

ARKANSAS LIBRARIES

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Arkansas Library Association, 2023

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Conference - Taylor Vanlandingham

Emerging Leader - Allie Stevens Gosselink

Intellectual Freedom - Adam Webb

Journal - Britt Anne Murphy

Marketing - Robin Campbell

Membership/New Members - Britt Anne Murphy and
Janine Jamison-Miller

Nominating & Elections - Rachel Shankles

Records Management - Jean Waldrop

Scholarship - Sarah Mallory

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Arkansas Library Paraprofessionals

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Arkansas Queer Alliance for Libraries

Allie Stevens Gosselink

College and University Librarians of Arkansas

Zane Ratcliffe

**Community of School Librarians and Library
Educators**

Quanta Wyatt and Rachel Shankles

Library Advocacy Community of Interest

Cori Williams

Making Arkansas Libraries Accessible

Jessica Riedmueller

Member Involvement

Becky Fischer

Mental and Emotional Lives of Library Workers

Amanda Moore

Public Libraries & Trustees

Betsy Fisher

Reference & Instruction Services

Jessica Kirk

Social Media & Marketing

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Two Year Colleges Community of Interest

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Arkansas Libraries

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Arkansas Libraries is the official journal of the Arkansas Library Association. It contains articles of current interest, historical significance or literary value, concerning all aspects of librarianship, particularly items pertinent to Arkansas. It also includes official statements of and information provided by the Arkansas Library Association.

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FROM THE ARLA PRESIDENT: What a Year It's Been!

by Carol Coffey, ArLA President

Greetings, friends and colleagues. To say that my presidential year was not what I expected is an understatement. When 2023 began, I was hopeful about the opportunity to further position the Association to meet the future with stronger succession planning and updated documentation.



Coffey

Instead, we all were faced with the need to rally to address a legislative agenda that included criminalizing librarians and denying many children the freedom to read the books they need to read. As most of you know, the Association joined in with a number of other partners from Arkansas and elsewhere to challenge Act 372 in federal court. As of August, sections 4 and 5, which pertain to public libraries, have been enjoined. As of this writing, in November 2023, the defendants have declined to appeal the temporary injunction, meaning the case will go forward. We expect the next stages to take some time to get through, but I or my successor, Taylor Vanlandingham, will keep the Association updated as much as possible.

Despite the tendency of Act 372 to take up most of the oxygen in rooms where Arkansas library workers gather, we have done other things this year. I'd like to tell you about them and thank those who worked hard to complete these projects. Apologies in advance if I neglect the name of someone who actively worked in any of these areas.

The Executive Board started the year knowing that we needed to make an agreement to move the Association's archives from Henderson State University to another institution that would be able to accept digital files as part of the collection. Fortunately, the library at the University of Arkansas had the needed capabilities and is willing to take possession of the archives and make it accessible. Rachel Shankles, ArLA Past-President, did a lot of the work on this project, and I'm grateful to her for the effort she put into ensuring our archives have a permanent home.

A few years ago, we created a Records Management Committee to organize our working files and create policies to govern those files. We started the year with Blake Denton as chair of the committee. When he moved out of state to take another position, I was grateful that Jean Waldrop stepped up to take the lead. The committee



developed a draft records retention policy and schedule, which has been forwarded to the Bylaws and Handbook Committee. The committee will continue its work to make our working files and archives as accessible as possible.

Thanks to at least two Communities of Interest (CIs) for their work in providing continuing education for ArLA members. The Reference and Instruction Services Community of Interest (RISci) offered a great series of Lunch and Learn sessions throughout the year. The College and University Librarians CI (CULAR) presented sessions on intellectual freedom and censorship, topics on all of our minds. The Arkansas Library Paraprofessionals CI (ALPS) hosted InfoBits again this year. While I've never attended InfoBits myself, I've heard so many great things about it and I'm so happy this ALPS tradition continues. Many other CIs sponsored conference programs that contributed to ArLA's mission of providing professional development opportunities for our members and other library workers in Arkansas.

I hope you all enjoyed our joint Annual Conference with SELA in Hot Springs in October as much as I did. I left Hot Springs energized and ready to finish out the year. Thanks to President-Elect/Conference Chair Taylor Vanlandingham and her committee for all their hard work. Thanks also to everyone who presented a program or a poster, or donated a basket for the auction, or nominated a colleague for an award. The Awards Committee did a stellar job lining up winners for every award. Thanks especially to Judy Calhoun for stepping up to chair the Awards Committee when the previous chair accepted a job in another state and had to step down.

I can't say enough about the work done by Adam Webb, chair of ArLA's Intellectual Freedom Committee, the Executive Board, and others. Their hard work and support have been invaluable to me as president and to all who are working on intellectual freedom and censorship issues in Arkansas. Please thank Adam for providing his expertise to the Association and for speaking out on our behalf.

And finally, I want to thank you, the membership of the Arkansas Library Association, for your support during my presidential year. You've cheered me and the board on, and so often, when I was mentally exhausted just thinking about the challenges we're facing, a kind comment came in at just the right time. You reminded me to take a deep breath and keep on

going. It has been an honor and a privilege to serve as ArLA president in 2023. I hope I've done the right things and served the Association well. And now I commend to you my successor in the presidency, Taylor Vanlandingham from John Brown University. I believe she'll do an outstanding job as our 2024 president and I know she can count on the same level of support as you've given me in 2023.

Carol Coffey is the patron experience and library analytics coordinator at the Central Arkansas Library System in Little Rock, Arkansas. She is the 2023 ArLA President.

FROM THE EDITOR: The Best of 2023

by Britt Anne Murphy

Library Director, Hendrix College

At the end of every year, and at about the time we're sending out our Fall-Winter issue of *Arkansas Libraries*, the media is full of reports about the past year. The best songs, the best books, the best films and the passing of notable people fill our headspace in the waning days of a calendar year. The reports are wrapped up in feelings of nostalgia for a year that's barely passed, and sadness for our heroes and icons, whether personal or international, we've lost. It would be easy to crank out an editorial dwelling on the "worsts" of 2023, so instead, I'd like to draw our attention to the best Arkansas libraries offered up over the past year.



Murphy

I was deeply inspired by many school librarians who quietly kept on at their jobs despite a lot of pressure and stress they had to face on a daily basis. I got to know a small group of school librarians here in Conway whose sense of humor, persistence, and genuine care for their populations kept my spirits up. While it's difficult for school librarians to take an active role in ArLA currently, I am hopeful we can provide a place that supports and hears them.

I was also in awe of our public library leaders – we have a powerhouse of public librarians who are calmly and intelligently responding to political pressures, and who have nerves of steel when faced with emotional torrents. Public libraries in different corners of the state responded as best they could to misinformation, anti-library social media groups, and virulent speech by a vocal minority. And they did this while continuing to serve their populations – kids need story times and enrichment, youth need media and a safe place, adults need jobs and services, seniors need community. Vanessa Adams updates

us on the Craighead County library, and you'll read in this issue of *Arkansas Libraries* about public libraries that are reaching their populations with art, programs, and new spaces.

Academics also are making contributions with advice on archives staffing, a study on the prestige of universities and library schools, and a recognition of Howard University librarian Dorothy Porter, and how she transformed cataloguing and recognition of Black collections and works over 75 years ago. Dorothy's legacy gives me hope that each of us can and does make contributions to our profession that are transformative for our populations.

Finally, I'm already missing some of our librarians who are no longer working in Arkansas libraries. Jason Byrd who was at UA Fort Smith's library, left for a position in Alabama. Kathleen Ashmore, the director of the Lonoke Public Library System, is off to sunny California, and Patty Hector lost her position for standing up to censorship efforts in Saline County. There are undoubtedly more library workers who have chosen other settings to work in, or have been pressured to leave, and I know I'm not alone in missing them from the Arkansas library world. I look up to each of them with great respect and admiration – they are my heroes.

In this issue you'll read a retrospective on our annual conference in October, which combined with the Southeast Library Association (SELA) in Hot Springs. Except for the unusual event of the eclipse, the conference was very much "usual," in that we recognized our library heroes, informed each other about different library technologies, issues, and topics, and networked with each other to have fun. In addition, ArLA's fundraising reached new heights this year with basket auction and ArLA apparel sales. Our institutional memberships have also bolstered the Association's finances and allowed many more Arkansas library workers into ArLA's fold.

So take heart – in a year that could have produced the worst, Arkansas library workers continue to produce the best. Their persistence, resourcefulness, creativity, generosity, and optimism in the worst of times has meant that we supported our populations to the best of our abilities.

2024 ArLA Officers Elected

by Rachel Shankles

Nominating Committee Chair

Our 2024 ArLA Officers were recently elected, and we have a wonderful group of leaders ready to lead us into the new year. Our 2024 Board consists of new and seasoned members who bring a wide variety of experiences and skill sets together for ArLA's benefit. Here's a bit about each. While each officer is responsible for various aspects of governing our association, you may call upon any if you have a need or concern.

Officers

Taylor Vanlandingham

will serve as ArLA's president. Taylor graduated from Missouri State University, majoring in Antiquities Near Eastern Studies. She briefly considered working in a museum, interning at the History Museum for Green County and Springfield, and volunteering at the Siloam Springs Museum. Taylor's formal career began as a children's services assistant, and she quickly decided to obtain her Master of Library Sciences from the University of North Texas. After six years in public librarianship, she changed careers, becoming an academic reference librarian. Taylor is now in her third year as director of the John Brown University Library. She has held the role of chair of the CULAR community of interest in ArLA and is organizer of the Community Outreach Committee of ARKLink. Taylor organized the ArLA conference as chair.



Vanlandingham



Valetutti

was secretary/treasurer during a time when the Association was experiencing financial challenges, and has served on the Membership Committee, on the website team for six years, and is now on the Financial Committee. She is active in ARKLink, the ALA Office of Information Technology Policy, and

ArLA's president-elect will be **Lynn Valetutti** who is currently the library and learning management systems director at National Park College in Hot Springs. She previously served at the Arkansas State Library as the Traveler database manager. She has also worked at UA Monticello and Ouachita Baptist University. Lynn

the SREB Arkansas OER Action Team.



Coffey

Carol Coffey is our past-president. Carol is the patron experience and library analytics coordinator at the Central Arkansas Library System in Little Rock. In the 24 years since she made Arkansas her home, she has served in a number of public service and administrative positions at CALS, including head of Reference Services and director of library resources. In addition to her work at CALS, Carol has served at various times as chair of the Digital Resources Round Table, the Scholarship Committee, and the Public Libraries and Trustees Division of ArLA, as well as member-at-large on the 2021 ArLA Executive Board. When she's not working, Carol loves to read history and British mysteries, garden, and travel.

Jessica Riedmueller



Riedmueller

continues as ArLA secretary. Jessica is the user experience and assessment librarian at the University of Central Arkansas in Conway, Arkansas. She is passionate about accessibility and inclusion in library spaces with a particular focus on matters of gender and sexuality. She is currently chair of *Making Arkansas Libraries Accessible*, the ArLA community of interest for accessibility. She has previously served on the board as Chair of both the *College and University Libraries Division* and the *Reference and Instruction Services Division*. She also served as interim secretary during ArLA's Bylaws revision. Jessica is a voracious reader of horror novels, has a music playlist ready for any situation, and has watched *Battlestar Galactica* all the way through at least four times. She resides in central Arkansas with her cat, Barry.

Ron Russ will move into the treasurer position. Ron is the longtime electronic and public services librarian at ASU-Beebe. He has served in leadership positions in ArLA, ALA, ARKLink, and is currently a member



Russ

of the Shared Governance Council at ASU-Beebe. He is also a recipient of the 2007 Suzanne Spurrier Outstanding Academic Librarian Award and the 2016 and 2020 President's Award. His interests outside of libraries are jazz music, photography, and gardening.

Crystal Gates

continues as our ALA Councilor. Crystal is the executive director at the North Little Rock Public Library System. Crystal has served in various roles for professional associations including ArLA, SELA, AAAL, and ALA. She was recently appointed to the ALA Membership Committee and ALA Chapter Relations Committee for 2021-2023. According to her family, because she made them check out her books using a file card box system as a child, she was always meant to work in a library. Her passions include staff development, strategic planning, and creating inclusive library environments and services. During her downtime, you can find her reading, cooking, spending time with family, and traveling.



Gates

Rev. John Paul Myrick was elected as



Myrick

the Southeast Library Association (SELA) representative on the board for 2024. At present he is executive director and regional librarian at East Central Arkansas Regional Library System in Wynne, where he has been since 2013. Previously he was adjunct professor at the University of Alabama, College of Communications

and Information Sciences, School of Library and Information Studies in Tuscaloosa, Alabama. JP is active in many library organizations.

Members-at-Large

One the four members-at-large who was elected was Jason Byrd, Director of Library Services at UA Fort Smith. Unfortunately for us and ArLA he had to step down, as he took another job out of state. After a special election, **Britt Anne Murphy** was elected to serve Jason's term. Britt has spent her professional career at Hendrix College,



Murphy

a small private liberal arts college in Conway. She was hired as a public services librarian there after completing her MLIS at the University of Texas at Austin. She's currently director, but knows that her staff really run the show. Britt has served the Arkansas library community in a myriad of ways, but is especially proud of being the managing editor of the Arkansas Library Association's publication, *Arkansas Libraries*. Britt has led the consortium of Arkansas academic libraries, ARKLink, and chairs the Amigos Library Services Board of Directors.

Our second new member-at-large will be **Amy DeVooght** who works in Bailey Library at Hendrix College in Conway as circulation manager.



DeVooght

She's held the position for five and a half years and is both an alumna and former library student worker at Hendrix. Her favorite part of working at Hendrix is the students. Amy supervises 25 student workers and they are "fun to watch grow and learn over their years at the college." Amy has chaired ALPS for the last two years and is currently overseeing the organization and implementation of the workshop InfoBits, an annual event for paraprofessionals across the state to attend for professional development. She is close to completing her ALA Library Support Staff Certification (LSSC) and has been a participant in the Arkansas State Library's ALL-In leadership program. Amy is living the world of children's literature through her adorable 6-year-old daughter Penny.

Shannan Hicks is the third member-at-large for 2024. She is the Collection & Workforce Director at the North Little Rock Public Library System. She has previously worked in a number of different types of libraries, including state, special, law, and school. Shannan holds a BA and MLIS from Louisiana State University. She also



Hicks

has a JD from Tulane University. She worked in the nonprofit field and practiced law for several years before becoming a librarian. Shannan has served on the Caldecott Committee and the Odyssey Committee through ALA. Currently, she is serving as chair of the Ezra Jack Keats Committee. She has also served on the Louisiana Young Reader's Choice Committee. You can find her book reviews on

Instagram and TikTok. She lives in North Little Rock with her dog Nelson, her favorite book reviewer.

The fourth member-at-large for this next year will be **Lacy Wolfe**. Lacy is Branch Manager at the North Little Rock Public Library System. Prior to working in the public library, Lacy worked for 10 years in various roles in academic libraries including Electronic Resources, Reference, Instruction, and Interim Director. She served as the Arkansas Chapter



Wolfe



Councilor to the American Library Association from 2016-2021. She's served various roles within ArLA and ALA including chairing and membership in several committees. Lacy participated in the inaugural Arkansas Library Leadership Institute (ALL-In) hosted by the State Library and continued working with following cohorts in a mentorship capacity. In 2014, Lacy was chosen to represent ArLA as an Emerging Leader in ALA. In her spare time, Lacy enjoys reading, sewing, knitting, hiking, and traveling.

Libraries: Shining a Light in the Darkness *ArLA/SELA 2023 Annual Conference*

by *Taylor Vanlandingham*

ArLA President-Elect/2023 Conference Chair

Over the cool fall weekend of October 13-15, 2023, ArLA and SELA members gathered in Hot Springs, Arkansas, to celebrate, learn, and communicate the excellent work of Arkansas and southeastern librarians over the past year. By the numbers, this year's conference included:

- 232 attendees
- 170 Arkansan attendees
- 51 baskets in the silent auction
- 36 breakout sessions
- 20 vendors to visit in the vendor hall
- 12 awards
- 10 poster sessions
- 7 trivia teams
- 4 authors at the Authors' Luncheon
- 2 meet and greets
- 2 general sessions
- 2 board meetings
- 1 pre-conference
- 1 dance party
- 1 partial eclipse



Conference dance party.



More than the numbers, this was a weekend for library workers to gather, find joy in their profession, and feel supported for our work after a challenging year. The meaning of this year's conference theme took on full significance for each attendee – we relished being together to celebrate the light libraries shone forth through a dark year for intellectual freedom.

Shining Our Light

EveryLibrary held the first program of our conference, the pre-conference. This session aimed to teach those working in libraries how to advocate and gain confidence by telling each of our stories. Advocacy is one way to shine a light on the good libraries provide their communities. The session was well attended, and participants were engaged and learned practical steps to combat misinformation surrounding libraries.

Learning how to advocate by taking practical steps was a theme for this conference, and it continued with our opening general session by Kathy Dempsey author of *The Accidental Library Marketer* with Libraries are Essential. LibrariesAreEssential.com is an essential source for advice and consulting on library marketing, promotion, and public relations. We were challenged to market our libraries to our communities by owning our stories and shining a spotlight on the fact that libraries are essential today and in the future.

ArLA Business

The ArLA board met on Friday afternoon, confirmed newly elected members, and heard reports regarding general business. Our Communities of Interest were encouraged to meet for breakfast on Sunday morning. We ended the conference with our annual member business meeting on Sunday afternoon where annual reports were delivered to the general membership, and leadership elections were announced to those present. An article in this issue of *Arkansas Libraries* will detail the results of the election.

Awards and Arkansas Authors

The Awards Dinner kicked off the weekend's festivities Friday night as we came together to highlight years of work, newly started careers, academic and children's librarians, scholarships, and many other awards. New this year was entertainment by Garland County librarians Erin Baber and Brent Carroll who host "Checked Out," a weekly radio show on KUHS Radio, Hot Springs' solar-powered community radio station. An article in this issue of *Arkansas Libraries* will feature our awardees and scholarship recipient. Later that night library workers were allowed to dance the night away, celebrating and letting loose before a weekend of professional development.

The annual Authors' Luncheon was different this year in that four different regional authors representing a variety of literature talked about their careers and books. This luncheon highlighted authors from Arkansas and the surrounding states, including Hot Springs Poet Laureate Kai Coggin, horror author Brad Carter, picture book author and illustrator Izzy B, and historical fiction author Becky Marietta. Coggin is the inaugural Poet Laureate of



ArLA Past President Rachel Shankles at the Annual Conference.

Hot Springs, and author of four collections, most recently *Mining for Stardust*. Carter is a writer of horror/humor books, including *Night of the Demon* and *Saturday Night of the Living Dead*. Izzy B is the "silly story specialist," and author of *A Tightly-Whitie Wind* and other super silly books. Marietta's debut novel, *White River Red: A Novel* was published by TouchPoint Press in April of 2021 and is inspired by a true story. Each spoke of their past, the process of writing, and an appreciation for libraries, library workers, and librarians. Each author made a point of stating that it is never too late to go for your dreams. A book signing hosted by Two Friends Bookstore followed the author luncheon.

Programming a Variety of Choices

The diversity of break-out sessions included programs for all types of libraries; from puppets to government documents, there were plenty of choices for those who attended this conference. These sessions highlighted the work that libraries continue to do in our respective communities. Some themes seen throughout the conference focused on how to partner with outside groups in public and academic libraries. Another topic was how to serve specific community members ranging from LGBTQ+, those with Alzheimer's, first-year students, Latinx and international students, and elementary students. "Light" was also a theme, from keeping the light on through burnout or letting your light shine through telling your library story. Art in the library also had its moment with maker spaces, artistic processes, and art in the health sciences. Other sessions reported on teaching research skills in interesting and new ways, how to highlight specific collections, and when to say goodbye to no longer needed services. It may have been impossible to leave the conference without a few new ideas.



Eclipse viewers.

Putting the Fun in Fundraising and Socializing

This year we really put the fun in fundraising raising over \$4,447 for LEAF. The Basket Auction is still ArLA's largest fundraiser, raising \$2,263 this year. Baskets ranged in theme from Rainy Day Romance to an ArLA/SELA Membership basket Bar-B-Que sauce (representing each state in SELA) to a copy of *The Little Ghost Who Was a Quilt* accompanied by a hand-stitched Ghost Quilt lovingly made by ArLA supporter Linda Green. Faulkner County Library provided the most baskets – eight – with the highest bid on a basket being the “Crazy Cat Lover’s Starter Kit,” provided by ArLA President Carol Coffey.

T-shirts were purchased before the conference using a company called BonFire and raised \$1,623. Attendees could choose from two different designs and opt for different tops, including a t-shirt, sweatshirt, or hoodie in multiple color options. Conference garb, as well as the “I <3 Arkansas Libraries” apparel, are still available through this link <https://www.bonfire.com/store/arkansas-library-association-shirt/>. Members were encouraged to go out on the town Saturday night with dine-arounds highlighting the great food around Hot Springs and meeting with other members.

Trivia night was held at the Best Café & Bar, and was well-attended by ArLA and SELA members, with over \$560 raised during this entertaining evening. Trivia MC Amber Wilson reported that seven trivia teams with 44 players competed for bragging rights. Below are the teams who placed:

First place: Smartinis (John McGraw, Jennifer Chilcoat, Hailey Beliew, Ollie Carter, Ash Pritchett)

Second place: Navy SELAS (Britt Murphy, Ruth Slagle, Matt Murphy, Sonya Lemke, Janice Weddle,

Michelle Morris)

Third place: Harding Nerd Herd (Jean Waldrop, Carol Coffey, Amy McGohan, Whitney Hammes, Amelia Baker, John Boone)

Filling Our Cup

The weekend ended on a note of self-care, with Beatriz De La Espriella addressing library staff burnout in the closing general session. Beatriz De La Espriella is a mental health therapist (licensed clinical social worker) in private practice and works with individuals helping them manage stress and anxiety. She is the founder of Bea Mindful Coaching, a certified Trauma Informed Care professional, and a certified Youth Mental Health First Aid trainer. Attendees learned how to identify the signs of burnout in themselves and others. De La Espriella then went through practical steps on how to mitigate and treat burnout. The most important takeaway was that you cannot pour from “an empty cup.” Library workers cannot continue to give to others without having their own mental and physical reservoirs replenished. Library leadership has a duty to notice signs of stress and take steps to support library workers to prevent the epidemic of burnout. This session was an excellent start to look for solutions to this pervasive problem.

See You Next Year!

Overall this was a well-attended and successful conference with a great range of programs, social events, and fellowship. Combining with SELA allowed ArLA members to learn from a wider and more diverse pool of librarians and make new friends. Members from all over Arkansas and the southeast left renewed, revitalized, and ready to take on the work of next year. Next year, we'll be back to “just” ArLA, but we hope to see you in Hot Springs October 4-6, 2024 for another great meeting!



2023 Arkansas Library Association Award Winners

by *Judy Calhoun*

Awards Committee Chair

Each year the Arkansas Library Association honors librarians by recognizing outstanding achievements in the library field. On Friday evening, October 13, 2023, librarians from around the state gathered at the Hot Springs Convention Center to present these awards as part of the annual conference's Awards Dinner. Thanks goes to Awards Committee members Carolyn Filippelli, Melissa Freiley, Debbie Hall, Jessica Reeves, and Jill Heard. A very special thank you to Jessica Reeves for her decorating skills.

The Awards Committee was fortunate to have an excellent slate of nominations to consider this year, and I would like to encourage everyone to consider nominating your colleagues and co-workers to receive these awards. These awards are a way that we have, as an association and as a profession, to recognize the achievements, dedication, and leadership that our colleagues bring to their jobs every single day.

And the winners are...

Ann Lightsey Children's Librarian Award Winner

The Ann Lightsey Children's Librarian Award is presented to an individual who has contributed to the improvement of children's library service both in their library and across the state library. This year's award was presented to **Wendy Christy**. Wendy was described as a library veteran in the best way, in that she knows how to connect with kids, and parents and children alike love her. She forms such strong bonds



with children and their parents, and even teachers and children in schools, that she is remembered long after they outgrow her storytimes, homeschool hour, or school visits.

Arkansas Intellectual Freedom Award

The Arkansas Intellectual Freedom award the award is given to a person or group for notable contributions that have furthered the cause of intellectual freedom on behalf of a library in the state of Arkansas. This year's recipient, **Adam Webb**, received this award due to his unwavering dedication to the Garland County library as well as his willingness to support intellectual freedom for every library patron in the state through his work at the state and national level advocating for library workers in providing access to library materials. He has repeatedly put himself at the forefront of the current library struggle across the nation, including speaking out at legislative hearings, supporting his colleagues at contentious library board meetings, and representing library workers through Advocates for All Arkansas Libraries. Even when confronted with angry or disgruntled patrons, Mr. Webb maintains a calm, collected demeanor and does everything in his



power to resolve the situation peacefully.

Bessie B. Moore Trustee Award

This award is given to an individual trustee or board of trustees who/which has made a significant contribution to the development of a library at the local, regional, or state level. Award winner **Karen Harbut** has been instrumental in moving Garland County Library in the direction it has been going these last 4-5 years. She championed

the implementation of RFID and self-checkout, expanding library services outside of the single physical location, and has pushed for modernization during her tenure.



Distinguished Service Award

The Distinguished Service award is to recognize distinguished service in librarianship. “If you have worked in a library in 2022-2023, serve marginalized children, care about intellectual freedom and the 1st and 14th amendments in the state of Arkansas then you know the name **Adam Webb**, and have seen what he has done and is currently doing for ALL libraries in Arkansas,” states nominator Butch Smith. Adam Beck describes him as a true leader that inspires confidence, opportunity, and a more open and accessible library.



Frances P. Neal Award

The Francis P. Neal award is given to recognize a career of notable service in librarianship within the state of Arkansas. This year’s recipient, **Tina Murdock**, was praised for having earned this distinction not only in her places of employment, but also as an active supporter and leader in ARKLink

and ArLA. It was not easy going into leadership positions in Conway which had been held by long-time beloved members of the community, but Tina brought her wealth of experience in organizational management and scholarship and applied her knowledge to places that really needed a fresh vision. “I can’t imagine a librarian in the state who deserves more recognition at this point in her career than Tina,” Bailey Library Director Britt Anne Murphy, who presented the award, said. “She has elevated so many libraries and held us all to a higher standard, and central Arkansas libraries have benefited from her expertise and perspective.”



LaNell Compton Prize

The LaNell Compton Prize is given to the author of the best contribution to library literature published in *Arkansas Libraries* during the eligibility period. This year’s winners are **Dr. Kay Walter** and **Elizabeth Parish** for their article, *Optimizing Connections: Professional and Pedagogical Benefits from Professor/Librarian Collaborations*. The article was published in the Spring/Summer issue of *Arkansas Libraries* and described a collaboration at the University of Arkansas at Monticello between English Professor Kay Walter and Librarian Elizabeth Parish.



Lorrie Shuff Paraprofessional Award

The winner of the Lorrie Shuff Paraprofessional award was presented to **Jasmine Jobe** and is given to recognize distinguished paraprofessional library service in Arkansas libraries. Jasmine works for the Central Arkansas Library System as the editorial assistant for the Central Arkansas Library System's *Encyclopedia of Arkansas*. She also helps with adult writing programs for the CALS Writing Circle. She's been a member of the Arkansas Library Paraprofessionals (ALPS) community of interest for approximately four years. In that time, she has assisted with planning and implementing InfoBits along with many other organizational tasks.



Retta Patrick Award

This award recognizes an individual member of the Arkansas library profession who has made an



outstanding state or national contribution to school librarianship and school library development. Award winner **Quanta Wyatt** was described as making learning fun! She incorporates STEM and reading activities in her lessons which engages students in hands-on activities. Her book fairs are the highlight of the school year. She is always ready to help and is full of great tips and tidbits of historical facts in the library and out.

Rising Star Award

The Rising Star Award is given to recognize a library worker who has worked in libraries less than 5 years and has provided exceptional service for their library community. This year's winner, **Kelsey Gocio**, is a valuable member of the Garland County Library team since 2019. In her role as marketing coordinator, Kelsey has been instrumental in growing the library's presence in Hot Springs. Her event graphics are eye-catching and informative, and her news features are always engaging.



Suzanne Spurrier Academic Librarian Award

This award recognizes an outstanding academic librarian within the state of Arkansas. This year's winner, **Amy McGohan**, electronic resources



librarian at Brackett Library, played an integral role in migrating to a new system. Amy is also very active in Arkansas state library organizations. In the past, she served as the chair of the Electronic Resources Committee for ARKLink and is part of the Open Educational Resources Taskforce. Amy has also been very active with ArLA, serving on the Scholarship and Nominating Committees along with chairing the Resources and Technical Services Division. ArLA has benefitted from her beautiful graphic design skills expressed in programs from past conferences and ArLA apparel designs.

President's Award

This award may be given by the President at the Annual Conference as means of recognizing the contribution of a person who has provided extensive service to the association president or the organization. This year's recipient, **Amber Wilson**, was recognized for her dedication to the ArLA conference trivia fundraiser and role as the Executive Board's parliamentarian.



Past President Award

A special award went to Past ArLA President Rachel Shankles for her guidance leading the Association during the pandemic, as well as her hard work recruiting nominees for ArLA leadership and running the elections. Rachel also put in a lot of work on the Membership Committee, contributing time and treasure, and helping out with the Basket Auction.



Judy Calhoun chairs the Awards Committee and is regional director of the Southeast Arkansas Regional Library System, which is headquartered in Monticello, Arkansas. ArLA is grateful to her for stepping in to lead the Awards Committee and developing quick and creative solutions for making the Awards Dinner a welcoming and beautiful experience!



2023 Award Winners.

ArLA Scholarship Winner

by Sarah Mallory

ArLA Scholarship Committee Chair

Keli Wright is this year's winner of the ArLA annual scholarship. Keli is enrolled in the graduate program in Library and Information Science at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. Since 2017, Keli has worked at the Rogers Public Library where she is able to put her passion for librarianship, information accessibility, and



Wright

community building into practice.

Her current position is Lost and Damaged Materials specialist. In addition to her regular duties, she also participates in any professional development opportunities she can and finds ways to further her skills to help her community. One example is learning Spanish in order to support Spanish-speaking adults at her library. Keli will continue to do great work for Arkansas libraries and her community.

Congratulations, Keli!

Sarah Mallory is the Information Services Department manager at the Central Arkansas Library System in Little Rock, Arkansas.

Monticello Branch Library Decked Out with Mural

by Judy Calhoun

Southeast Arkansas Regional Library

The Monticello Branch Library, which is part of the Southeast Arkansas Regional Library System, got a bookish facelift. Artist Erin Ashcraft created a new mural that spans the side of the Monticello structure. All branches of the Southeast Arkansas Regional Library are on the spines as well as some of our favorite books and

authors. The library's mural pays homage to Charlie May Simon, who was born in Drew County, as well as Arkansas authors John Grisham and Ayana Gray. The mural not only showcases favorite book titles but also programs and interests in our communities.

Judy Calhoun is regional director of the Southeast Arkansas Regional Library System headquartered in Monticello, Arkansas.



Bentonville Public Library Celebrates with Topping Out Event

Bentonville Public Library (BPL) hosted a “Topping Out” celebration on Friday, November 17. The event marked an important milestone in construction of the new library expansion. Approximately 150 attendees had the opportunity to sign the final beam before it was hoisted into place.

The afternoon featured remarks from Bentonville Mayor Stephanie Orman and Library Director Hadi Dudley. According to Dudley, “We are thrilled to be reaching this important milestone in our construction project. We love celebrating the library’s growth with

our patrons and supporters.”

Bentonville Public Library’s expansion is comprised of a 22,975 square-foot addition, with renovation of existing spaces and outdoor amenities planned. The project budget is \$16.75M and is being funded through a \$4.5M city bond extension and private fundraising efforts. BPL’s expansion team includes MSR Design, Hight Jackson and Flintco, along with other regional firms and contractors. Bentonville Public Library broke ground on April 27 and will celebrate its grand opening next summer.



The final steel beam was hoisted into place for Bentonville Public Library’s expansion project on November 17. Photo by Samantha Sacry, Library Marketing Specialist, Bentonville Public Library.



Bentonville Public Library’s expansion is a 22,975 square-foot addition. Aerial construction photo by Jeremy Metcalf, Bentonville Fire Department.



The Bentonville Public Library team celebrated with city staff, library supporters, and the Bentonville community at a recent topping out event. Photos by Samantha Sacry, Library Marketing Specialist, Bentonville Public Library.



Library Science Program Dearth at Prestigious Universities

by *Emmett Lombard*

Gannon University

Abstract

This study is followup to one published in *Arkansas Libraries* in 2022. During investigation of the relationship between academic librarian educational pedigree and employment at prestigious colleges and universities in the United States, it was discovered that of schools identified as most prestigious, zero had programs offering master's degrees in library science. This study aimed to determine why. Unfortunately, little can be inferred from the results, but the reality of the situation as described should be cause for concern regarding academic librarianship as profession.

Introduction

A study was published in the Spring/Summer 2022 issue of *Arkansas Libraries* that described a relationship between academic librarian educational pedigree and employment at what are considered by multiple sources as the most prestigious colleges and universities in the United States (Lombard, 2022). Such studies are important given common knowledge of societal influence prestigious colleges and universities, and their alumni, enjoy in this nation. Findings described a seemingly equitable situation on the surface, i.e., more librarians employed at the most prestigious schools had not earned degrees at them; however, if one looks below surface (i.e., proportion rather than raw numbers) we see a different situation. There were only nineteen schools identified within the study's parameters (Lombard 2022), i.e., about one percent of all schools in operation; yet nineteen percent of librarians working at these schools earned a degree(s) from them. Although most of these schools do not state in librarian job advertisements that graduating from schools considered prestigious is required (one inferred in at least one advertisement that it 'preferred' such candidates), the description of the situation as it exists may cause DEI concerns, at the least in terms of socio-economic demographics.

An unexpected finding emerged from the 2022 study: of the nineteen colleges and universities identified as most prestigious, zero had master's degree programs in library science (Lombard, 2022). Given importance of where one graduates in terms of influence and prestige in the United States, this could raise concern regarding perception of the library profession. This current study attempted to discover reasons for the library science program dearth in America's most prestigious schools.

Literature Review

Most studies library science programs focus on curricula and/or pedagogy. Few deal with

rankings, and zero were found that addressed why library science programs are unavailable at the most prestigious higher education institutions in the United States. Although Ching and White (2006) cited someone who asserted that library schools being ranked was good for the profession, other librarians voiced concern over rankings when based on perceptions of faculty who teach within the programs rather than students or prospective employers (member, 2006). Miller (2012) was also concerned that ranking master's degrees by salary and employment outlook could have negative effects on how professional librarianship is perceived.

White (1981) ranked library education programs based on quality of the programs and their faculty's contributions to the profession. One particular item from White's rankings that raised additional concerns for this current study: three schools identified as most prestigious in 2023 once had library programs that have since been cancelled.

Some studies outside librarianship were relevant to this study. Hall and Appleyard (2011) discussed how pedigree can create conditions of elitism within the financial sector, and Brint, German, Anderson-Natale, Shuker, and Wang (2020) examined how prestigious institutions prepare privileged individuals for influential roles. Henderson and Zahorsky (2012) considered lawyer educational pedigree, specifically impacts of law degrees from elite schools as opposed to lower-ranked ones in terms of job prospects and the threat such brand bias poses to the legal profession. These studies indicated that prestigious institutions can play a role in elitism, and according to Brint, German, Anderson-Natale, Shuker, and Wang, one's educational pedigree seemed even more important in a culturally influential sector like higher education. The implication for the current study is that if library science is not even offered at prestigious schools then its perception as a profession could be compromised.

Literature cited in this review informed this study, but none directly addressed why more prestigious institutions do not have library science master's programs. Therefore, to do so required primary research.

Methodology

The methodology for identifying the most prestigious schools in the United States used in the previous study (Lombard, 2022) was expanded for purposes of this one. Instead of a school having to appear in all four publications, only one publication was used for this study; as a result, instead of the nineteen schools identified in the previous study, thirty-seven were identified for this one. However, the institutions categorized as liberal arts colleges were not included in this study because they did

not confer graduate or professional degrees of any sort, including library science. That left twenty-four universities eligible for consideration. Of these twenty-four, two actually had library science programs that offered the required master's degree for most professional librarian positions; thus, those two universities were eliminated from consideration, leaving twenty-two.

The chief academic officers for each of the twenty-two universities considered most prestigious were then approached for interviews. The question was simple, "Why does your university not offer a Master's in Library Science?" My hypothesis for the reason(s) was either one or combinations of the following: enrollment potential; degree prestige; professional librarian career prospects; degree value. Five responded; three (referred to as U1, U2, U3) elected to address the question.

Findings

The academic officer at U1 stated that they rarely offered master's degrees in any program and in those instances only to students admitted into one of their doctoral programs. U2 stated that they never considered offering a library science program and surmised that it was most likely due to the fact that they would consider it a subcategory of education for which they do not offer degrees. U3 stated that only their individual colleges proposed and delivered degrees and that none of them ever proposed one for library science at any level; they surmised this was because of the college configuration within the overall university structure and/or individual college mission.

Discussion

Note: universities used for this study would likely be recognizable by anyone working in higher education. However, the researcher's Institutional Review Board required their anonymity and the researcher promised U1, U2, and U3 respondents that neither they nor their universities would be identified. Further, like the 2022 study, this one did not earn permission to identify the magazine that published the annual rankings used.

This study is limited by lack of chief academic officer participation. However, even if all officers approached had participated then there would still be no guarantee of knowing definitively why their universities do not sponsor library science programs. For one, there could be reasons of which the officers are unaware (e.g., decisions made before their hire). Additionally, there is always risk of dishonesty in human subject research. To illustrate: the three officers who contributed to this study were exceptionally cordial; it would be unsurprising if such individuals were concerned that honest but unflattering responses about their university's perception of library science programs may offend some people, including the researcher. Instead of

saying "the profession is antiquated" or "we groom people for professions where they can make a big splash", even if that were the perception then they may have kept things neutral out of sense of grace.

According to the three responses, library program dearth at prestigious universities seems more matter of institutional interest and mission than negative perception of librarianship. However, it should be noted that the same schools that responded all have MBA programs, graduate school engineering, medical degree offerings, and two have law schools. One can accept the findings at face value, but the findings can also inspire discussion: regardless mission or perception, the fact that the most prestigious universities in the United States do not sponsor library science programs still remains and has implications not only to librarianship as a profession but also inclusion and equity initiatives.

Brint, German, Anderson-Natale, Shuker, and Wang (2020) asserted importance of where one earns degrees in terms of success and influence. If true, then the vast majority of librarians will enjoy fewer opportunities to influence at societal levels outside librarianship by virtue of their degrees alone. Think of the most celebrated, influential individuals in American society: any librarians come to mind? It is a shame to think a person is judged by their educational pedigree alone and a national tragedy and waste if the talents of perhaps some of the most gifted individuals in society are not fully reaped, regardless reason. It is inequitable to the individual and a significant inclusion barrier.

An example of how society can suffer through inclusion barriers based on educational pedigree is 'fake news'. Fake news has become a global phenomenon; it is ironic that all sectors suffer from misinformation yet are unappreciative of skills librarians possess designed to combat it. This is the so-called "Information Age" – information is arguably the world's most valuable commodity – yet society is in the midst of a fake news pandemic. Perhaps if librarians were more involved in policy decisions beyond just library collections and building hours, or that information literacy was better appreciated in the media, then fake news might not be as big of a problem. Could there be a connection between fake news and low information literacy? Low information literacy and lack of librarian influence? Lack of librarian influence and lack of regard for the library profession by prestigious universities?

Future Research

This study produced little about why the most prestigious universities in the United States tend not to offer master's degrees in library science. Perhaps another study could instead examine the two that do provide them, a bounded case study that produces meaningful information as to their reasons. Maybe

investigation into all universities that offer master's degrees in library science, regardless institutional prestige, could be done that includes interviews with chief academic officers and content analyses of university and program mission statements to understand reasons why they are offered. In terms of understanding societal perceptions professions garner, it is useful to understand the educational foundations of a given profession.

Another study might look beyond the United States. Example: is there also a dearth of library programs among the most prestigious Asian institutions? Descriptive information like that produced in this study and its predecessor (Lombard, 2022) could be identified along with possibility of inferential analysis as to why.

Conclusion

One more research possibility that ties in with this conclusion: maybe this same study could be replicated by someone affiliated with one of the most prestigious colleges or universities in the United States. Would participation increase? I will leave it for readers to imagine for themselves if more chief academic officers would have replied if the researcher were affiliated with one of their types of schools.

Is a degree from a prestigious college or university important in terms of influence? Common knowledge and review of relevant literature indicate yes. As sectors, including and especially higher education, claim more dedication to diversity, equity, and inclusion, perceptions that may inhibit such dedication in terms of any type of work, including librarianship, deserve attention due to the socio-economic implications. An individual's profession does not dictate competence or integrity: there are individuals in all professions who are competent and others who are not, regardless educational pedigree or any other. Individuals should be perceived base on their ideas and work, not be dismissed by default of social generalizations and prejudices about professions or any other category.

Discussion about society's perceptions of librarians is important, not only to librarians but to society. In light of the so-called information explosion, this author perceives librarians to be more important than ever, yet evidence such as news articles about dying professions (e.g., Godfrey, 2021; Tahir 2023) and library science program dearth at what are arguably the nation's most famous universities indicates different societal perceptions. Hopefully this study helps inform future scholarship and action related to the topic and ensures that gifted individuals who happen to be librarians, like other gifted individuals in other professions, are given equal capacity to contribute and influence in the United States.

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ADVOCACY ARKANSAS:

How to Garner Public Support: The ABCs of Library Advocacy

by *Vanessa Adams, Craighead County Jonesboro Public Library*

Library advocacy is something we feel we are doing around the clock because we are passionate about getting the word out to everyone that we are here for them. But are we really advocating for ourselves and recruiting the outside world to advocate for us? It's easy to get bogged down in the daily activities of our jobs and neglect the fact that we need public support more than anything. There are many of us who receive plenty of public attention, and some of this attention isn't what we need, but we need attention in order to get our messages out there. As we're contemplating yet another program or event, keep in mind the "Advocacy ABCs": **A**dvocate **B**y **B**randing, **C**ommunications, and **C**ommunity Relations!

Advocacy also means "branding" your library. You might have a terrific logo, but does your library use it effectively? Your logo sets you apart from any other community organization and you should try to include it whenever you're promoting the library. Consider using your logo's colors in creative ways. Buy some plastic tablecloths in your logo colors to cover tables when you make a display. When you have an open house or other event, make certain your party supplies are the same colors as your logo. Amazon has every color imaginable in napkins, paper plates, streamers, and anything else associated with events. Take advantage of your colors every way you can, and people will soon associate them with your library even when your logo isn't present.

If you don't have a logo, or are needing to update, look to your local university or high school's marketing or art department for help. They are often thrilled to offer their services for free just for the experience. Launching a new logo is a great excuse for an event, and you can tie it in with another program or contest. You might even consider offering a few logo ideas and have your patrons vote on their favorite. This allows patrons to feel invested in their library. The next ABC of library advocacy is "communications," which has several meanings, but in this instance, it means getting your message across to your staff, patrons, and the general public. Think "word of mouth" for this activity. Also think "free" for this activity. If you're checking out at



Adams

Craighead County Jonesboro Public Library

the supermarket and the checkout clerk notices your nametag and mentions the library, here is your chance to plug an activity happening at the library. "I bet you had several people in your store buying food for our library's cookbook club," which will undoubtedly lead to a quick conversation about your library's cookbook program. You can add, "if you're interested, or know anyone who likes to try new recipes, we've got a great group that meets every month. Just check us out on Facebook." There's always a chance that person will mention this program to someone and your word-of-mouth advocacy will take off. Be prepared to discuss your library wherever you go and get in a plug for it when you have any opportunity to do so. This is an easy two or three minutes of your time promoting your library's services that can have positive far-reaching effects.

Consider "community relations" as another effective means of advocacy that can easily be achieved with a little effort and usually no cost. If you have a friend who works for your local humane society, ask her if your library could host a food and supply drive for them one month. It is doubtful she will decline this offer, and now you have a partnership with a local nonprofit organization that is mutually beneficial. The humane society will advertise that your library is hosting a food drive, the public will come to the library to drop off items, and your name is "out there" and linked with another community organization. Ask library staff if they have connections to nonprofit organizations and have them contact them to see if your library can help them. Providing a drop off location is free for the library and very much appreciated by organizations with limited budgets. Even if they don't need the library's help at that moment, they will remember your offer and might contact you to set up a library table at one of their events.

When it comes to public support for your library, the more your name is heard, your flyers are seen, and your logo is recognized, the more support you will receive when you need it from your community. Don't be afraid to try new ideas to get the word out about your library and what it has to offer. Remember that our library's existence depends on public support, and it's our job to advocate for that support at work, and even more so when we're out in the community.

Vanessa Adams is director of the Craighead County Jonesboro Public Library in Jonesboro, Arkansas.

ALA COUNCILOR'S REPORT: Issues & Advocacy

by *Crystal Gates, North Little Rock Public
Library System*

The ALA Constitution states the purpose of ALA is to promote library service and librarianship. The mission is to provide leadership for the development, promotion, and improvement of library and information services and the profession of librarianship in order to enhance learning and ensure access to information for all.

ALA has seen tumultuous times over the last year. It experienced several state chapters separating, the resignation of its Executive Director, and heat from radicalized political figures and groups.

In Arkansas, OIF and the ALA Chapter Relations Office have worked in tandem with ArLA and Advocates for All Arkansas Libraries (AAAL) to continue the fight against Act 372. Regular meetings address advocacy efforts, legal options, and communication opportunities. While an injunction was awarded to stop parts of the law from going into effect, other parts of the law are in effect. Now is a great time for me to encourage you to join AAAL as it continues to work on behalf of all Arkansas libraries and library workers and also to join both Unite Against Book Bans, an ALA affiliate, and Every Library, a separate non-profit focused on library advocacy. All of these organizations are fighting for us every day. It is time for us to do our part. We will only succeed if we all come together for our profession and the communities we serve.

Between January 1 and August 31, 2023, OIF reported 695 attempts to censor library materials and services and documented challenges to more than 1,900 unique titles. This represents a twenty percent increase from the same reporting period in 2022. The majority of challenges are to books written by or about a person of color or a member of the LGBTQIA+ community. Of these challenges, almost half are in public libraries. And ninety percent of all challenged books were part of attempts to ban multiple titles. You can report censorship and challenges to materials, resources, and services at <https://www.ala.org/tools/challengesupport/report>.

LibLearnX 2024 @ Baltimore, MD

LibLearnX: The Library Learning Experience will be held in Baltimore, Maryland, from January 19-22, 2024. On Friday, attendees may attend the ALA Governance Institute to learn more about ALA and its inner workings. That evening, please join



Gates



us for a welcome reception, featuring the I Love My Librarian Awards. The rest of the learning will happen via sessions, keynotes, and don't forget to network while you are near colleagues from around the world. Great award highlights include the RUSA Book and Media Awards and ALA Youth Media Awards. Finally, be sure to visit the Marketplace and the Ideas Xchange to find the latest technologies and products that suggest solutions to help you and your library shape the future. This central location will provide access to new ideas, trends, and the latest from upcoming and established authors. Want to bring home free ARCS and signed copies of materials to share with your library or offer as prizes for 2024? Grab all you can tote and keep your traveling light by heading to the Post Office located at the convention center to ship those items home!

Michele Norris, one of America's most trusted voices in journalism, joins us as our opening speaker. Norris will discuss "Our Hidden Conversations: What Americans Really Think About Race and Identity," a unique compilation of stories, essays, and photographs.

Antonia Hylton, whom you may recognize as co-host of the hit podcast Southlake, is a Peabody and Emmy Award-winning correspondent for NBC News and MSNBC. Hylton will discuss her new book, "Madness: Race and Insanity in a Jim Crow Asylum." Hylton blends intimate tales of patients and employees of the Crownsville Hospital while also grappling with her own family's experiences with mental illness and its impact on future generations.

PLA 2024 Conference @ Columbus, OH

Registration is open for public library workers and supporters to visit Columbus, Ohio, April 3-5, 2024, while attending a three-day event full of curated education sessions, inspiring speakers, networking opportunities plus a full exhibition of vendors featuring the latest in products, services, and materials. Dulcé Sloan, one of the fastest rising voices in comedy, will close out the conference. Sloan has a robust international touring schedule with sold-out shows, and dhr now has her first memoir to be released in February 2024 by Andscape Books.

Annual 2024 @ San Diego, CA

ALA Annual Conference and Exhibition is June 27-July 2, 2024 in beautiful San Diego, California. We have a full schedule of events for you to learn and enjoy. The Library Marketplace hosts exhibits,

stages, and resources with hundreds of exhibitors and author presentations plus LIVE stages!

Other News

As always, if you plan to attend ALA meetings and conferences, please let me know. Come experience a bit of the conference location while talking with friends and enjoying local cuisine as we come together to share a meal.

Crystal Gates serves as ArLA's ALA Councilor and is executive director at the North Little Rock Public Library System.



ArLA/SELA Conference attendees. See article on page 6.

TRAINING: TIPS, TOPICS & TECHNIQUES:

Mapping the Road to Metadata

*by Phoenix Smithey and Chrissy Karafit,
University of Central Arkansas*

Training archival student workers can feel daunting, but it doesn't have to feel that way! This column will focus on getting your archival student workers set up for success by enacting project management that focuses on the utilization of standardized workflows, employing the use of a metadata template and data dictionary based in Dublin Core, using controlled vocabularies and standardized metadata, and focusing on collaborative project quality control.



Karafit

The University of Central Arkansas (UCA) Archives is committed to digitizing and making accessible as many archival materials as we responsibly can. This commitment to digitization would be impossible without our student workers. The UCA Archives currently employs two student workers, Clover Quill and Valerus Corbin, to assist with these digitization projects. It is important to find that sweet spot between teaching and mutual benefit. Using resources with broad application across career fields enables students to develop useful skills and build strong resumes while also advancing collection accessibility for the Archives. Even so, whether an archive engages student workers or staff, a detailed project management strategy will ensure materials are digitized and metadata applied according to established standards.

Project Management and Standardized Workflows

The Archives is aware that a large-scale archival digitization project of this nature can only succeed through project management that focuses on the

standardization of workflows. Good project management ensures that your project will operate with consistency and efficiency. Standardized workflows allow you to accurately see where you fall on the project timeline and simplifies onboarding other students to the project as needed. In our project, so many of the components build upon each other, which necessitates standardized workflows. The Archives focused on using our project management to facilitate healthy communication through documented expectations, well-communicated and written deadlines, digital work tracking, and equitable access to project files and information. All of these project management methods lower the risk of anxiety and confusion for the student. The goal is to show our students that digital archival work is useful and engaging, not scary.



Smithey

The Archives decided to utilize the Google Suite for this particular digitization project, which eliminated the need for additional software purchases. Most students and staff are already familiar with the Google Suite, allowing for ease of use and a fairly flat learning curve. The first step was to create a digital centralized information repository; in other words, a Google Drive. This project Drive would hold all digitized project materials as well as administrative metadata and collection metadata. All project files must be stored in a secure, institutionally managed digital space that all project members easily access. Using an individual's digital storage or accounts, such as a personal Google Drive, exposes the project to the risk of lost work and documentation in the event of personnel changes.

Finally, the Archives utilized Google Sheets for work tracking allowing the project to enjoy effective project management and workflows. There are three main spreadsheets that the Archives uses: digitization tracking, metadata tracking, and issue tracking. The



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digitization and metadata spreadsheets organize each file into a column. It is important to keep intellectual control of these files by properly notating series, subseries, box, and file numbers. Each column or “file” contains a color-coded drop-down menu with fields like “Metadata Done-Needs Quality Control,” “Needs Metadata,” “Quality Control In Progress,” “Revision Needed,” and “Quality Control Done-Ready for Upload.” The drop-down fields for metadata are essentially the same. This simple process keeps the archival team on the same page and allows for communication across asynchronous schedules, which is essential when working with students.

Templates and Data Dictionary

The Archives knew early on that we would standardize our metadata to be as accessible as possible. Like good project management and standardized workflows, metadata templates facilitate training and help minimize any hiccups that may arise from having multiple authors working on metadata creation. A well-explained metadata template is another great weapon against student anxiety. The Archives created a metadata template in Google Sheets with each column representing a Dublin Core metadata field used for resource description and each row representing a folder; item-level description would take too much time. The Archives chose Dublin Core due to its widespread use in the library and information field and its current use in CONTENTdm, the content management system utilized by the Archives and Torreyson Library.

The second piece needed for a metadata template is a data dictionary. Most students are not familiar enough with Dublin Core to simply begin creating metadata. The Archives created our data dictionary in Google Docs using a free table template provided by the Google Suite. The table includes fields for Element Name, Required or Optional status, an Example, and Definitions and Instructions for the Dublin Core element being utilized. The free text in the Definitions and Instructions proved particularly useful. In the template itself, the Archives utilized the Dublin Core definition for each metadata element. The Archives wanted to make sure that students felt comfortable with the jargon of the information world. Keeping this in mind, the Archives opted for less formal language in the data dictionary to help explain and drive home the new metadata concepts.

The Archives decided that the head of the project should be the first person to fill out the metadata template. This was another method to prevent stress, anxiety, and confusion on the part of our students. The head of the project would catch any potentially confusing language or instructions in the metadata template and the data dictionary.

Controlled Vocabularies and Standardized Metadata

Making holdings available is only the first step in making archival holdings accessible; an archive also needs to make holdings discoverable and linkable. Archival holdings are made discoverable and linkable through controlled vocabularies and standardized metadata, which also allow a repository to utilize several different metadata authors while not falling victim to data inconsistencies. The Archives uses Library of Congress Subject Headings and DCMI Metadata Terms because they are widely used by other archival institutions, facilitating linked data and a richer research experience for the user. Controlled vocabularies and standardized metadata relieve the pressure of guessing from the student, allowing them to relax and think like a user while learning more about access and linked data from an archival perspective.

Collaborative Quality Control

Lastly, the Archive uses collaborative quality control to train the archival student workers. Metadata creation and digitization work are both detail-oriented, repetitive tasks. Quality control begins as early as possible so that mistakes are caught early and not repeated in larger batches of data. The Archives also found that students appreciate quality control comments delivered early, as it cements their comprehension of new concepts. Doing quality control early allows the project lead to understand what is working and what is not working for communication and project workflow. Collaborative quality control enables delegation and facilitates workflow transparency. Not to mention, data is susceptible to human error, and the more eyes on the data the better. In the interest of reducing student stress and anxiety, early and collaborative quality control is key to a successful digitization project.

With these strategies, libraries and archives big or small can implement a digitization project. Project management components equip personnel to carry out workflows independently and with minimal confusion. Using tools like templates, controlled vocabulary, and a data dictionary establishes clear protocols for metadata creation of newly digitized materials. By checking the metadata quality early and discussing needed course corrections with the team, project leads can refine procedures and clarify expectations while avoiding the need for data

clean-up later. Investing time in a detailed project management infrastructure at the front end will smooth the way for many successful digitization projects in your future.

Chrissy Karafit and Phoenix Smithey are faculty librarians at the University of Central Arkansas in Conway.

FACES OF ARKANSAS LIBRARIES: A First Destination for Children: Asele Mack by Nakeli Hendrix, Bentonville Public Library

When walking into the children’s area of the Bentonville Public Library (BPL), one of the friendly faces you’ll see is Asele Mack. She is one of the full-time children’s specialists in the youth department, serving children from infants to elementary school students and their families. She can be found in the stacks helping a child find a new book to read, chatting with parents, or leading a special story time in the community. “I love it, I couldn’t see myself doing anything else,” Asele said.

But actually, Asele did not always picture herself working with children or even in libraries. She grew up in Moscow when it was part of the former Soviet Union. As a child she liked to read, sing, camp, and spend time with her friends. She also had a close relationship with her grandmother, from whom she learned cultural traditions. Although not religious, they celebrated Soviet, Russian, and Islamic holidays. Asele had a passion for reading and wanted to be a librarian, but it was not a career choice that was encouraged. There were stereotypes associated with librarianship, and therefore she didn’t see it as a viable career path. She considered journalism and linguistics and eventually settled on journalism.

In 1995-1996, she moved with her then-husband to Austin, Texas, where she landed a job in translating. For the next 20 years, they moved around

the southern United States with their two children, Dasha and Gregory. During this time, Asele realized her true calling for librarianship, after taking her children to library story times and volunteering. She got her MLIS at Valdosta State University and started working in public and academic libraries. Eventually she landed in Arkansas in 2015.

Asele was working as a part-time clerk in BPL’s circulation department when a paraprofessional position opened in the children’s department. She never expected to work with children, but she was eager for a full-time job and was encouraged to apply by the former children’s librarian. To her surprise, she fell in love with the work.

“When I started doing online story times during COVID, something clicked,” she said. Her main responsibilities include cataloging, helping people navigate the collection, and being the “first friendly face” they see when entering the department. She also plans and executes programs, assists with collection development, and puts together displays to make the children’s area as inviting as possible.

When it comes to her favorite books, she loves reading contemporary family sagas from authors like Anne Patchett and Anne Tyler. She also enjoys academic fiction and social satire.



Asele enjoys reading new children’s books, so she can make recommendations to her patrons. One of her goals is helping families stretch from their comfort zones. She does that by recommending books from new authors, classic stories with modern twists, or books about unfamiliar topics. While Asele believes the collection is fantastic in its diversity, sometimes getting patrons to try something new can be challenging. But it’s so rewarding when she places a book in a child’s hands, and they come back to tell her how much they loved it!

Asele has become a fixture in the community, presenting story times at different locations such as the historic Peel Mansion and the Bentonville Community Center. She’s held story times at local parks incorporating the natural surroundings into her lessons. She also developed a monthly program called Around the World with BPL that ran from September 2022 to May 2023. Asele knew a lot of people from different countries and thought it would be a neat idea if they shared their experiences with kids. She started with a roundtable discussion during Welcoming Week in September. She then invited one speaker a month to lead a program about their country. They read books, sang songs, and participated in activities from that country. Some of the countries included Uzbekistan, Ukraine, Iceland,

New Zealand, and India.

Asele sees the future of libraries as being a community center hub and a “first destination” for new arrivals. She says libraries will never go away – no matter how much it’s predicted. She thinks libraries should prioritize being a welcoming atmosphere for all as well as a place to work and play. At BPL, she hopes the library can offer more resources for ESL learners, immigrants, refugees, and the unhoused. She also envisions offering a space for new moms to connect and socialize with other parents, outside of a structured story time.

In her free time, Asele likes to hang out with friends, read, and spend time with her cats. She also likes to travel and is an avid theater-goer. Asele enjoys being part of the community and playing a specific role that helps people. She’s cultivated relationships with families and loves when a kid recognizes her when she’s out and about. “When a kid screams across the parking lot ‘Hi, Miss Librarian!,’ it’s priceless,” she said.

Nakeli Hendrix is library specialist at the Bentonville Public Library in Bentonville, Arkansas.

ALPS AT WORK:

Moving Forward

by *Amy DeVooght, Hendrix College*

ALPS’ success with InfoBits 2023 in May makes our community of interest excited for the future. In June, we debriefed and discussed evaluations from the day as well as went over attendance and money earned. We had 38 attendees, and the event broke even! We made approximately \$800 for ArLA. It was the first in-person InfoBits since 2019. We weren’t sure how the professional development day would go over, but it exceeded our expectations.



DeVooght

As the 2024 chair, I look forward to a new year of both challenges and successes. We’ll begin planning for InfoBits 2024 in February with monthly meetings. Much like this year, once InfoBits is over, we’ll return to our regularly-scheduled bi-monthly meetings in August. Here’s hoping the next InfoBits goes just as well!

While ALPS did not have a presentation for ArLA this year, we did have a member nominated for the Lorrie Shuff Paraprofessional Award. This year’s

recipient was Jasmine Jobe, who works at the main branch of the Central Arkansas Library System. She was a major asset during the planning and execution of InfoBits this past spring and continues to be a vital and active member in the group. Congratulations, Jasmine!

If you or someone you know is interested in joining the ALPS Community of Interest or has questions about the group, please contact me at devooght@hendrix.edu.

Amy DeVooght is the circulation manager at Hendrix College’s Bailey Library. She is the current chair of the ALPS Community of Interest.



Conference poster session. See article on page 6.

Dorothy Porter:

A Black Woman Pioneer in Library and Information Science

by Zina Conley

University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff

Dorothy B. Porter Wesley was born in Warrenton, Virginia, in 1905 to parents Hayes Joseph Burnett, a physician, and Betha Ball, a tennis pro turned homemaker (Bledsoe, 2018). The family moved to Washington, D.C., where she attended and received her high school diploma at Miner Normal School. After high school, Dorothy went to Howard University to receive her B.A. with Phi Delta Kappa Honor Society membership. While at Howard, Dorothy met an art historian James Amos Porter, and the two married in 1929. Later in life after the death of her first husband, Dorothy married American historian Charles Wesley. In 1930, she got a job as a librarian at Howard University. Dorothy Porter was the first African American student to get a library science degree from Columbia University in 1932 (Bledsoe, 2018).

Dorothy had a passion for cataloging and preservation of the African American experience. All of the libraries that Porter consulted for guidance on cataloging relied on the Dewey Decimal Classification (Nunes, 2018). According to Dorothy, “Now in [that] system, they had one number – 326 – that meant slavery. They had one other number – 325, as I recall it – that meant colonization,” she explained in her oral history. In many “white libraries,” she continued, “every book, whether it was a book of poems by James Weldon Johnson, who everyone knew was a black poet, went under 325. And that was stupid to me” (Nunes, 2018). It was clear that no American library had a suitable classification for Black materials. She adapted the system based on the subject. For example, if books focused on slavery or colonization, they were given those numbers. If the book subject did not fall under slavery or colonization, they were given different numbers for the authors.

Before Dorothy’s new system took place, an “initial development of a satisfactory classification system” was conducted by four women Lula V. Allen, Edith Brown, Lula E. Conner, and Rosa C. Hershaw, at the Howard University library. The ideas prioritized the scholarly and intellectual significance and coherence of materials marginalized by European conceptions of knowledge and knowledge production (Nunes, 2018).

The steps the women took helped pave the way for Howard’s new classification system.

Instead of using the Dewey Decimal System, Dorothy Porter classified the genre and the author’s name. The new system would highlight the massive role African Americans had in the country. According to Nunes (2018), Dorothy used the following subject areas to classify materials: art, anthropology, communications, demography, economics, education, geography, history, health, international relations, linguistics, literature, medicine, music, political science, sociology, sports, and religion. The classification system was the influence of the Harlem Renaissance and the Black perspective:

This Africana approach to cataloging was very much in line with the priorities of the Harlem Renaissance, as described by Howard University professor Alain Locke in his period-defining essay of 1925, ‘Enter the New Negro.’ Heralding the death of the ‘Old Negro’ as an object of study and a problem for whites to manage, Locke proclaimed, ‘It is time to scrap the fictions, garret the bogeys and settle down to a realistic facing of facts.’ From a Black perspective, Locke argued that scholars would



Dorothy Porter Wesley at Moorland-Spingarn Research Center, Howard University.

combat racist stereotypes and false narratives while celebrating the advent of Black self-representation in art and politics. (Locke, 1925)

Porter's classification system challenged racism, where it was produced by centering work by and about Black people within scholarly conversations around the world (Nunes, 2018). She challenged the bias of the Dewey Decimal System by cataloging black scholars with white scholars. Reclassifying the collection helped to turn herself into an innovator in decolonizing libraries. She wanted the students at Howard University to feel like their culture was influential and should always have pride in themselves.

Dorothy spent more than forty years at the library; she improved the classification system, developed a wide variety of research tools, and wrote authoritative bibliographies based on her vast knowledge that would later be known as Black Studies. She helped with establishing the Founder's library that would later be called the Moorland-Spingarn Research Center. Howard University received a 3,000 plus collection from alumni and faculty member Dr. Jesse Edward Moorland. The exhibition consisted of books, documents, brochures, photographs, and manuscripts on the African American experience. She started by going through boxes of materials that were donated in 1914 by Jesse E. Moorland.

In an interview with Phil McCombs from the Washington Post, Dorothy recalled that "Nothing had been done in that collection, nothing had been brought together." She had to teach herself Black history; she told McCombs. "Then I went around the library and pulled out every relevant book I could find the history of slavery, black poets-for the collection" (McCombs, 1995). With no budget at first to gain materials for the collection, Dorothy asked publishers, authors, and families if they were willing to donate their unused materials. She collected materials from around the world, such as Africa and Latin America, to prevent the marginalization of research among black people based on county and language.

The collection and the anti-slavery collection donated by Lewis Tappan formed the beginning of the Moorland Foundation. The foundation became the first research library at an American University. In 1933, Dorothy Porter described the purposes of the Moorland Foundation: (1) To accumulate, record and preserve material by and about the Negro; (2) to assist interested students of Negro life in pursuing the scholarly exploitation of the materials in the collection; (3) to instill race pride and race

consciousness in Negro youth; and (4) to provide an excellent reference library on every phase of Negro life (Battle, 1988).

In 1962, the Ford Foundation sent her to help build a library in Nigeria. During her time as a librarian, she formed relationships with W.E.B. Dubois, Alain Locke, Sterling Brown, Rayford Logan, and Langston Hughes. She was able to get materials from the local D.C. chapter of the NAACP, Francis Grimke and Archibald Grimke. Before she retired in 1973, the research center had amassed more than 180,000 manuscripts, books, pamphlets, letters, oral history works, and microfilms. To honor Dorothy Porter Wesley, the library dedicated a reading room in her name; during the occasion, historian Benjamin Quarles is quoted as saying, "Without exaggeration, there has not been a major black history book in the last 30 years in which the author has not acknowledged Mrs. Porter's help" (Madison & Wesley, 1995).

Dorothy received an invitation to the White House in 1995 to receive the Frankel Award from the National Endowment for the Humanities and has a museum at Howard named after her. During her life Dorothy Porter published works including *A Selected List of Books by and about the Negro* and *North American Negro Poets: A Bibliographical Checklist of Their Writings*. As the curator of the Mooreland Foundation, she got Howard University to purchase the Negro Authors collection of Arthur Barnett Spingarn in 1958.

Spingarn's Negro collection was the largest in the world at the time. The collection featured African American composers and Black composers from Cuba, Brazil, France, Haiti, and other countries. After Howard University was given the collection from Spingarn, Dorothy went to the Library of Congress to appraise the collection. Unfortunately, the appraiser did not know anything about Black culture. She ended up writing her report, after which the appraiser sent it to the treasurer. Her contribution helped create the standard for collections focused on Black culture.

Many of her published writings helped highlight scholars' materials that would probably go unrecognized. After retiring from the library, she continued to be a researcher, writer, and consultant to the Moorland-Spingarn Research Center until she passed away from cancer in 1995. Before she passed at 91, reflecting on her impact on the field of African American history, she said the following, "The only rewarding thing for me is to bring to light information that no one knows. What is the point of rehashing the same old thing?" (Madison and Wesley, 1995, p. 6)

Dorothy Porter Wesley showed how European-focused the Dewey Decimal Classification System

is and how it easily overlooked the aspects of the African American experience. Dorothy saw the need to know the backgrounds of African American scholars and their world views. The '50s and '60s were the beginning of the civil rights movement, and Black leaders needed to be highlighted worldwide. She inspired other libraries to think outside the box when it came to classification. Her unhappiness at the status quo made people take a deeper dive into classification. It showed how things could be slow to change, and sometimes you have to take things into your own hands. She addressed how the global Black experience demanded new and specific qualitative and quantitative approaches to collect, assess, and catalog materials. It is important to know this information because the origins of cataloging and library systems reflect their origins, but Dorothy Porter Wesley demonstrated how changes can continue to better serve the patrons that use the library.

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AROUND ARKANSAS:

by *Heather Hays, Associate Editor*

Jason Byrd, director of UA Fort Smith's Boreham Library, left to be assistant dean of Historical Collections at the University of Alabama Birmingham's Reynolds-Finley Historical Library. Jason had been at UAFS since 2022. We appreciate all Jason did for Boreham Library and the academic library community, and wish him well in his new venture!

After Saline County Library Director Patty Hector was fired in October for refusing to relocate books, Library Manager Leigh Epsey was promoted to be director in December. Patty is running for a position on the Saline County Quorum Court. The ArLA community supports these courageous librarians and wishes them both well in the future.

Congratulations to Stacy Barker for her new position as Library Director of Lonoke County Libraries. She was previously the Assistant Director and is looking forward to her new role. Also, we are sad to say goodbye to her predecessor Kathleen Frankl Ashmore, who is moving to sunny California to be director of the Oxnard Public Library. Good luck to

you both!

Heather Smith is the new director of Library Services at University of Arkansas Pulaski Technical College (UAPTC). Prior to this, she worked in the Bossier Parish Libraries (LA) system for several years and for a couple years as the library director at Barksdale Air Force Base. Welcome back to Arkansas, Heather!

We are saddened to report the loss of Peggy Walters on August 25, 2023. Peggy had a Master's degree in English and taught at the University of Texas, El Paso. In 1994, she obtained a second Master's Degree in Library and Information Science from the University of Texas, Austin. She spent her career as a librarian at Southern Arkansas University where she worked her way up to the position of Director of the Library. She moved to Austin to be with her children in 2008 and retired in 2020. She will be missed by the many libraries who were fortunate to work with her over the years.

Arkansas' own Clare Graham is one of the ten recipients of the I Love My Librarian Award. Graham has broadened her library's presence in

Hot Spring County by installing several Little Free Libraries, installing a book kiosk, and advocating for a future library annex. We are so proud of you, Clare!

Philip Shackelford has accepted the position of executive director of a two-county public library system in Mississippi. He served as library director of South Arkansas College for seven years and is past president of the Arkansas Library Association.

You will be missed but congratulations on your new adventure!

A reminder to Arkansas librarians: please submit news items to me for the next *Arkansas Libraries* issue! Births, deaths, new hires, retirements, funding, new buildings, and news that affects Arkansas libraries would be perfect fits for this column. Just jot me an email at hhays@bentonvillear.com, and you'll most likely see it published in our journal.

Mullins Library: Then and Now

The Mullins Library at the University of Arkansas opened its doors in August 1968. The University Library was previously located in Vol Walker Hall, just west of Old Main, where it had been since 1929. Phase I of the most recent renovation to Mullins Library was complete in August 2021 while Phase II of the facelift is scheduled to complete in Fall 2024. Below are some photographs of comparing areas on levels 3 and 4 as they appeared in 1974 (*left*) and how they look now (*right*).



Libraries of London

ArLA Layout Editor Ethan C. Nobles and his wife, Marci Kay Nobles, vacationed in London in June. While there, they visited some libraries, bookstores and other sites of literary interest in the city. *All photographs by Ethan C. Nobles.*



The London Library, established in 1841, is open to members only. However, it is possible to sneak a photo or two of the interior while the staff there is distracted.



Quintessentially London?





The King's Library of George III tower at the British Library.



Welcome book lover, you are among friends.

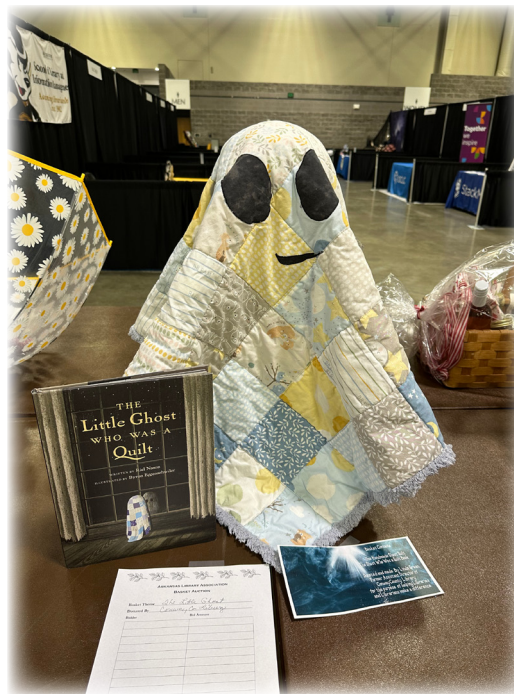


An early printing press at the British Library.



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ArLA/SELA Conference shirt design and the 'Little Ghost' basket at auction. See article on Page 6.