

President's Greetings

1946: We stood in front of our bungalow in suburban Fort Smith, Arkansas. "Skate three blocks down our street, turn left, go ten blocks, turn left again. It'll be right there on the corner," my mother said, priming me for the adventure of skating to the Andrew Carnegie Public Library. I got there, checked out three books and skated back home. I did not know that Carnegie libraries founded in 1902 served white people only.

1947: "That's the Baltimore Enoch Pratt Public Library. It's provided service every day since it opened in 1886." My father leaned toward the windshield for a full view of a building that filled an entire block. Enoch Pratt founded it 'for all--rich and poor, without distinction of race or color.' "

1952: African-American Carla Hayden was born. She would grow up to direct the Enoch Pratt Library System and become the current Librarian of Congress. Her father directed the String Department at Historically Black Florida A&M University. Her mother was a social worker. Her father's maternal family were slaves.

1964, 1965: The Civil Rights Act outlawed discrimination in public libraries. The Voting Rights Act gave African Americans full voting access, power over local government and its public facilities.

2018: June 24, The ALA unanimously adopted a resolution including the following

Whereas, in many cases the American Library Association participated, both passively and actively, in the disenfranchisement of African American librarians, depriving them of the resources of professional association;

Whereas an apology for decades of injustices cannot erase the past, but a recognition of the wrongs committed and injustices ignored can help the nation's library community confront the ghosts of its past:

Now, therefore, be it Resolved, That the American Library Association (1) Acknowledges the fundamental injustice, cruelty, and inhumanity of racially segregated libraries; (2) Apologizes to African Americans for wrongs committed against them in segregated public libraries.

Florence Pritchard

Sources: American Digital Public Library, Wikipedia.

Focus on Freedom

"I loved my job as a circulation assistant at Headquarters, and now I love my job as a public services assistant at Freedom," said Marisa Atwell, one of the library's newest staff members. As part of her much-loved job, Marisa helps patrons find and check in and out library materials. She also assists with children's programs. For example for the Children's Pajama Party, she helped the children dance and work on crafts as well as taking pictures of the event.

Working in her high school library influenced Marisa to apply for the circulation assistant position downtown. Soon she was promoted to public services assistant at Freedom. In addition to working at Freedom, she attends the College of Central Florida where she is well on her way to an associate's degree. When her AA degree is complete she plans to work toward a bachelor's degree and while not sure in what area, does feel a real pull toward a library degree.

"This community is really growing," observed Marisa, and I am hoping to help provide more programs for children and young adults so that we can involve more families and be part of their lives." She went on to note the library's importance to the community. "We can provide many information resources to people that they may not have. We can help bring people together that might otherwise not meet—home schooled teens, for example. We can provide opportunities for companionship for people who live alone, and we can help people find jobs."

Clearly, Marisa has a strong sense of public libraries as community resources and a commitment to helping. She is the kind of staff member who can make a difference in the lives of those she serves.



Marisa Atwell

On the Horizon

After playing long-term, key roles in helping the Friends of Freedom Public Library accomplish their mission to financially support library programs, services and facilities, Casey Edkins and Milli Costantini, co-chairs of Book Sales and Membership chair, Mary Nellans, are retiring. We will miss seeing them in their administrative positions, but are delighted to introduce the Friends who will now step into these positions. Sanni Schlemmer and Donna Schmidt will lead Book Sales, Lou Doak will pilot Membership and Fern Rhodes has already taken on the responsibilities of Secretary as Sanni leaves that position.

Sanni Schlemmer managed accounts payable/receivable for an import-export company so has many skills for managing book sales. "I have Casey's big shoes to fill," she says, but expresses confidence that she is up to the job especially with the assistance of co-chair **Donna Schmidt** who heads the library and the Community Emergency Response Team at Marion Landing. Donna was also a medical transcriptionist and a notary public.

Lou Doak has recruited the majority of our new members over the past two years so she steps into her new leadership position with experience and a "people first" approach that welcomes all. A former draftsman and inventory control manager, she also creates beautiful quilts and has donated several for prizes awarded in our membership drives.

Fern Rhodes is a retired Air Force Master Sergeant, a non-commissioned officer with leadership, supervisory, and managerial responsibilities. She will be serving as secretary to both our membership and our executive board and will be organizing our state and Federal documentation as a non-profit, as well as the records of our day-to-day operations. "I look forward to learning about Friends work and being involved with the community," Fern says.

We welcome these new leaders with pride in their talents and gratitude for their willingness to serve and their commitment to the Freedom Friends.