources, contact information, and recommendations. We are currently working on the initial stages of this initiative. Submitted by Rodrigo Castro.

## **Government Resources**

Highlights: We hosted a virtual section meeting on April 5, 2022, featuring the presentation, "Government Documents: An Introduction for Teachers." We hosted a summer 2022 section meeting/workshop at UNC-Chapel Hill's Friday Center on June 10th, with four presentations and 15 attendees. We updated the section bylaws in October 2022. We sponsored an NCLA Student Conference Scholarship recipient for the 2023 Biennial Conference. David Durant (ECU) took over as Chair in October 2023. We plan to focus our efforts in the next biennium on engaging federal and state depository librarians in North Carolina. We will conduct a survey of federal depository librarians in NC, collaborate with our regional depository librarian at UNC, and hold an in-person meeting/workshop in late spring, with focus on the Federal Depository Library Program. Submitted by David Durant.

## **Leadership Institute**

2020+2 NCLA Leadership Institute Planning Committee: Juli Moore (Chair), Michael Crumpton, Joel Ferdon, Amanda Glenn-Bradley, Jen Hanft, Kate Hill, Christie Reale, and Libby Stone. Mentors: Jenny Gerami-Markham, Melissa Kammerer, Rachel Olsen, Colleen Pinyan, Jenneffer Sixkiller, and Meghan Wanucha Smith. Cohort: Steve Bahnaman, Krishawna Obele Bele, Dawn Behrend, Susannah Bishop, Erika Brock, Amanda Cain, Hugh Davis, Chelse Harris, Tiffany Henry, Kathryn Kehoe, Michele Lawrence, Kim Looby, Laurie Lyda, Samantha Martin, Amy Mason, Maria Luisa Saldarriaga Osorio, Melisa Pressley, Lynda Reynolds, Christopher Robinson, Renee Sheehan, Justin Stout, Jamie Stroble, Beth Thompson, Lois Vinson, Kathy Vossler, and Devon Waugh.

Due to COVID-19, the 2020 NCLA Leadership Institute was not held. The Planning Committee served for four years, planning two institutes, and submitting two LSTA grant applications. The cohort selected for 2020 was smaller than usual which allowed a second call for applications to go out when planning for the 2020+2 Institute began. The 2020+2 cohort consisted of 26 members and the Institute was held September 13-16, 2022 at the YMCA Blue Ridge Assembly in Black Mountain,

NC. In addition to the four-day event, each mentee was assigned to a mentor group, attended a one-day follow up session held at the Iredell County Public Library on April 21, 2023, and participated in the 2023 NCLA Biennial Conference. Jami Yazdani of Yazdani Consulting facilitated the Institute and Wanda Brown, Michael Crumpton, Kelly Eubank, Brandy Hamilton, Jen Hanft, and Juli Moore presented on specific topics, complementing Jami's sessions. The cost of the Institute was \$450 per cohort member. This fee covered registration, housing, and all meals. Additional costs were covered through a \$6,000 LSTA Grant from the State Library of North Carolina and donations/contributions from ACRL-NC, Literacy, NCLPA, NCLA President (Libby Stone), NMRT, PLS, RTSS, and WILR. The 2020+2 Leadership Institute graduation was held on Thursday, October 19, 2023 at the All-Conference Reception held at Forsyth County Central Library. The awards were presented by Juli Moore with the assistance of Libby Stone, NCLA President. At the 2023 NCLA Biennial Conference, 19 out of 26 cohort members presented a poster session and/or a presentation session. The Leadership Institute breakfast was during the final poster session held on Friday, October 20, 2023 and cohort members presented posters. In addition, Juli Moore, LI 2020+2 Chair and Joel Ferdon, LI 2024 Chair presented a Leadership Institute poster. The 2024 NCLA Leadership Institute will be held September 10-13, 2024 at the YMCA Blue Ridge Assembly in Black Mountain, NC and the call for applications will go out in early 2024. Submitted by Julianne Moore.

## **Library Administration and Management**

April 2022: The board focused on updating LAMS web pages, creating a leadership portal, and curating materials for it. Plans for trauma-informed leadership programming were made. Newsletter progress, positive feedback, and plans for the next issue were discussed.

July 2022: Worked on the Summer Edition of LAMS Letters. Faced challenges balancing workloads with professional development. There was interest in bringing back a leadership book or professional article discussion.



October 2022: A meeting was planned to discuss the next newsletter, winter programming, book discussion schedule, and conference planning.

January 2023: There was a membership decrease, and the budget was around \$3500. The Leadership Institute went well, with a focus on personal growth in the upcoming newsletter. The board sought increased participation and sponsorship of NC LIVE leadership workshops.

April 2023: A virtual discussion on managing change and a book discussion on “Making Things Right at Work” took place. Conference plans were discussed, and the decision was made not to present this year, focusing on reworking training for 2024. There was consideration of a survey for a revised “Present Like a Pro” and preparation for a social gathering/meetup during the conference.

July 2023: The board meeting reviewed the budget and membership. Positive feedback was received on the book discussion on “Making Things Right at Work.” Preparation for the fall newsletter with articles on community, book recommendations, and promotion of conference sessions was underway. Plans for a social event at the conference and discussions about LAMS' purpose and future meeting dates were also part of the agenda.

October 2023: A business meeting at the conference included the induction of new members, discussion of roles and responsibilities, and brainstorming ideas for the next biennium. The reports covered updates on website development, programming, newsletters, financial status, membership, Leadership Institute, and conference planning across multiple quarters. Submitted by Brandy Hamilton.

### **Library Advocacy and Legislative**

Highlights: This was the section's first complete biennium. Officers included: LaJuan Pringle, Chair; Denelle Eads, Treasurer; Elizabeth Ellis, Secretary; Morgan Pruitt, Member At-Large. Hosted a workshop with Megan Cusick, Deputy Director for ALA's Public Policy & Advocacy, on how to prepare for the 2023 Legislative Session. LaJuan Pringle joined other North Carolina Library advocates for the 2023 Voices for Libraries fly-in visits with legislators to advocate for continued federal sup-

port of grant programs that fund library services and programs. Revived the North Carolina Student Ambassador Program in 2023 after a hiatus during the pandemic. LALS worked closely with the NCLA Intellectual Freedom Committee to monitor legislation that would have an adverse effect on North Carolina libraries.

Planned Events: Quarterly meetings with members, Student Ambassador Program, Voices for Libraries fly-in, biennial programming. Biennium Goal Reporting: Our goal is to secure officers and revise the bylaws to assist in section succession. Submitted by Elizabeth Ellis.

### **Literacy**

At the NCLA Conference Dr. Michelle Osborne was installed as Chair of the Literacy Section. Submitted by Sarah Miller.

### **NC School Library Media Association**

Highlights: NCSLMA offered well attended and relevant professional development opportunities during the 2021-2023 biennium through the Annual Conferences, Winter Tune-Ups, Summer Learning Series, and the inaugural Librarian Boot Camp. NCSLMA also offered informal opportunities such as the Page Turners Grown Up Book Club and the Brew Crew. Each year, NCSLMA sponsors the Elementary, Middle, and High School Battle of the Books Competitions which lead to a state winner in the spring of each year. They also offer grants and scholarships for school librarians which are announced at the Annual Conferences in October. In April 2022 NCSLMA released a position statement in response to the increase in book challenges happening across North Carolina. NCSLMA stated that it “stands in full support of our members and affirms their professional expertise in selecting materials” in their school libraries. In March 2023, NCSLMA released a position statement in response to SB 49 stating that “NCSLMA also stands with and adheres to ALA's statement. ‘When students enter a school library, two expectations of privacy should be guaranteed: 1) The right to read and borrow library materials free from scrutiny regardless of age, and 2) The right to seek information and have the subject of academic and personal research remain

private.” NCSLMA continues to support, promote, and empower librarians working in K-12 school libraries across North Carolina. NCSLMA held two annual conferences during the biennium with approximately 100 sessions available for attendees at each event. The first was held from October 6-8, 2022, at the Benton Convention Center. The theme for that year’s conference was “We Are Not Alone in the Library.” In 2023, the NCSLMA conference was held on October 5-7, and the theme was “Magic in Your Library.” Approximately 500 people attended each year’s conference. NCSLMA held two Winter Tune-Ups during the biennium. In 2022, there were 9 sessions held between February 14 – March 15. In 2023, nine sessions were held between February 13 – March 15. Two Summer Learning Series were held each year. In 2022, the series was held between July 12 and August 8, and offered five sessions for school librarians. The Summer Learning Series of 2023 was held from July 11 – August 8, and offered five sessions for professional development. Before the beginning of the 2023 school year, NCSLMA held its inaugural Librarian Boot Camp which offered 48 sessions for early career and veteran school librarians. NCSLMA’s Leadership Academy Cohort for 2022 supported the leadership development of 10 school librarians. The 2023 Leadership Academy Cohort had 11 school librarians as participants. NCSLMA offered informal opportunities for school librarians to gather and support one another during the twice monthly Brew Crew sessions throughout 2022 and 2023. Town Hall sessions were offered to provide updates from NC Department of Public Instruction and provide NCSLMA updates throughout the school year. The Page Turners Grown Up Book Club offered a monthly book club and discussion group. Submitted by Delandrus Seales.

### **NC Library Paraprofessional Association**

Highlights: NCLA Conference program: Romance in the Library. NCLPA sponsored a table at the NCLA conference. Brochures, candy and other info were available at the table. It was manned in shifts by Jackie Cornette, Ronald Headen, Joy Hollingsworth, and Nita Williams. We also provided a raffle basket at the NCLA conference. Some of the items included were a portable CD Player, MP3 Player,

2-in-1 Flashlight, 3-pack Super Hero Flash Drives and Flash Drive Carrying Case, USB Car Charger, and Book Light. Held business meeting during the conference. We sponsored one \$50 NCLA scholarship. Officers during this biennium were:

- *Chair:* Ronald Headen, Greensboro Public Library
- *Chair Elect:* La-Nita Williams, Smith Library, High Point University
- *Secretary:* Open
- *Treasurer:* Jackie Cornette, Western Watauga Branch, Sugar Grove
- *Region 1 Director:* Open
- *Region 2 Director:* Open
- *Region 3 Director:* Beth Sheffield, Greensboro Public Library
- *Region 4 Director:* Wendy Barber, Wilkes County Public Library

2022 Highlights: We held a Zoom meeting on February 22, 2022 to discuss NCLPA bylaws and handbook, and to brainstorm fundraising ideas. Our next Zoom meeting was on July 13, 2022. A virtual Meet and Greet was offered at the ECU Paraprofessional Conference. The 56 attendees gave great feedback on what they were interested in having NCLPA offer in the future. Sponsored Greensboro Public Library Author Festival on July 30, 2022. NCLPA Info was distributed at the event. We held a Zoom meeting on November 8, 2022.

2023 Highlights: We held a Zoom meeting on February 21, 2023. Janelle Barbour resigned from her positions as Region 1 Director and Secretary and we welcomed Wendy Barber as Region 4 Director. We began planning for the NCLA Conference in October and worked on implementing ideas for future NCLPA events. We held a Zoom meeting on June 29, 2023. Participated in the 20th Annual ECU Joyner Library Conference on May 10, 2023, sponsoring a NCLPA information table. Diane Hampshire resigned her position as Region 2 Director on May 15, 2023. NCLPA website was updated by Jackie Cornette. Sustaining Wellness Through Creative Reflection and Community Care program was presented on August 8, 2023 with Jewel Davis from Appalachian University.

We currently have 41 NCLPA members. Elections for the upcoming biennium were held and our new officers are:

- *Chair:* La-Nita Williams, Smith Library, High Point University
- *Chair Elect:* Ronald Headen, Hemphill Branch, Greensboro Public library
- *Secretary:* Open
- *Treasurer:* Jackie Cornette, Western Watauga Branch, Sugar Grove
- *Region 1 Director:* Open
- *Region 2 Director:* Open
- *Region 3 Director:* Beth Sheffield, Central Branch, Greensboro Public Library
- *Region 4 Director:* Wendy Barber, Wilkes County Public Library

Our 2023 Meralyn G. Meadows Scholarship winner is Joy Hollingsworth, AMY Regional Library.

### **New Members**

Our biennium included the introduction of new officers, creating a financial report, and a review of past activities and initiatives, future initiatives and events. We discussed goals to focus events on library specialties with collaboration from different roundtables. We discussed a goal to create programming that addresses the transition from completing library studies to securing employment, and a goal to organize meetups which will be determined at the next meeting. Submitted by Melody Rood.

### **Public Library**

The Public Library Section held the Fabulous Friday Conference on October 7, 2022. The event was hosted by Durham County Library and held at the newly renovated Main Library. The theme of the event was “From the Ground Up: Rebuilding Connections.” The featured speaker was Dr. Noah Lenstra, Associate Professor from Library and Information Science School of Education at UNC Greensboro. Many of the session topics were focused on building and strengthening our communities through partnerships, creating inclusive and welcoming environments for individuals with disabilities, developing a defense for challenges, and weeding strategies. The

65 attendees were taken on a guided tour of the main library, and a walkthrough of the technology vehicle, which will be dispatched to take STEAM programs to underserved areas in Durham County. The closing session was presented by the State Librarian Michelle Underhill, where she provided the group with some excellent strategies on how to prioritize and set goals. PLS raffled gift baskets to raise funds for Librarians Build Communities. PLS presented Etaf Rum, best-selling author, as our featured speaker at the Wine and Cheese event at the Biennial Conference. Lynda Reynolds participated in a successful panel discussion, “Strengthening North Carolina Public Libraries in the Defense of Intellectual Freedom.” Pat Familiar, Branch Manager from Gates County Public Library, was the recipient of the 2023 William H. Roberts Award. PLS provided contributions to the Leadership Institute and Conference Student Scholarships. During this time, we lost committee members to retirement or relocation: Jeffrey Hamilton, Marian Lytle, Diane Palmieri and Elizabeth Skinner. We were fortunate to welcome new committee members: April Llewellyn, Lynda Reynolds, and Jennifer Rogers. Carrie Lee, a longtime member, filled the vacancy as Vice Chair. Carrie Lee will now serve as Chair in the upcoming Biennium. Biennium Goal Reporting: PLS will continue to discuss and review the Purpose, Goals, and Vision of the section to ensure we are staying abreast with current trends and topics in public libraries. We will develop strategies to attract and recruit new members, and to keep current members interested and involved in PLS. Rachel Webb, PLS webmaster, successfully recruited new members for the marketing committee, who will assist with updating PLS Marketing materials, and who will develop outreach, programming and marketing strategies to reach our members. Committee reviewed and updated PLS bylaws. Collaboration Request: We would like to partner with other sections, collaborate on programs and offer additional outreach programs; especially programs related to library best practices for dealing with banned book issues, and providing training opportunities for professionals and paraprofessionals alike. PLS met with the Chairs of REMCO and Paraprofessional Sections to discuss future collaboration opportunities. Will seek to continue our collaboration partnership with YSS. Submitted by Sandra Lovely.



## **Reference and Adult Services (RASS)**

Highlights: The RASS Board voted to grant Velappan the Chair position and update the Chair-elect, Secretary and Treasurer positions. Biennium Goal Reporting: 1. Recruit new members. 2. Continue to present Buzz sessions. 3. Continue sending new member letters to welcome potential new members, as we have done in the past. Submitted by Michelle Osborne.

## **Resources and Technical Services (RTSS)**

Highlights: We held a successful election of new RTSS officers and one interest group chair for the new 2023-2025 biennium. In-person business meeting was led by incoming chair Lisa Baricella to welcome new officers. RTSS was active in the 2023 conference, hosting a sponsored panel of speakers, one sponsored student scholarship, and a raffle basket contribution.

Detailed Report: For this quarter and for the 2023 Biennium, RTSS successfully elected new board members and actively participated in the conference. New members of the RTSS board for 2023-2025 includes Lisa Baricella as the Chair, Velappan Velappan as Vice-Chair/Chair-Elect, Collin Stiglbauer as Secretary/Treasurer, Beth Ashmore as Director, Christine Fischer in the 2nd Director position, and Doug Short as the new Interest Group Chair for Cataloging. A call for volunteers to fill the remainder of open Interest Group Chairs will go out soon.

This quarter RTSS focused its efforts on preparing for the 65th Biennial Conference. RTSS held an in-person business meeting during the conference led by incoming Chair Lisa Baricella. RTSS also sponsored a panel session entitled “Demystifying Careers in Technical Services: Getting a job, learning the job, growing in the job,” featuring a wide variety of library professionals with experience in Technical Services. Our speakers were Adrian Zeck, Carrie Nichols, Sarah Guy, Shaunta Alvarez and Tim Hunter, with outgoing RTSS Chair Tiffany Henry as session moderator. Additionally, RTSS sponsored one student scholarship for the conference and contributed a basket for the conference raffle. Submitted by Tiffany Henry.

## **Roundtable on Ethnic & Minority Concerns (REMCO)**

Highlights: The executive board had an opportunity to meet and discuss the final conference logistics on October 12th. Brittany Champion requested that each board member prioritize attending sponsored/cosponsored events. To raise visibility, Champion relaunched the hashtag, #REMCoexperience. Its use increased the number of followers on both Facebook and Instagram (IG). We are proud to say that some of our posts were shared on the IG platform of our partner, Black Librarian Male (@theblacklibrarianmale). In addition to increased social media presence, we used Wild Apricot and word of mouth to advertise conference sessions. We sponsored two sessions, including our biennial luncheon, and cosponsored three sessions. In addition to official sessions, we hosted a BIPOC meet-up, proposed by Jazmyne Baylor, our new Vice-Chair/Chair-Elect. In closing, Champion has since updated all files, websites, and social platforms to prepare for the incoming board. Our sessions included: Author Talk featuring Kelly Starling Lyons & Judy Allen Dodson (approximately 40 participants), Cultivating Sustainable Organizations--Real Talk on Serving in Professional Organizations (approximately 50 participants), REMCo Luncheon: Social Justice and Libraries: Strengthening East Greensboro through Archival Collections and Historical Program and Award Ceremony (approximately 64 participants), Business Meeting (16 participants), Zen Den: Mat Yoga and Reflection. We elected new Executive Board members, including: Carlos Grooms- Chair, Jazmyne Baylor- Vice Chair, Chair Elect Joan Hill, Co-Director Velappan Velappan, Co-Director Candace Jacobs, and Secretary/Treasurer. Submitted by Brittany Champion.

## **Scholarships**

Highlights: New committee members for the 2022-2023 Biennium include Michele Lawrence (Perquimans County Library), Shaunta Alvarez (Elon University), and Kathy Vossler (Haywood County Public Library). Biennial Scholarship recipients were selected by the committee and notified/awarded in August 2023.

Detailed Report: Current committee membership includes Katy Henderson, 2024-2030, Chair 2024-2025 - Chatham County Public Libraries; Rachel Olson, 2018-2024 - UNC Greensboro; Michele Lawrence, 2022-2028 - Perquimans County Library; Monica Young, 2020-2026 - Guilford Technical Community College; Shaunta Alvarez, 2022-2028 - Elon University and Kathy Vossler, 2022-2028 - Haywood County Public Library. In October 2022, former committee member Jennifer Winford resigned from the Scholarship Committee after taking a new non-library position. The committee chair put out a recruitment call via the NCLA listserv, which had a large response, and selected Michele Lawrence (Perquimans County Library) to fill the vacated position. Scholarships committee chair prepared and submitted a budget request for the 2023 scholarship cycle after conferring with committee members on award amounts. The Finance Committee agreed to fund the following scholarships for the 2022-2023 Biennium: NCLA Memorial Scholarship - \$1000, Appalachian Scholarship - \$1000, Query-Long Scholarship - \$1000. President Libby Stone initiated a discussion around updating the language in the handbook regarding scholarships and promoting/soliciting donations to the scholarship funds so that more funds may be distributed biennially via the NCLA Scholarships Committee. In April 2023, a Scholarships Task Force met to discuss the possibility of changing the language in the NCLA Handbook to set a minimum award amount for each scholarship going forward, to allow for flexibility in both dollar amount and possibly the number of scholarships awarded (minimum of one each for Appalachian, McLendon, NCLA Memorial, and Query-Long). Finance Committee chair Paul Birkhead confirmed that the North Carolina Community Foundation gives us an amount that we can withdraw/distribute one time during the year. We appear to be in good shape to offer larger scholarships and/or more scholarships in the next Biennium, but this will have to be discussed further as we near our next budget request period. Language reflecting the above changes was added to the Handbook. For the 2022-2023 Biennium, the scholarships committee collaborated via email and Google docs to review

and score the 21 complete applications we received. The committee selected the following recipients: Appalachian Scholarship - Sarah Dwyer (UNC Chapel Hill), NCLA Memorial Scholarship - Natalie Goretti (NCCU), and Query-Long Scholarship - Anna Louise Kallas (UNC Greensboro). Winners were notified in August 2023, and checks were sent out by NCLA Treasurer Lara Luck. Scholarships were announced at the Biennial Conference Ogilvie Lecture in October 2023. Katy Henderson has agreed to serve as Scholarships Committee chair for the 2024-2025 biennium. Submitted by Katy Henderson.

### **Special Collections**

At the conference this year the section held a meet and greet in person with coffee and pastries. It was good to meet people and talk about the work of the section. The section also held its business meeting via zoom during the conference. The following slate of officers was approved: Kathelene Smith, Chair; Travis Souther, Vice-Chair; Stacey Krim, Treasurer and Secretary; Alston Cobourn, Director; Jennifer Daugherty, Director; Jessica Janecki, Past Chair. We do not have any events currently planned. Submitted by Jessica Janecki.

### **Technology & Trends**

Highlights: Over the course of this Biennium, the Technology and Trends section created a virtual technology help request form, encouraging all NCLA members to utilize Technology and Trends member expertise for assistance with technology questions. We hosted a webinar about the technology that kept us afloat during the height of the COVID pandemic. At the end of the '23 conference, we elected new officers and held a well-attended business meeting to identify member interests and future programming directions.

### **Women in Libraries**

Women in Libraries during the 2022-2023 Biennium strived to meet no less than quarterly, but often met bimonthly since we were still mostly meeting virtually. We hosted three webinars in 2022. The first webinar was "Meet ALA Presidential Candidate Emily Drabinski" in March 2022; it was a meet

and greet that 22 participants attended. In June 2022, we hosted “Quantifying Our Worth: Revisiting What We Measure with Statistics” with panelists Amanda Johnson from the State Library, Carol McCollum from Wake County Public Libraries and Mary Sizemore from High Point Public Library. This webinar discussed how stats are collected, experiences with statistics and quantifying library usage, and how to ensure that you’re accurately reflecting your library’s impact on the community, especially post-COVID. Our final webinar, “How to Get Involved in NCLA,” in 2022 was cosponsored by Leadership, Administration, and Management and the New Members Roundtable. Panelists included representation from each section that sponsored with varying levels of experience with NCLA. The panelists were Wanda Brown, Melody Rood, Brandy Hamilton, Michelle Hildreth, and Mark Sanders. We also supported the Leadership Institute by purchasing copies of *Dare to Lead* by Brené Brown for the current cohort. In 2023, we focused on planning for the Biennial Conference and obtaining nominations for the Marilyn Miller Award. We had discussed creating a second award this biennium so one could be focused on mid-career and the other would be more like a lifetime achievement award, but we decided to not pursue this at this time. For the conference we hosted a luncheon featuring a talk on “Cultivating Community” by Jamie DeMent Holcomb, North Carolina farmer, cookbook author, entrepreneur, and CEO of Kidzu. The Marilyn Miller Award winner, Mollie Peuler, for 2023 was announced. Our new slate of officers was also announced. At the conference, WIL offered two sessions in addition to the luncheon. One session was cosponsored by REMCo and featured North Carolina authors Judy Allen Dodson and Kelly Starling Lyons. It was entitled “American Dreams: Celebrating Black Heroes and History.” They shared excerpts from their work and how Black Heroes are featured in their stories. The other session cosponsored with LAMS was “Surviving to Thriving: Cultivating Healthy Workplace Environments” which was a panel of managers and administrators who talked about what they do to cultivate a healthy workplace. The biennium goals identified were mostly met. Our goals were to offer 2-3 edu-

cational sessions a year, to plan for the conference, to create a new award, and to update the election process in the bylaws. All goals were met, except for the creation of a new award, which we decided to wait on. Submitted by Michelle Hildreth.

## Youth Services

We had a great time last biennium with a Renewing and Refreshing YSS Retreat in November 2022. Members were able to learn about current topics, share ideas, and relax in Western NC. We awarded 5 Let’s Get Creative grants to public libraries in NC in April 2023. The winning proposals were for circulating STEM kits, pop-up plays, electronics, Trick-or-Trot family 5K event, and Young Adult gardening workshops. It will be exciting to hear how their grant projects play out. NMRT and YSS hosted a Trivia Night at NCLA conference where attendees enjoyed light refreshments and Jeopardy-style trivia on various topics from library literature to pop-culture. Laughs were heard all around. Our new YSS board members, listed below, are excited to craft goals for the next biennium. Officers are:

- Vice Chair/Chair Elect--Tracy Bagnato, Southeast Regional Library, Wake County Public Library
- Treasurer--John Russell, Lincoln County Public Library
- Director of Membership--Anna Monroe-Stover, Onslow County Public Library
- Director at Large--Jen Dickenson, Polk County Public Libraries
- Scholarship & Grant Director--Katie Broughey, Southern Pines Public Library
- Secretary--Varin Worthington, Neuse Regional Libraries
- Past Chair--Lisa Donaldson, Henderson County Public Library

The Youth Services report was submitted by Amanda Weaver.

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# NCLA Executive Board Business Meeting

## Friday, October 20, 2023

### Winston Salem, NC – Benton Convention Center

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Attending: Members of the North Carolina Library Association

The meeting was called to order by President Libby Stone at 12:49 p.m.

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#### Welcome - Libby Stone

Libby thanked everyone for joining us in person for the 65th Biennial Conference. She also acknowledged the Local Arrangements Committee and Forsyth County Public Library. Libby thanked the Executive Board and the Conference Planning Committee and Dawn Behrend for planning a great conference and expressed her gratitude to them for their hard work. Libby announced the winners of the raffle basket drawings. She announced winners of the LAMS table raffle and the Passport to NCLA winner.

#### Treasurer's Report – Lara Luck

Lara began her report by thanking Libby, and the rest of the Finance Committee. She also thanked Amy and Lorrie for their help and advice. This year our finances have gone up and down, and ended financially stronger than we started. Thanks to all the members for attending and supporting workshops and sessions. Section finance reports went out last weekend; if you didn't get your report, please email [treasurer@nclaonline.org](mailto:treasurer@nclaonline.org). The scholarships have been given already. The Leadership Institute is still in the black; all the bills are paid. Conference profits stand at \$51,000, but that number will change. All the activity that has happened the last few weeks goes out in the fourth quarter. Our \$228,882.54 budget is on track, there was an amendment regarding liability insurance.

Section Chair reports are due November 30. Submit in the same way you have before on the website <https://nclaonline.org/executive-board-submissions>.

There is a motion pending from NCLA Constitution, Codes and Handbook Revisions Committee. Floor was opened for discussion or questions but none were brought forward. They were sent out 30 days before via email. All members were encouraged

to use QR code on the tables to vote. Libby will email the results next week. Updated results, 114 unanimously voted to approve the motion.

Libby provided some personal reflections and future advice as she steps into a new role as Past President, as this is a six year commitment. For the first two years, I planned a conference during a pandemic. My second two years were challenging with hybrid meetings. We made it through, kept close to our goals and initiatives. New graduates coming in from Leadership Institute, some stay on in supportive roles. I'll be looking for new board members as the Past President, please answer my call!

Libby asked Lorrie Russell to come forward to administer the oath of office. There was a special presentation to Lorrie. Currently SELA representative, Treasurer, Membership Committee, LAMS Chair, Past President. Libby presented Lorrie with a gavel.

#### Swearing In- Lorrie Russell

As a member in good standing, Lorrie considered it an honor to swear in the incoming board. Lorrie asked for all past presidents to stand. There are a total of 15 still with us, even though not all present today.

1987-1989: Patsy J. Hansel  
1989-1991: Barbara A. Baker  
1995-1997: David Fergusson  
1997-1999: Beverley Gass  
1999-2001: Plummer Alston "Al" Jones, Jr.  
2001-2003: Ross Holt  
2003-2005: Pauletta Brown Bracy  
2005-2007: Robert Burgin  
2007-2009: Phil Barton  
2009-2011: Sherwin Rice  
2011-2013: Wanda Brown  
2013-2015: Dale Cousins

2015-2017: Rodney Lippard  
2017-2019: Mike Crumpton  
2019-2021: Lorrie Russell

She read off each of the 15 names. Extended gratitude to Libby Stone as newest Past President. Installation of officers for 66th biennium. Recognized incoming Board Members; President: Dawn Behrend, Lenoir Rhyne University; Vice President/President-Elect: Lara Luck, Forsyth County Public Library; Secretary: Jonathan Furr, Highpoint Public Library; Treasurer: Kate Engelbrecht, STV company in Charlotte; Treasurer-Elect: Mark Sanders, East Carolina University; Regional Director Western, Breanne Crumpton, Appalachian State University; Regional Director Piedmont, Kathy Shields, Wake Forest University.

Dawn introduced Alan Bailey, Professor Emeritus at East Carolina University. Alan Bailey has served as a public school librarian, a branch manager of a public library, and has worked in community college and university libraries. He is the author of the book, *Building a Core Print Collection for Preschoolers* and considers serving on the Randolph Caldecott Award Committee and the Coretta Scott King Book Awards Jury two of his career highlights. He has been an ac-

tive member of the Coretta Scott King Book Awards Committee for 17 years and served as the committee's 2019-2020 Chair. Upon his retirement from East Carolina University, he was appointed Professor Emeritus and currently serves as an adjunct Teaching Professor for ECU's Master of Library Science Program.

### **Closing Keynote Speaker**

Alan Bailey introduced Kwame Mbalia, whose debut middle-grades novel was awarded Coretta Scott King and Children's Africana Award, *Tristan Strong Punches a Hole in the Sky*. Other titles include "Last Date of the Emperor" series, and *Black Boy Joy*. Mbalia is a Howard University grad who survives on dad jokes and Cheez-Its. His presentation focused on, "Everyone Needs a Story." Equity equation: information + access = opportunity is the takeaway. Empathy= treat each book like it's someone else's birthday party.

The Business Meeting ended at 1:13 p.m.

Dawn resumed the meeting at 2:22 to make closing remarks about the 66th Biennial Conference to be held Oct 13-17, 2025. Winner for conference registration drawing, Kathryn Nesbitt. Dawn Behrend adjourned the closing session at 2:23 p.m.

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# An Author Looks at Censorship

In Fall 1987 (Volume 45, Issue 3), author Lee Bennett Hopkins contributed “An Author Looks at Censorship,” an issue which resonates strongly with libraries in North Carolina and beyond today. Hopkins was an award-winning children’s author who was also an incredibly prolific anthologist of poetry for children—he compiled more than 120—and who created the Lee Bennett Hopkins Poetry Award (Pennsylvania Center for the Book) and the Lee Bennett Hopkins/International Reading Association Promising Poetry Award for outstanding writing for children. In this essay, Hopkins describes how the “concern, doubt, and anxiety” in these critical times leads teachers and librarians to self-censor, thus depriving readers of the richness of literature to explore the full range of our experiences. Hopkins ends by urging us “open more library doors” and to “do it now!”

*Shut not your doors to me proud libraries,  
For that which was lacking on all your  
well-fill'd shelves, yet needed most  
I bring,  
Forth from the emerging war, a book  
I have made,  
The words of my book nothing,  
the drift of it every thing,  
A book separate, not link'd with  
the rest nor felt by the intellect,  
But you ye untold latencies will  
thrill to every page.*

Walt Whitman  
*Leaves of Grass* / 1865

It is incredible that this sentiment was expressed over 122 years ago, yet some libraries still are shutting their door on Walt Whitman. They are also closing out a multitude of writers being censored by non-writers.

In the world of children’s literature, countless titles are being scrutinized, then banned, in every genre—fiction, non-fiction, even poetry!

I find it hard to believe what I find in journals and newspapers. Imagine, for example, that a Superintendent of Schools in Panama City, Florida, announces “a three-tier book classification system,” banning such acclaimed novels as Robert Cormier’s *I Am The Cheese* about a teenager who becomes involved in a spy-like web, and Susan Beth Pfeffer’s novel, *About David*, dealing with teenage suicide—one of the major problems children in our country face today.

Other headlines recently have blared: “Alabama Textbooks Banning Threatens School Librarians;” “CNEA Files Brief in Tennessee Textbook Case;” “Censor’s New Aim: Limiting Study of Ideas in Schools.”

Where are we going? What are we headed for? Indeed, censorship is a rampant disease that makes it difficult to reach readers.

James J. Jacobs states: “...most of us realize if every book which makes someone unhappy were torched, we could operate the city library from the trunk of a Japanese import.”<sup>1</sup>

Each and every book is under scrutiny. Shel Silverstein’s popular volumes of light verse, *Where the*

<sup>1</sup> James J. Jacobs. “Making Kids Safe for Books.” *The People*, (October, 1985).



*Sidewalk Ends* and *A Light in the Attic* are constantly under attack due to lack of “moralism.” Yet, if one carefully observes his body of work, one will find human messages contained within his verses, more so than any current writer of verse today. The renowned poet, Myra Cohn Livingston, stated: “Mr. Silverstein’s genius lies in finding a way to present moralism, beguiling his child readers with a technique that establishes him an errant, mischievous and inventive child as well as an understanding, trusted, and wise adult.”<sup>2</sup>

Censors hit the minds and hearts of everyone involved in teaching—those who instill the love of reading—causing concern, doubt, and anxieties.

In a recent speech on censorship held at the International Reading Association Annual Convention in May 1987, Myra Cohn Livingston reported: “... several years ago I received word from an editor of a major textbook publisher that a limerick of mine scheduled for use in a textbook had to be dropped.” The five-line verse, titled “Fourth of July” deals with lighting fireworks with a *match*.<sup>3</sup>

The editor told Mrs. Livingston: “We can’t have anything about children playing with matches.”

“But how do you light fireworks?” Mrs. Livingston posed, stopping due to her realization that she had become familiar with the restrictions about “junk food, about witches, about proper English, Black dialect, brandnames, violence, Negative and Positive images.”

Judy Blume, one of the most beloved, yet most banned authors in the country, talked about her view of censorship:

Several years ago, while writing *Tiger Eyes*, my editor asked me to delete a few lines because, as he said, that passage would surely make the book a target for censors. I deleted the passage and I’ve regretted the decision ever since. I think my editor does too. I have vowed not to be intimidated again. But what about all the other writers? What about writers who are just starting out? If I were

that young writer today, I might not write for and about children at all I might find it impossible to write honestly about them in this climate of fear. Because I don’t know how to get into the mind and body of a character without allowing his or her sexuality to come through. Sexuality is an important part of life. It’s healthy, not sick.<sup>4</sup>

Richard Peck, another well-acclaimed author of young adult books, has been criticized for being “too realistic.” On the basis of “community standards” his young adult novel *Are You in the House Alone?* has been removed from the shelves of classrooms and libraries in many towns.

Mr. Peck relates that he wrote the book “because the typical victim of the crime of rape is a teenage girl in our country. That’s a very hard truth. Yet, I wanted my readers to know some things about this crime, that our laws are stacked against the victim and in favor of the criminal. I wanted them to know what it’s like to be a victim...I had to deal only in the truth. I couldn’t put a happy ending on this story because we don’t have any happy endings to this problem in our society.”<sup>5</sup>

Censors hit the hearts and minds of educators, too. Misha Arenstein, a veteran teacher in Westchester County, New York, a true advocate of children’s books, relates:

Almost twenty years have elapsed since I entered the teaching profession—one I still adore. The echo of a myriad of changes fills my head.

I remember early on as an elementary teacher, formally requesting my Board of Education’s approval for the use of Judy Blume’s pioneer novel, *Are You There God? It’s Me, Margaret*. The President and the Board laughed at my timidity, thinking I was too intimidated by so-called controversial books!

In later years, I recall a parent complaining about my use of M.E. Kerr’s, *Dinky Hocker Shoots Smack*. Was I advocating the use of heroin? The

<sup>2</sup> Myra Cohn Livingston. “The Light in His Attic.” *New York Times Book Review*, (March 9, 1986): 36-37.

<sup>3</sup> “Fourth of July” in *Celebrations* (New York: Holiday House, 1985.)

<sup>4</sup> Judy Blume. *Newsletter on Intellectual Freedom*, (September, 1986): 144, 176.

<sup>5</sup> Richard Peck in *From Writers to Students: The Pleasures and Pain of Writing*, edited by M. Jerry Weiss. (Newark, Delaware: International Reading Association, 1979): 65.

criticism vanished as I asked the parent whether she had read the book. The parent judged the entire content of Kerr's work by the title alone.

Today, a seasoned and literate reader of children's literature, past and present, I fear most the reactionary atmosphere surrounding all of us. I indulge in self-censorship—a practice widely prevalent in many schools.

Coming across a mild expletive, an off-color word, or a situation involving realistic sexual interest. I often set a book aside.

Will my administrators welcome the chance to defend my academic freedom, I silently ponder? Will parents influenced by years of negative comments about teachers and teaching understand my fervent attempt to get children to read? Censorship and its silent effect on us all must present the answers.<sup>6</sup>

“A more subtle and frightening kind of censorship...is that which is practiced voluntarily by librarians and teachers.”

Unheard of decades ago, college professors of children's literature devote chapters in textbooks to censorship. Their concerns are voiced too.

The distinguished educator, Charlotte S. Huck, includes a discussion of censorship in her volume, *Children's Literature in the Elementary School*, reiterating what Misha Arenstein feels in these troubled days. “A more subtle and frightening kind of censorship,” Dr. Huck states, “is that which is practiced voluntarily by librarians and teachers. If a book has come under negative scrutiny in a nearby town, it is carefully placed under the librarian's desk until the controversy dies down.”<sup>7</sup>

Arthea J.S. Reed, an associate professor of education at the University of North Carolina at Asheville echoes this phenomenon in her text, *Reaching Adolescents: The Young Adult and the School*. She begins the chapter, “Censorship and the Young Adult Book”

with: “Censorship sends terror up and down the teacher's and the librarian's and the administrator's spine. No educator has failed to reexamine the materials used in the classroom or library when well-publicized cases of censorship, book-banning, and book-burning have occurred. No creative teacher feels safe from the censor's wrath when he or she reads about teachers who were fired for using particular books in their classrooms.”<sup>8</sup>

In Zena Sutherland's, *Children and Books*, Alice B. Naylor, Professor at Appalachian State University, Boone, North Carolina, devotes twelve pages to the issue of censorship, including excellent listings of “Anti-Intellectual Freedom Organizations” and “Pro-Intellectual Freedom Organizations.”<sup>9</sup>

All of the above texts are worth reading, each providing sound guidelines to educators as to what to do when the censors do come.

Distinguished editors of children's books, such as Jean Karl, feel the effects also. In her article, “Calm down, Squirrels,” Ms. Karl relates: “These days, I look at *damns* and *hells* and *gods* and *pisses* and all the other four letter words that spell realism to many. And in many cases they are realism. They are exactly the way the characters that use them would talk, and so they must talk that way, no matter what the censor might believe. To create books that lie about speech or about any aspect of life is to create distrust in readers, to say that we cannot depend upon books. It is to doom the book as a part of common life...

“It is time to stop shutting those doors and open new ones...”

Every aspect of language, and of incident, in books being edited is considered with an eye to what must be there and what might simply be fodder for the censor.”<sup>10</sup>

So many writers have felt the impact of the censor's arbitrary bite in America: Maurice Sendak, Ezra Jack Keats, Norma Klein, Carl Sandburg, Langston

<sup>6</sup> Conversation with author. April, 1987.

<sup>7</sup> Charlotte S. Huck. *Children's Literature in the Elementary School*. Third, Updated Edition: (New York: Holt, 1979):42.

<sup>8</sup> Arthea J.S. Reed, *Reaching Adolescents: The Young Adult and the School*. (New York: Holt, 1986):422.

<sup>9</sup> Zena Sutherland and May Hill Arbuthnot. *Children and Books*. Seventh Edition. (Glenview, Illinois: Scott, Foresman, 1986.)

<sup>10</sup> Jean Karl. “Calm Down, Squirrels.” *The Advocate* (Winter, 1982):77.

Hughes, E.B. White. The list could fill a volume! But one thing is certain. In fifty years or less, those people banning books will be long gone. But the books such as Sendak's *In the Night Kitchen*, Keats' *The Snowy Day*, Klein's *Mom, the Wolf Man, and Me*, the poetry of Sandburg and Hughes, and the classic tales spun by White will live on and on and continue to be loved long after the censors' knives are dutifully blunted.

It is time to stop shutting those doors and open new ones—open young minds to the feasts that only books can bring—to life and language that can be found nowhere else except on printed pages.

“We need those books that reflect every aspect of our cultural diversity,” Jean Karl states. “And if we can no longer picture teen-age sexual explorations,

the trauma of abortion, their terrors of drug addiction after its initial pleasures, the things that are really wrong with our society, and lives that are not lived in a perfect suburb, then we are lying to our children and forcing them into cultural blindness that could eventually shatter the fabric of the nation. For democracy is based on trust and understanding, on acceptance, and when these are missing, the diversities that will continue to exist will fragment rather than enrich the commonwealth.”<sup>11</sup>

We do need these books. We need to light more bulbs in more attics, not turn them off. We need to start opening more library doors. And we need to do it now!

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

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## On the Front Lines: Welcoming the Next Patron

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“Perhaps no word better summarizes what librarianship is than service.”

Welcome to this first article of a new recurring column in *North Carolina Libraries* where we on the front lines of librarianship can share our experiences, tips, and recommendations.

Perhaps no word better summarizes what librarianship is than **service**. All who work in libraries provide service to others, whether frontline customer service to patrons asking for circulation or reference assistance or to internal customers asking for acquisitions, cataloging, IT, or administrative support. Since most of my experience over nearly 25 years of working in academic libraries has been public facing in access service, this issue's column will share some musings from that perspective.

So many books and trainings exist on customer service and yet it is so difficult to teach, learn, and faithfully practice in every encounter with library patrons and others. How many times have we all been on the receiving end of unwelcoming, uninterested, unhelpful, and unavailable service at a store, restaurant, or other businesses? We certainly do not want our libraries to be among those mental lists of our patrons. Many of us no doubt have turned toward retail-focused books to learn how major brands provide a good “customer experience” (CX): Disney's *Be Our Guest*, and *The Nordstrom Way* come to mind. We've perhaps received training on the golden rule, the platinum rule, and more recently even the rhodium rule as applied to customer service. Perhaps we've tried to enact the concierge services model from hoteliers, as Cyril Oberlander encouraged interlibrary loan conference attendees in the 2000s. Or maybe we're not even wanting to use the term “customer service” because it has become too loaded, as James Waters, Eleanor Cleveland, and Jeff Hipsher have suggested in recent years.

Whatever model or terminology we use to describe helping library patrons (or users, customers,

borrowers, or readers), there are many **best practices** we can strive to implement. We can be approachable even when working on other tasks at the desk. We can smile, welcome patrons, offer assistance and referrals, and chat if patrons seem to want to and there isn't a line of other patrons. We can strive to be person-centered, employ active listening, have open body language, use people-first and inclusive language, and attempt to avoid possible microaggressions and stereotypes. We can promptly reply to voicemails and emails from patrons and coworkers asking for our replies. We can certainly ensure privacy by not speaking loudly when repeating titles or talking about patrons by name at the desk with coworkers.

When assisting patrons who speak another primary language than English, or who might be from another country or culture than your own, we can be thoughtful when making gestures or using idioms that could be culturally offensive or confusing, and we can be understanding if their reactions are not what we might expect (e. g. not making eye contact or speaking with a louder or softer voice). If assisting patrons with an interpreter or sign language interpreter, we can speak looking at the patron rather than the interpreter.

Even for patrons who speak English as their primary language, libraries often use terms many patrons have not encountered elsewhere previously, and even the concept of a library is confusing to some patrons. For instance, many undergraduate students come to my library's service desk asking to rent a laptop and how much it costs, and so many struggle with the idea of why there are due dates when they have not finished with an item yet. We need to be mindful of library jargon and explain what we do and mean and why these perhaps seemingly arbitrary policies exist. We should validate

patron confusion, apologize for our part in that, and then perhaps work with colleagues to review our policies and how we explain them, revising as needed.

Even though being asked for the millionth time where the restroom is located can be boring, or potentially insulting to some (I went to graduate school for this?), we on service desks must remember that this patron may be asking the question for the first time. We should respect them and answer readily without launching into a lecture on how to read signs or into a spiel about everything else the library can provide them.

It is also all too easy for some of us at service desks to slip into autopilot and not listen well or respond appropriately – and our patrons do it, too. I have asked patrons as they approach the desk “how may I help you” to have them respond “fine and you” as if I had asked how they were. A coworker of mine who was also a student at the time once had a patron who knew her ask her how her finals were going as she handed him a stack of checked out books and she said “thank you” and looked back at what she had been doing only to realize a moment later what he had said. I’m afraid sometimes we, too, forget to smile, greet, and thank our patrons because they walked up while were in the midst of doing something else, or there is a line of patrons, or we’re having a bad day ourselves.

We can certainly attempt to **train employees** thoroughly in advance on all needed information, but realistically not all will be remembered since there is so very much frontline employees must be trained to know. To help in these lapses, we should have current policy, procedure, and instruction documents readily available for quick reference when questions arise during a patron interaction, especially if working a service desk alone, so a patron does not have to wait long, and employees do not get flustered while frantically looking for how to help. We can also provide a reassuring work environment to our employees, encouraging them to make their best judgment decision in the moment to address an immediate issue, especially if an instruction or supervisor is not available, without the fear that there will be repercussions for an error. Rarely is any of these decisions irreversible in libraries.

As much as we strive to meet or exceed patron expectations, **there are limits**; indeed, the customer is not always right. We must have organizational restrictions for compliance and liability and must have personal boundaries for employee safety and wellness. We can practice the art of saying no, use various de-escalation techniques, and use some assertiveness training. More simply, we can sometimes prevent or reduce a potential conflict with some planning. On one early morning at my university library, a patron became agitated and repeatedly banged his umbrella on our service desk because our employee had stepped away for a moment to ask a colleague a question and he was having to wait for assistance. In this case, and in others, scheduling a desk with more than one person whenever possible is incredibly helpful to waiting patrons; having preprinted “back in five minutes” signs or having a bell with a “ring for service” sign can also be helpful.

Other times, though, there are patrons who are having a bad day and take it out on you no matter what you have or have not done. Unfortunately, having to assist through some of this and then take a step away from a desk to decompress from such an encounter is common in any customer service environment. Then there are some patrons who are prone to question every policy, every overdue item, every equipment late fine, every hold or interlibrary loan item that has taken far too long in their mind to arrive. In such cases, my colleagues and I have found these patrons have responded best when the same employee has helped them because we learn the patron and they learn us. Sometimes patrons have made this request, and sometimes we have chosen this method so a patron is not attempting to play every employee against the other. Making notes of conversations in your circulation system, or email, or a notebook, can be helpful to ensure consistent decisions with high-need patrons, too. At the least, we all need to know when to refer to a supervisor or transfer/end an abusive phone call or one that is spiraling and when to call library security or police if an incident is that severe. For many practical tips on security, [The Blackbelt Librarian](#) by Warren Graham, a former long-time security guard from the Charlotte Mecklenburg Library in North Carolina, is a quick and useful read.

“We need to be the choice our patrons think about, want to come to repeatedly, and importantly refer their friends to use.”

Much more goes into having good - or bad - customer service encounters than what happens with a patron at the library service desk to find a title, get directions, checkout an item, or discuss a fine or damaged/lost item, though. Employees need customer service training in advance and need training on their duties, systems, the library's policies, collections, and services. The department's documentation must be current and readily available. The library's policies, signage, email templates, workflows, forms, and outreach materials all must be set, reviewed, and updated as needs and patron expectations change. All these **behind-the-scenes tasks** make every encounter at a service desk, over the phone, or replying to an email a possibly good, or bad, experience, too, and must receive attention as well as frontline customer service training.

As so many libraries are facing book challenges and program challenges, we need to remember to be

representative of all patrons and be a safe, welcoming space for all. It is an awfully hard tightrope to walk on sometimes, though, to please groups diametrically opposed to materials or programs that represent other parts of our communities. However, we must remember that our libraries are community funded and for the benefit of our community members; rarely are our libraries the only option (at least for some of our patrons) for research or leisure materials, study or gathering space, or any of the other services that we strive to provide so well. We need to be the choice our patrons think about, want to come to repeatedly, and importantly refer their friends to use. Our customer service makes the difference in our patrons' experiences, and we hope their lives, and in our own, too. So let's welcome the next patron.

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# In Step with Library Leaders

Welcome to the inaugural article for a new column, to be focused on library leadership. Leadership may provide vision, direction, encouragement, or a model, and it may come from those in positions of authority or from coworkers alongside you. If you are interested in library leadership, I would encourage you to network with your local library leaders and consider contacting someone from the NCLA's [Leadership, Administration, and Management Section](#).



Janice S. Lewis

For this first column, I have 3 questions for 3 library leaders. The first person to respond was Janice S. Lewis, Director of Academic Library Services at East Carolina University. On July 1, 2024, she will celebrate the completion of her 25th year at J.Y. Joyner Library. Her leadership

roles include past chair of the UNC University Libraries Advisory Council, past president of the Association of Southeastern Research Libraries, and President of the Friends of Sheppard Memorial Library.

Melanie Morgan, Director of Libraries for the Neuse Regional Libraries, was the second library leader polled. Selected Public Library Director of the Year for 2021, Morgan is an educator who believes in the power of libraries to transform lives. With more than 15 years of public library experience, she is dedicated to re-envisioning the library to advance its role as a community hub committed to inspiring creativity, fostering learning, and engaging the community. Melanie Morgan is a resident of Kinston and enjoys reading, going on hikes, and traveling with her family and friends.



Melanie Morgan



Kathy Parker

The third library leader to participate is Kathy Parker. Kathy is a Raleigh native who answered the calling to be a lifelong educator. She graduated with English and history degrees from North Carolina State University and earned ESL certification and a master's degree in library science from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. She began her career in education as a high school English teacher before transitioning to school library media. In 2008, she earned National Board Certification in library media. Joining the NC Department of Public Instruction in 2012, she is currently the state's School Library and Sandhills Regional Consultant in the Office of Digital Teaching and Learning. Kathy is available via email or phone at [kathy.parker@dpi.nc.gov](mailto:kathy.parker@dpi.nc.gov) or 252-220-0917.

## **My first question for all three is, "What motivates you as a library leader?"**

As a library leader, Lewis writes that she is deeply motivated by the opportunity to innovate, improve, and proactively collaborate to advance our university's teaching, learning, and research mission. Her goal is to ensure that every person who interacts with our library services and resources – whether onsite or online – has a positive experience, and she strives to make their journey as frictionless as possible. Several factors drive her commitment. One is our collective responsibility to create a welcoming and inclusive environment. Another is our collections, which should reflect the diversity of our communities, ensuring that everyone feels represented and valued. By curating materials that resonate with various backgrounds, cultures, and perspectives, we contribute to a richer learning experience for all library users. Third, Lewis is also deeply appreciative of the dedicated and tal-

ented team of faculty, staff, and student employees who are the backbone of our library. She is passionate about supporting them by providing resources, training, and technology that enable them to perform at their best.

Their professional growth and job satisfaction are essential to our collective success. She wants them to recognize the importance and value of their work and the impact it has on library users. As a leader, Lewis strives to communicate this impact to other stakeholders, whether it is faculty, administration, or the broader community. Our work matters, and she wants others to understand and appreciate it. The leadership mantra “people don’t care how much you know until they know how much you care” resonates with her. “I try to prioritize empathy and understanding,” she writes in closing. “Despite managerial pressures and financial constraints, I am committed to fostering a compassionate environment where our team feels supported and valued.”

Public libraries are the heart of the community, Morgan firmly believes, the cornerstone of democracy, and inclusive environments “where community members’ needs are fulfilled in an impactful manner.” It has been her passion to build libraries that not only elevate the communities they serve but transform the lives they impact. She goes on, “As a leader, my focus is building a resilient team environment

dents, and their families better. Knowing how much libraries enrich our school communities and improve well-being, motivates me as a library leader. I want to enable that purposeful work!”

### **The second question is, “How do you help create a shared vision?”**

Melanie Morgan provides a focus on a shared role, and attempts to gather consensus around what they can do together to meet that role. “The Neuse Regional Libraries (NRL) are dedicated to re-envisioning the library to advance its role as a community center where residents can gather, learn, create, and find inspiration; as well as increase partnerships with local organizations to provide programming and resources outside the library’s walls. For the NRL, it is really about being part of the community and adapting services and programming to meet community members where they are.” Neuse Regional must be attuned to differences across the service area, as it serves more than one homogenous community: “As one of twelve regional library systems overseeing three counties in North Carolina, it can be challenging because each county is unique. Therefore, we have to build collections, programming, and services that are adaptable, sustainable, and core to our mission of promoting intergenerational literacy to meet our goal of being a community center.”

*“...we have to build collections, programming, and services that are adaptable, sustainable, and core to our mission of promoting intergenerational literacy to meet our goal of being a community center..”*

and creating a work culture where all staff members feel valued and heard. It takes relationship building to develop a connected library, and the success of a library comes down to a healthy work environment where staff members are encouraged to dream big while upholding professional best practices.” Leading that interconnected team of coworkers to make an impact on the community is the prime motivation for Melanie Morgan.

Parker emphasizes her desire to work with those who enrich communities: “School librarians and the services they offer make the lives of our teachers, stu-

Kathy Parker writes “Listening, relationship building, engagement, and communication are key to creating a shared vision. Libraries are productive when stakeholders are collaborating and connecting around a common purpose.” Interpersonal communication and relationships are foregrounded in how leaders help create a shared vision.

For Jan Lewis, a shared vision “starts with communication, respect, and active participation.” She goes on to describe how East Carolina University has a strong commitment to shared governance that carries over into the library: “At our library, this is evidenced

through our EHRA and SHRA Assemblies, committees, regular department, division, and library-wide meetings, and participatory planning processes.” She attends all Assembly meetings to provide updates and answer questions, convenes regular leadership meetings documented with minutes shared library-wide, hosts regular library-wide events, and uses email, the library’s Intranet, and Teams sites to ensure that everyone stays informed. “As library director, I have learned,” she writes, “that it is practically impossible to over-communicate.”

Strategic planning is also done with library-wide input, ranging from the overarching five-year strategic plan which frames annual department, committee and individual goals. “Achieving the goals in the strategic plan and thereby our mission and vision requires buy-in and participation from everyone,” Lewis confirms, and she makes visible the products of that shared vision. “Our website prominently features our goals, metrics, annual reports, and initiatives that support our shared vision. Sustainable publishing, open and affordable educational resources, and student success are central themes. By showcasing these efforts, we inspire our community and reinforce our commitment to excellence.” Lewis summarizes her position this way: “In short, creating and achieving our shared vision hinges on effective communication, shared ownership, and a collective commitment.”

**The last question is,  
“What is the most exciting thing you see  
on the horizon for your libraries?”**

Perhaps not surprisingly, the possibilities offered by current and developing technologies figure into leaders’ responses to this question. Parker sets this in a school library context: “I am excited by the instructional leadership opportunities that generative AI provides for school librarians. Teachers, students, and their families need a school librarian’s skillset now more than ever to help them optimize generative AI effectively, ethically, and responsibly.”

Jan Lewis addresses this question from an academic library perspective. She writes that she is “excited about the opportunities generative artificial intelligence, customized large language models and other AI tools offer. Our university’s exploration of

a Microsoft CoPilot license,” she goes on, “can be game changer. Imagine training our chatbot using our institutional data and tailoring it to ECU’s unique resources, data, and needs. Leveraging AI features in Outlook, Teams and Microsoft tools will enhance productivity and user experiences. Patrons can receive personalized assistance whether they are seeking primary source materials, navigating databases, or reserving a laptop or a study room.” And thinking beyond immediate office tools, she goes on, “Likewise, the integration of AI in Adobe products and advancements in tools like DALL-E and Midjourney opens the creation of images and videos to a much wider audience. Specific tools for functions like coding, data analysis, metadata creation, literature reviews, and more will streamline many tasks and inform decision-making.” While she expressed concerns about the financial implications, Lewis writes that she is “excited by the incorporation of AI features in subscription databases and the potential for helping researchers uncover insights faster and contribute new knowledge.”

ECU is one of the institutions participating in the Ithaka S+R “Making Artificial Intelligence Generative for Higher Education” research study. As part of the research team, Lewis interviewed instructors and researchers about their uses of generative AI and the types of support they need. “This has been invaluable in helping plan for the library’s role in the area of AI literacy, which,” she affirms, “is a natural evolution of

*“Helping users understand AI’s capabilities, biases, and ethical considerations will help ensure informed engagement with these powerful tools.”*

our role with information literacy and critical evaluation of information. Helping users understand AI’s capabilities, biases, and ethical considerations will help ensure informed engagement with these powerful tools.”

Beyond AI, community engagement remains paramount. The growth of StoryWalks® across North Carolina exemplifies this, and at this time, a Joyner Library team is planning the first StoryWalk® in

Greenville. Jan confesses that she is “super excited to be part of this project and can’t wait for the ribbon-cutting ceremony! It will be a celebration of literacy, nature, and shared experiences.”

Melanie Morgan sees innovation and resiliency in the face of challenges. She writes, “Although our libraries are located in rural and tier-one counties, Neuse Regional Libraries have become centers of innovation and resiliency. We hope to continue to build upon the innovative programs and services that have elevated our community including the Digital Media Lab, Digital Resource Rover, Let’s Connect, Literacy without Barriers, and the WiFi for All programs to ensure accessibility for all community members.” Further, she hopes to increase her library’s sustainability by attracting new people into

the profession. Specifically, NRL plans to grow their Teen Volunteer program by offering paid internships through the LSTA Teen Leadership Internship grant, “introducing librarianship as a career path for the next generation.”

Even though they work in disparate environments, including an academic library, a regional public library and as a regional consultant for teachers and school librarians, these three library leaders share their commitments to their colleagues within libraries, seeking to bring library employees together to build a shared vision of service to their communities. Future articles in this column may offer advice, encouragement, and inspiration for each of us to build leadership capacity within ourselves.



INFORM  
CONNECT  
SUPPORT



## Revamping and Rethinking Popular Reading at an Academic Library

Many people think of academic libraries as physical (or virtual) spaces and collections maintained for the purpose of patrons acquiring professional knowledge and practicing scholastic research skills. Academic libraries have much more to offer patrons, as is evident by the diversity of programs and resources increasingly offered by college and university libraries. Popular or leisure reading collections can serve as an important function of academic libraries, which also meet patrons' needs and interests outside of research and homework completion.

Academic libraries serve multiple functions and, to some extent, also act as public libraries to many patrons. Consider, for example, the low likelihood that a university student will visit her public library for leisure reading or programming when her academic library is readily available on campus (and likely a critical stop in her weekly schedule). Academic librarians have many wonderful opportunities to support visiting patrons' interests, personal and professional growth, literacy, and socioemotional development at their libraries.

Studies suggest that students find value in leisure reading and find that it promotes empathy, reduces stress, and can help them to develop professional and communication skills (Watson, 2016). Furthermore, by offering patrons of academic libraries easy access to leisure books, we encourage them to visit and become more familiar with library services and resources overall.

### Out with the Old

In Fall 2023, I began managing the Popular Reading collection at East Carolina University's Joyner Library. A couple of years had passed since our Popular Reading books had received much attention

in terms of new title selection, publicizing, or weeding. The then-stagnating collection held 591 titles and consisted predominately of dated fiction titles by established bookstore favorite authors of the previous decade including James Patterson, David Baldacci, and Patricia Cornwell. The collection also contained a few nonfiction titles, including biographies of former political candidates and cookbooks with covers boasting the names of network television chefs.

While some of these titles may have triggered a higher circulation at a public library, our patrons, predominately students in their early 20's, showed lukewarm interest. When I first began working with the collection, less than 20% of the titles had been used during the previous 6 months.

To improve and develop the collection, I first eliminated low-circulating and older titles. At Joyner Library, our Popular Reading collection consists of titles on loan from a vendor, so eliminating unwanted titles simply entailed contacting the vendor and arranging the returns. For each returned title, we received vendor credit for a new book of our choosing from the catalog available to us.

### Seeking Suggestions

After weeding roughly a quarter of the titles in the collection based on their age and lack of use, I began to choose titles by analyzing circulation of previous titles and genres, reading best seller lists, and acquiring suggestions via digital as well as virtual title request methods.

I experienced some success engaging patron feedback via a physical suggestion box placed on a shelf within the collection. However, patrons were most inclined to offer suggestions online. In order to solicit feedback virtually, I created an anonymous

Qualtrics survey with fields for titles, authors, and general comments. I initially sent the survey to Academic Library Services faculty and staff as well as to library student employees. Every few months, I have continued to remind students and employees of this suggestion link, which I keep live so patrons may suggest titles, authors, or genres at any time. The link also includes a multiple-response option for a variety of topics, such as “African American Interests, Topics, and Authors,” and “Self Help, Psychology, and Personal Growth.”

In total, I have received dozens of responses, many of which have been requests for multiple titles as well as for genres, including graphic novels, to which I would have been unlikely to have given much attention if it were not for the survey.

### Advertising and Acquiring

To draw attention to the Popular Reading collection, I advertised titles with posters placed near the shelves, hero images on the Joyner Library website, flyers highlighting new titles, and bookmarks with QR codes to the suggestion survey, and a departmental presentation about the collection. Each of these methods elicited renewed interest in the collection, and I have also experienced success in advertising the titles by having personal conversations with student and employees about their reading interests as well

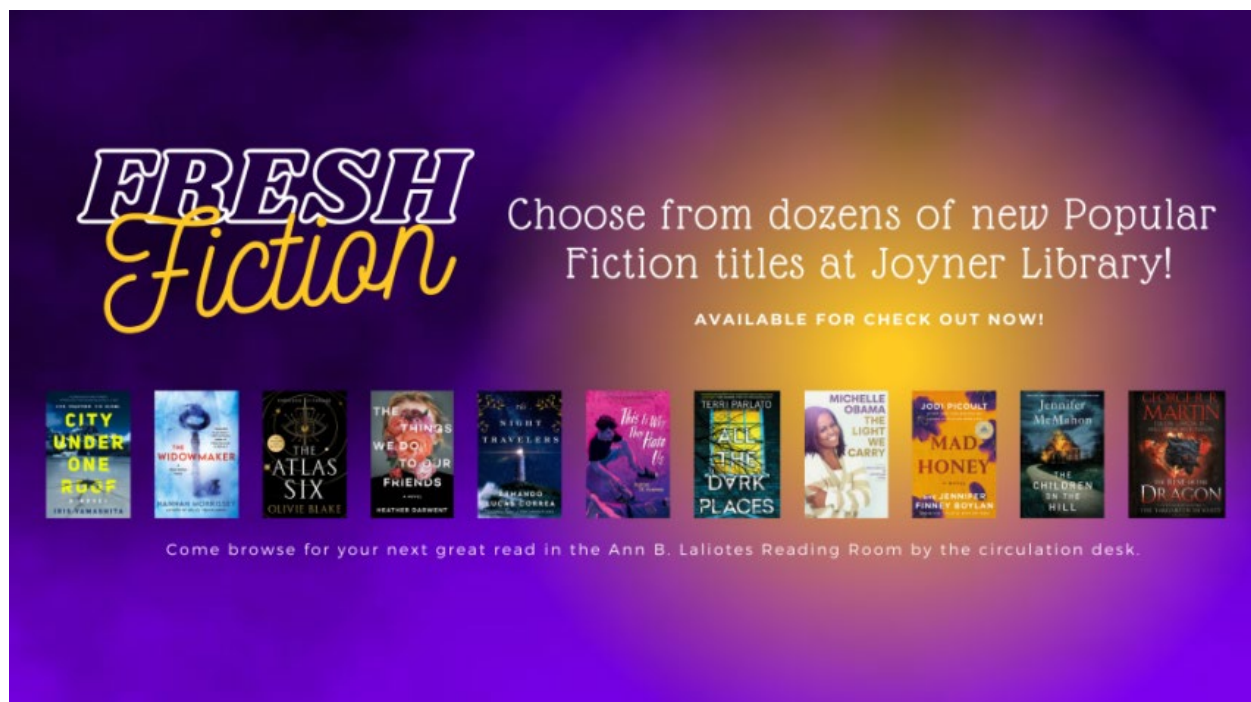
as having discussions about specific titles within the collection.

As with many other collections within the library, I believe Popular Reading collections are strongest when designed “by the people, for the people.” Though I consider the collection a perpetual work in progress, our Popular Reading titles currently much better reflect the interests and lives of our patrons.

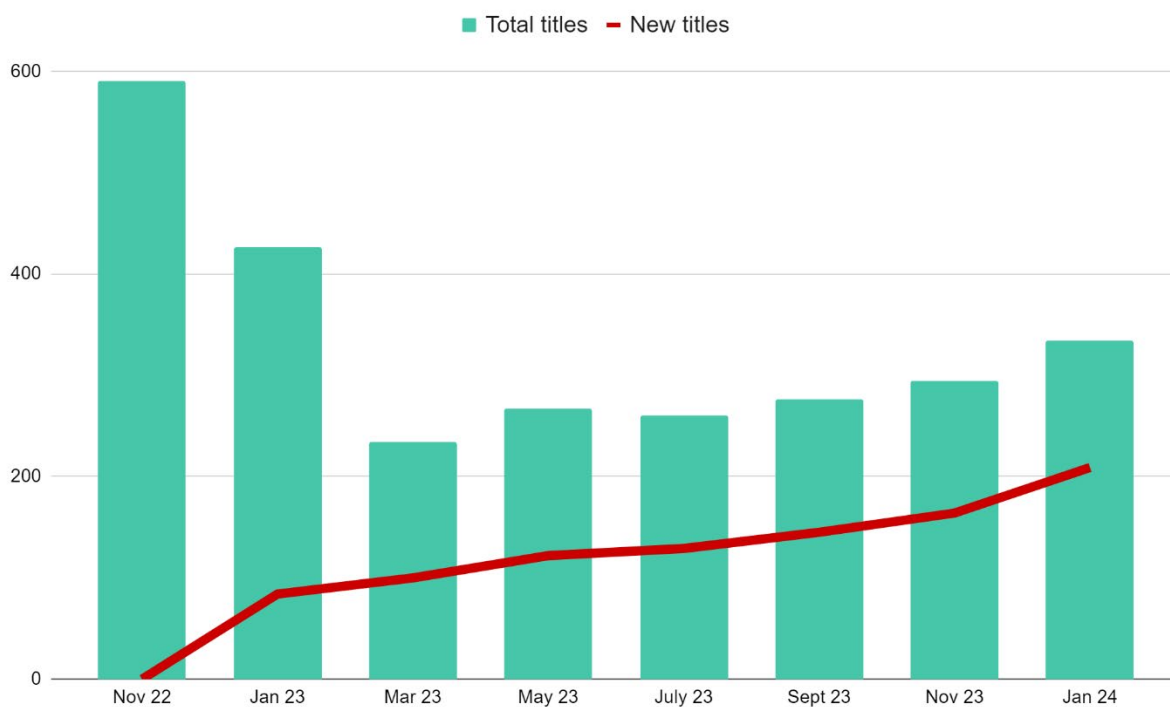
Soliciting suggestions and advertising titles have both greatly helped improve the collection, increasing interest and engagement. When ordering titles, I also do my best consider the interests of patrons who have not engaged with the survey or collection. Researching our student population demographics reminds me to include Latinx voices and characters so patrons are better able to empathize with and be inspired by narratives and authors which reflect our community. Attending faculty trainings and maintaining an awareness of student events reminds me of our patrons’ passion for equality with respect to LGBTQ+ issues and respect for neurodiversity, also allowing me to select titles accordingly.

### Current Collection

After making the initial, and more sweeping, changes to the Popular Reading collection, I have adopted a “slowly but surely” approach to ordering titles. Some months, I receive little feedback and see few avail-



A poster placed in the Popular Reading section to advertise new titles.



A graphic from a recent department presentation displays the number of Popular Reading collection titles and the number of newly acquired titles in the collection.

able new bestsellers that seem essential to add. Other months, several patrons reach out and request new titles, topics, or series, or there happen to be more new releases that seem to have the potential for high circulation. Currently, our Popular Reading collection is at 60% of its size at the commencement of revitalization, and I expect this number to grow over the coming year.

Despite the smaller size of the current collection, circulation reports reflect a 50-100% increase in the number of titles checked out each month when compared to January 2023. The number of titles checked out over a 6-month period averages 125 in the months following the collection makeover. Comparatively, about 100 titles were checked out within a 6-month period of pulling monthly statistics prior to revamping the collection.

The percentage of titles currently checked out each month ranges from 10-15% since revitalizing Popular Reading, compared with an average of 5% of titles currently checked out prior to my management of the collection. However, because the collection is smaller, I know these statistics alone do not necessarily reflect an increase in patron interest. I aim to keep title circulations high while growing the collection

in number, knowing this outcome would be a better indicator of success.

### Acknowledging Impediments

Regardless of my efforts, I acknowledge the impossibility of all patrons using the Popular Reading collection, suggestion box, or survey, and therefore I remain open to new tactics for outreach to address this limitation. In taking over the Popular Reading collection, my most frustrating hindrance has been the lack of availability of patron-requested titles from our vendor. Our vendor's options allow me to order approximately half of the titles specifically requested by patrons, and there are far fewer popular graphic novel titles than would be ideal for my readers.

In an effort to boost support for our student requests, I alerted our vendor. I also contacted other UNC school system libraries with leisure reading titles as well as a colleague at the University of Tennessee. In my discussions with seven other librarians, I found that each of the other libraries supplemented their popular collections with titles from additional vendors or worked with a different vendor.

As I continue to receive some requests I cannot fulfill via our vendor, I note them for discussion

## Title Spotlight

Please browse titles and check out newer and trending **titles on display in Gray Gallery today!**



A presentation slide displaying new fiction and non-fiction titles in Joyner Library's Popular Reading collection.

with the representative, hoping we will be offered a solution. In terms of request fulfillment, I pass suggestions for titles I cannot order along to liaison librarians according to subject so the titles can be accessed via our general collection if not housed within Popular Reading.

### Helpful Hints and Title Highlights

Over the past 18 months, our most highly circulating Popular Reading titles include *Spare* (memoir) by Prince Henry, Duke of Sussex; *The Hurricane Wars: A Novel* (fantasy) by Thea Guanzon; *Yellowface: A Novel* (satire) by R. F. Kuang; *The Professor* (mystery) by Lauren Nossett; *How to Sell a Haunted House* (horror) by Grady Hendrix; *Carolina Built: A Novel* (historical fiction) by Kianna Alexander; *How We Heal: Uncover Your Power and Set Yourself Free* (nonfiction, self-help) by Alexandra Elle.

I hope that some of my success with the Popular Reading collection can be duplicated at other libraries while some frustrations are avoided. My “word(s) for the wise” include: allow patrons to suggest titles virtually, periodically remind them to do so, have individual discussions about leisure reading, and keep an open mind when selecting titles. Young Adult titles, for example, should not be excluded from academic leisure reading collections if they are requested by patrons.

While I find the suggestion box and virtual title recommendation form useful in soliciting patron requests, I believe that engaging with patrons in person to have discussions about Popular Reading generates new and renewed interest in the collection. To attract additional attention to the collection, I plan to involve students by advertising events such as book talks and readers’ “meet and greet” social events. The events will be advertised in the library building and via email invitations to student library employees. These opportunities will have the potential not only to advertise the collection, but to support and connect student readers.

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