

Gordon M. Conable Scholarship Report  
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This year, I had the incredible honor of being named the sixth Gordon M. Conable Conference Scholarship recipient. I would like to thank the Freedom to Read Foundation and the Conable family for this unique opportunity as well as their invaluable work and dedication to protecting intellectual freedom rights for everyone. Through this scholarship, I was able to attend my first ALA annual conference and walk away feeling inspired and ready to share what I've learned with others and find more ways to get involved with intellectual freedom through my work as an information activist and advocate in my communities.

Over the past few years, I have volunteered my time and my professional skills to non-profit organizations that focus on community, social justice, civic engagement, and LGBTQ history and culture. It has always been my intention to support the mission and goals of these unique libraries and organizations, but looking at my work through the lens of intellectual freedom gives it a greater context and potential for larger impact.

My goals at the conference included connecting with other librarians interested in information activism and advocacy at the community level, learning more about current privacy issues, and seeing first hand what other information professionals are doing in terms of creative and innovative community engagement and programming.

The conference exceeded my expectations and goals twofold; I felt incredibly welcomed by those involved with the Freedom to Read Foundation, Office of Intellectual Freedom, Intellectual Freedom Council, and the Intellectual Freedom Round Table. Members and trustees of each group made it a point to talk with me, share their experiences with me, and graciously offer up ideas on how I could become more involved when I expressed my growing interest. It was also a pleasure to have Candy

Morgan as my mentor before the conference and throughout. Prior to the conference, I had met Candy when she guest lectured at one of my MLIS courses on constitutional statutes, principles and libraries; collection development and intellectual freedom; and challenges libraries face. Having her as a mentor gave me further insight into her work, her charismatic character, and her deep knowledge of intellectual freedom issues that has led to so much progress in the field. I look forward to learning more from her beyond the conference. Though I did not ever have the privilege of meeting Gordon Conable, I was happy to meet his wife and son, Irene and Ted, who affectionately shared inspiring stories about Gordon over dinner.

Through attending the meetings and programming, I learned a great deal about the political issues that Americans are currently faced with in which our basic rights, protected by the first and fourth amendment, are being eroded. Specifically speaking of the National Security Agency and data mining, there is an outcry among librarians and our professional organizations for everyone to take a stand on the recent infringements of privacy on the American people. Over the next few months, I hope to coordinate and facilitate community discussions and dialogue within the library that I actively volunteer at. This engagement is crucial if we all want our privacy and rights respected by our government.

Again, I would like to thank the FTRF, Candy Morgan, and the Conable family for providing me with this opportunity to learn from them and for inspiring me to engage more thoughtfully and intentionally in protecting intellectual freedom and privacy in libraries.