Oklahoma Librarians Recognized at ALA Annual Conference

Urban Libraries Council Honors Masters
Library Leadership Focus of Award

Anne Masters, Pioneer Library System Associate Director for System Services, was selected to receive the first Urban Libraries Council Leadership Grant. The award was given June 26 during the American Library Association Conference in Chicago.

The 2005 ULC Leadership Grant will be used to prepare Pioneer Library System Branch Managers and system administrative staff to work in partnership with city and neighborhood leaders, establishing PLS managerial staff as partners and leaders in community development efforts and insuring public library involvement in those efforts.

In 2005 the Pioneer Library System implemented the Public Library Association Planning for Results Community Planning Process in its nine branches. Response to this process by library staff and members of the community planning committees has been overwhelmingly positive. The planning effort brought to light many community needs, but a theme throughout the Pioneer communities is the need for community development information, strategies for community building and leadership development opportunities for community and neighborhood leaders.

The Urban Libraries Council Leadership Grant of $5,000 was established in 2004 to honor retired ULC Executive Director Joey Rodger. The grant provides financial assistance to a library leader for participation in a leadership development opportunity.

Patterson Receives ALA Honorary Membership

An ALA Honorary Membership was bestowed on Dr. Lotsee Patterson, professor of Library and Information Studies at the University of Oklahoma. Dr. Patterson is one of the founders and past presidents of the American Indian Library Association. She was also co-chair of the Native American Pre-conference to the 1991 White House Conference on Libraries and Information Services.

Dr. Patterson has been honored in the past with the Beta Phi Mu Award for distinguished service to education in librarianship, the Silver Award from the National Commission on Library and Information Science for noteworthy and sustained contributions to libraries and information services, and the ALA Equity Award for outstanding contributions promoting equality in the library profession.
As this Oklahoma summer draws to a close, we begin the precentennial year for the Oklahoma Library Association. I am honored to serve as your President the year leading to our centennial and am very thankful for the opportunity. Just so you know, I have retired from my position as Director of Library Media/ITV at the State Department of Education and have begun a new work at the Oklahoma Christian University Library. I have thoroughly enjoyed my work with school libraries and will always be an advocate for information literacy. However, as I face a new chapter, I am anxious to experience life in an academic library and to work with students and faculty.

The campaign, “Just So You Know,” resonates with me. It makes a perfect theme for this year. I firmly believe that, as Thomas Jefferson stated, “Information is the currency of democracy.” It is critical that we know!

At this year’s OLA Leadership Retreat, the group (chairpersons of divisions, roundtables and committees—or DrOCs) took a look at issues facing this association. There were eleven issues which rose to the surface as we worked. They are, in order of priority to the leadership:

- Oklahoma legislature—censorship tied to funding
- Advocacy for libraries
- OLA infrastructure: staffing and headquarters
- Increasing membership through recruitment and retention
- Active involvement of membership
- Libraries as advocates
- Opposing censorship
- Professional image and higher profile
- Raising funds
- (Tie for tenth) Building a stable financial situation
- (Tie for tenth) Keeping libraries relevant in a digital world

A need for advocacy, for speaking our voice, for making our opinions heard and counted, threaded throughout the weekend’s events. Clearly, in order for Oklahoma libraries and this profession to be able to thrive, we must gain a position of respect in our communities. In another work session, the participants wrote statements that were “perfect wishes.” In other words, “My vision for the Oklahoma legislature is that they would adequately fund all libraries.” Such things as the following arose:

- OLA would have 3000 active members
- OLA would provide unified communication to legislators
- We would know who all of the OLA members are and have access to them
- We would live among an educated public
- OLA’s endowment monies would be adequate to fund speakers, conference events, etc.
• OLA would have money to have an office building with ample meeting space
• When people meet librarians, they’d say, “WOW!” In other words, we would receive respect and honor.
• Salary levels which draw recruits to the career of librarianship.
• Access to library education for all

Next, we needed to think, “What must to be done to accomplish the above?” The answers came quickly:

• Advocate
• Empower
• Promote
• Celebrate ACRL/SLA
• Fund raise
• Find ONE and influence

As a member of OLA, you have an important voice. This voice needs to be used as an influence for such issues as information literacy, freedom of information, free access to materials and support for funding of libraries. It is important that we use our voices, our votes, and our connectivity to ensure that Oklahoma libraries are poised for success during the next 100 years.

Again, I am delighted to be the President of the Oklahoma Library Association. Please feel free to contact me at home (405-769-4367 or <abook4u@swbell.net>) or at OC (405-425-5315 or jeanie.johnson@oc.edu). I will do my best to keep us all “in the know!”

Jeanie Johnson
OLA President

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**Plans for 2006 OLA Annual Conference Begin**

It is not too early to plan a program for the 2006 Oklahoma Library Association’s Annual Conference to be held in Tulsa on March 29 – 31, 2006. Do you have expertise in an area that you would love to share with your peers? OLA welcomes that willingness for you to volunteer to present a program. You may not realize that each program presented at the OLA conference must be submitted by a Division, Round Table, or Committee (DRoC) Chairman. Programs are not accepted from individuals, however, you do not need to belong to the sponsoring DRoC to have your program submitted. If you wish to present a program proposal, please decide which (DRoC) could best sponsor your topic. All Divisions, Round Tables, and Committees can be found on the OLA Web page by locating drop-down menus across the top of the page. Either contact the Chairman of the DRoC or Barb Pfrehm, OLA Program Chairman, at <barb_pfrehm@sde.state.ok.us> for more information. Plan to share your knowledge.
OLA Board Actions

January

- Voted to refer the following proposed changes to the OLA Bylaws to a vote of the membership at the Annual Membership Meeting at the OLA Annual Conference on April 1, 2005:
  - To dissolve the New Members Roundtable, as it has been inactive for three years and its duties have been absorbed into other divisions, committees and roundtables.
  - To change the name of the Technology and Electronic Resources Roundtable to Information Technology Roundtable.
- Approved Communications and Marketing Committee workshop “Just So You Know: Putting the OLA toolkit in action.”
- Approved the Public Libraries Division workshop “Help Wanted: Recruiting and Utilizing Volunteers.”
- Approved the Scholarship Committee’s recommendation to amend the scholarship eligibility guidelines to reflect that applicants must attend an Oklahoma institution for higher education.
- Approved the Legislative Goals for 2005 presented by the Legislative Committee.

February

- Approved entering into a temporary agreement with Pioneer Library System to allow the printing of 5000 folders with the “Just So You Know” logo, to be used for conference and workshop packets.
- Approved the recommendations of the Career Recruitment and Retention Committee that recipients of its conference scholarships for under-represented groups would be considered OLA members in calculating conference fees; additionally OLA will waive $90 of the registration fee but the scholarship value could not exceed the total registration fee.
- Approved the establishment of the Donna Norvell Picture Book Award to be given annually to a book selected by librarians from the Children’s Sequoyah Reading Team consideration list.
- Approved a workshop entitled “Protecting Patrons/Protecting Privacy,” co-sponsored by the Intellectual Freedom Committee and Ethics Committee.
- Approved new OLA logo developed by the Marketing and Communications Committee.
- Approved Audit Committee report.
- Approved the following proposed bylaw changes go to the membership for a vote: 1) Name change for Administration Roundtable to Supervisors, Managers, and Administrators Roundtable (SMART); 2) Name change for Technology and Electronic Resources Roundtable to Information Technology Roundtable; and 3) Dissolution of New Members Roundtable.
The Oklahoma Department of Libraries has named two Oklahoma residents and an Oklahoma foundation to the Second National Advocacy Honor Roll sponsored by the ALA and the Association for Library Trustees and Advocates (ALTA), a division of ALA.

They are: State Representative Barbara Staggs; Julia Brady Ratliff, library advocate; and the Samuel Roberts Noble Foundation. These advocates are among the more than 300 honorees named to the National Advocacy Honor Roll, representing more than 40 states and the District of Columbia.

Representative Staggs was responsible for legislation which provided state-appropriated funding for the construction of public libraries in Oklahoma. The legislation was accompanied by increased funding to the Oklahoma Department of Libraries on a continuing basis to provide for annual grants. OLA recognized Representative Staggs as a Library Champion for this accomplishment. OLA President Lynn McIntosh said Staggs is a true friend to Oklahoma libraries and librarians. “Since 2001, more than $700,000 has been appropriated to assist fifteen libraries with their building projects,” McIntosh said.

Julia Ratliff is active in the Tulsa Friends group and in the statewide Friends of Libraries in Oklahoma (FOLIO). Ratliff also served on the ODL board where she was an advocate for the role of technology in libraries. ODL director Susan McVey said, “Julia is a force of nature so committed and passionate that you find yourself swept up in her energy, enthusiasm and love of libraries.”

The Samuel Roberts Noble Foundation has been a leader in recognizing the impact of libraries on the quality of life in Oklahoma. Over the past five years the Noble Foundation has supported several efforts to build the capacity of librarians, library supporters, and libraries. The Noble Foundation made its conference center available for two state library association leadership retreats, two FOLIO planning retreats, and the first OLA leadership development conference. “The support of the Samuel Roberts Noble Foundation has been exceptional,” McVey said.

Advocates were recognized at an Honor Roll Banquet on June 24 during the ALA Annual Conference in Chicago. Honorees received a souvenir program book along with a specially designed pin as a thank you for their dedication to library advocacy. ODL will also add the honoree's names to a plaque listing Oklahoma's honor roll advocates on display in its facilities.

The National Advocacy Honor Roll was instituted in 2000 and is held every five years. The Honor Roll recognizes those who have actively supported and strengthened library services at the local, state or national levels over the last 100 years. The honorees are advocates who have led major initiatives or sustained efforts to enhance library development and/or public awareness. Their accomplishments are noteworthy and provide models for others who wish to expand advocacy efforts.

As members of Oklahoma's cadre of extraordinary library advocates of the past five years, this year's nominees join a select group of citizens who have truly made a difference in advocating for Oklahoma's libraries. Previous honorees are Nancy Anthony, a 27-year member of the Metropolitan Library Commission; Sally Frazier, a member of the Tulsa City-County Library Commission since 1985; Gail Miller, Oklahoma delegate to the White House Conference and charter member of FOLIO; Lillian Norberg, member of the Tulsa City-County Friends board for over 40 years and a major player in the statewide Friends group; and Bob Segal, former FOLIO president who has also served as member of the Legislative Task Force to Study Library Laws in Oklahoma and the ODL Steering Committee. Phil Dessauer and Charlie Ward, Tulsa library advocates, were honored posthumously.

Each state was asked to develop its own award criteria when naming advocates to the honor roll. Both individuals and groups were eligible for nomination, including those from the library community, business and professional community, political and public service community and/or the philanthropic community.
2005 Legislative Report

Libraries encountered several challenges this legislative session and librarians were swift and articulate in their response in bringing important information to public awareness as well as to the legislature. The positive actions of the library community had a profound and direct impact on the outcome of library issues.

Throughout the session and particularly on our day at the State Capitol, Legislative Day, we found ourselves dealing with, among other issues, a bill that attempted to significantly reduce the financial support of public libraries through various exceptions to the property tax. Over fifty proposals were introduced to reduce some $590 million out of Oklahoma’s tax base. Twenty-nine exemptions to the state’s sales tax (most of them for special interests) were passed.

The Department of Libraries received almost $1.6 million in state funds this year. The Department requested additional funding of $840,481 to provide restoration of state aid funds to serve the residents of their counties. These state aid funds were those in which the legislature (House) threatened not to pass and produced a contentious and difficult year for Oklahoma’s public libraries.

It began early in the session when a state representative questioned the materials selection policy of a local public library. A patron had complained to his state representative about the public library’s having gay-themed books in the children’s section. State Representative Sally Kern urged the Metropolitan Library Commission to “change the library system’s [shelving] policy and uphold traditional values of the state.” Kern sponsored a House Resolution (HCR 1039) urging Oklahoma libraries to restrict children’s access to books with homosexual themes. It was approved by the State House of Representatives 81-3.

Some State House Republican members threatened to kill new state-aid funds for libraries that did not abide by the recommendation. Kern’s threatening words as quoted in The Oklahoman were “if the libraries do not comply with what the Legislature feels are the prevailing community standards of our towns and cities and entire state, then yes, there is a possibility that they (i.e. libraries) will not receive extra funding.” Elsewhere Ms. Kern said community standards are state standards (The Oklahoman, May 13, 2005).

The Oklahoman editorialized (May 16) that the Legislature “should shelve talk,” and strongly supported the Metropolitan Library System. Many other state publishers spoke out to support the boards of large and small libraries as capable of making their own decisions. The editor stated, “It’s not the Legislature’s job to tell libraries which books they can stock, or where they should be placed…. Library decisions are best left to the individual library boards in general and to parents in particular.”

Oklahoma libraries are largely funded by local governments. Although percentages vary, most libraries get less than 10% of their funding from the state. Even though rural libraries don’t have any of the materials in question, linking funding to shelving policy hurts those libraries disproportionately because most of the new money requested is earmarked for them. Many small libraries around the state depend on state funding to buy new books.

Nevertheless, until near the end of the legislative session additional state aid was threatened by the House of Representatives. At the end, the Department of Libraries was funded. Attaching legislative policy to appropriation bills is highly unusual and frowned upon. The insistence on a law that is clearly not enforceable risks contempt for all laws. It was the collective voice of OLA and the entire library community that succeeded in getting the approximately $400,000 of those funds restored.

On the federal level, Congressman Walter Jones of North Carolina has introduced federal legislation (HR 2295), the “Parental Empowerment Act of 2005,” that would prohibit a state from receiving federal education funds unless the state has certain policies and procedures regarding the purchase or acquisition of library and classroom based reference, instructional, and other print materials for use in elementary schools. It would create a small review board to decide for all families in a community what materials will be available.

House Concurrent Resolution 1039 is an important issue to review with your legislator when he is back home in his district. Let him know that your library has competent staff, policies and procedures, and the oversight of your library board to review materials and determine appropriateness for your community.

In reviewing this legislative session it is clear we cannot relax our vigilance. Our attention is necessary year-round and not just the four months at the State Capitol. Be aware of what library issues, questions and challenges are within your own community. Bring them forward to OLA for discussion before the legislative session.

Oliver Delaney
Legislative Liaison
The Oklahoma Biological Survey is hosted by the University of Oklahoma, Norman. Their webpage is comprised of nine major sections that correspond to their major projects plus other links. We'll look at these. Interesting information is buried within most of these links.

**RARE SPECIES INFORMATION**
To get full access to this database you have to subscribe to it. But The Survey will perform searches for individuals and send results to them as long as their requests are reasonable. They will also perform a search for all rare species within a specific area. In both cases you must contact them to request service.

**SEARCHABLE DATABASES**
There are eight databases that the public can search, each with explanatory notes about the database and how to use it—“Distribution of Oklahoma Amphibian and Reptiles by Recorded Sightings (DOKARRS),” “Oklahoma Bird Specimen Records,” “Oklahoma Mammal Specimen Records,” “Oklahoma Vascular Plants Database,” “Bird Literature of Oklahoma,” “Herpetological Literature of Oklahoma,” “Mammal Literature of Oklahoma,” and “Plant Literature of Oklahoma.”

**WETLAND AND AQUATIC PLANTS OF OKLAHOMA**
Here you will find a list of species by both popular name and scientific name in an A-Z list, and also lists of these plants in five categories.

**OKLAHOMA NATURAL AREAS REGISTRY**
Landowners in Oklahoma can register lands that they keep in a natural state that will preserve the plant and animal species that live there in a statewide registry. There are currently over 100 landowners who have registered lands from 2 acres to over 9,000 acres in this database. Included is a state map of these sites.

**BIoblitz!**
*Bioblitz!* is a volunteer program of The Survey in which Survey staff and volunteers describe all of the plant and animal species that they find within a particular site within a 24-hour period.

**OK-GAP PROJECT**
This is a program that analyzes existing conservation programs to determine if ordinary—not threatened or endangered—plant and animal species need to be included in Oklahoma’s conservation programs so that these species never need help.

**FLORA OF OKLAHOMA PROJECT**
Everything The Survey is doing about Oklahoma’s plants from anywhere in their website is linked here. There is also some other information here not found elsewhere. It includes the “Catalog of Woody Plants of Oklahoma” (trees, shrubs, woody vines), “State Designated Plants” (you can see what our official state plants look like), and a vegetation map of Oklahoma.

**GEORGE M. SUTTON AVIAN RESEARCH CENTER**
The Sutton Center near Bartlesville researches the birds of Oklahoma. You’ll find info about “Prairie-Chicken Studies,” the ecology of Tallgrass Prairie birds, bald eagle restoration, and The Center’s “e-zine” of articles that are of interest to bird watchers. You can also view and subscribe to The Center’s online newsletter here, and use a bibliography of their publications (some titles include a link to their full texts).

**OK WILD BIRD WIKI**
The Survey has its own “wikipedia” about birds comprised of articles written by birders across our state.

**THE OTHER LINKS**
You’ll find these lined up on the left side of the homepage. “Publications” includes not only Survey publications proper, but also articles, book chapters, theses and dissertations from personnel connected with The Survey. There is also a “History” of the Survey, and “Opportunities” includes all the information you’d need to volunteer to help on a Survey project.

*Steve Beleu, ODL*
OU SLIS Receives Grant

For Educating MLIS Cohorts to Provide School Library Media Specialists

The University of Oklahoma School of Library and Information Studies has been awarded a grant in the amount of $569,552 from the Institute of Museum and Library Services. OU SLIS will partner with the Oklahoma City Schools and Tulsa Public Schools to fund 30 master’s degree candidates with strong teaching credentials, including teacher certification and experience working with minority students. The partners will provide release time and continued employment of the future school library media specialists. For more information about the grant, please contact Dr. Kathy Latrobe at OU SLIS.