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2020 Michigan Library Award Winners Announced

LANSING – Three of the leading statewide library advocacy and service organizations - The Michigan Library Association (MLA), the Michigan Association for Media in Education (MAME), and the Michigan Academic Library Association (MiALA) are pleased to announce the recipients of the 2020 Michigan Library Awards.

The Michigan Library Awards are awarded annually and are considered the state’s highest honors within the library community. The eleven awards celebrate the excellence, accomplishments, dedication and service of library staff, trustees and supporters in the Michigan library community.

The 2020 honorees were unveiled on Thursday, October 29 during the Michigan Library Awards virtual award ceremony broadcast on Facebook live. Author and musician Wesley Stace hosted the event, with a special guest appearance by Governor Gretchen Whitmer. The library community is proud to announce the winners of the Rising Star, Frances H. Pletz Award for Excellence in Service to Youth, Heart of a Champion, Library Support Staff of the Year, State Legislator of the Year, Federal Legislator of the Year, Public Librarian of the Year, Academic Librarian of the Year, Citation of Excellence, Above and Beyond, and the Lifetime Achievement Award.

Each recipient was chosen through peer review for their outstanding achievements within specific categories as follows:

**HEART OF A CHAMPION**

**Susan Matthews, President of the Friends of Troy Public Library**

The Heart of a Champion Award recognizes a library supporter who has shown an exceptional commitment to libraries or the library profession through continued advocacy and supporting or providing funding for their local library.

“A champion is someone who makes the lives of other better, and Sue Matthews has the heart of a champion,” stated Cathleen Russ, Director of the Troy Public Library. “Sue has advocated tirelessly for Troy Public Library through three millage campaigns and loudly proclaims the value that a library brings to its community!”

**MAME CITATION OF EXCELLENCE**

**Kathy Lester, Advocacy Chair of the Michigan Association of Media in Education**

The Citation of Excellence celebrates and honors those who have championed school libraries through volunteerism, administrative support and advocacy.

“Kathy has become a mover and shaker in the school library and technology world, a professional to follow, a friend to turn to for advice and assistance,” said Lisa Brakel, one of Kathy’s nominators and the District School Librarian at the Airport Community Schools in Carleton. “Through her statewide advocacy work over the past six years with the Michigan Association for Media in Education, she has become the voice for school librarians across the state.”

**FRANCES H. PLETZ AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE IN SERVICE TO YOUTH**

**Stephanie Reinhardt, Librarian at the Auburn Area Branch Library, Bay County Library System**

The Frances H. Pletz Award for Excellence in Service to Youth is given annually to a Michigan library staff person who has made an outstanding contribution to the field of library service to youth throughout their career.

“Stephanie is full of energy and excellence as a Children’s Librarian at the Auburn Area Branch Library,” stated Linda Austin who is her direct supervisor in the Bay County Library System. “Stephanie interacts with her patrons from the youngest to the oldest and talks to them at their level. Interacting with children at their level is the kind of behavior that impresses on the children that libraries are fun and that the people working there think they are important. This type of behavior will bring the children back when they become adults.”

**LIBRARY SUPPORT STAFF OF THE YEAR**

**Jermaine Jackson, Library Assistant at the Kalamazoo Public Library**

The Library Support Staff of the Year Award recognizes a support staff professional who goes above and beyond to provide support at their library and who has advanced and strengthened the image of support staff.

"Jermaine has been invaluable to the community as a role model to youth, as an advocate for patrons, and as a supporter of local authors,” stated Sonya Hollins who nominated him for the award. “He is deeply in touch with the community he works in, excels at customer service and takes time to get to know all patrons of the Kalamazoo Public Library Alma Powell branch.”

**PUBLIC LIBRARIAN OF THE YEAR**

**Jessica Trotter, Collection Development Specialist at the Capital Area District Libraires** The Public Librarian of the Year Award recognizes outstanding library professionals that inspire people, provide innovative library service to their community, promote collaboration among libraries, and show evidence of personal and professional achievement as well as initiative and creativity.

“Jessica is an amazing resource to CADL, the community it serves, and both the statewide and national landscape of Readers Advisory and collection development services,” stated Scott Duimstra, Director of Capital Area District Libraries. “She is a humble and dedicated leader, serving on the Board of Directors for Library Reads, and has chaired the MLA Fantastic Fiction group, the MCLS Overdrive Consortium Committee overseeing and spearheading collection growth from 1.4 million checkouts in 2017 to over 2 million in 2019.”

**RISING STAR**

**Betty Adams, Library Director at the Leanna Hicks Public Library of Inkster**

The Rising Star Award recognizes a librarian who shows leadership early in their career. While new to the profession, winners of this award are forward-thinking, expand the role of librarian and move libraries into the future.

“Over the past few years, I have witnessed Betty’s desire to learn, engage, and contribute to the work she is responsible for,” stated Matthew Wisotsky, Associate Director of the Wayne State University Library System. “These traits continue to inspire her colleagues to do more as well, which makes for a stronger and more motivated workforce.”

**ACADEMIC LIBRARIAN OF THE YEAR**

**Sandra C. McCarthy, Professional Faculty and Librarian at the Bailey Library, Washtenaw Community College**

The Academic Librarian of the Year recognizes the outstanding accomplishments of a librarian or library administrator and their contributions to their institution and academic libraries within the academic year 2019-2020.

“Sandra initiates change wherever she goes,” said Darlene Johnson-Bignotti, who announced her award. “She is the volunteer administrator and co-founder of the Michigan Virtual Reference Collaborative, which has enabled its 15 member libraries of MiALA to seamlessly support students during the pandemic. And if that wasn’t enough, during the Winter 2020 semester she completed a study of health sciences librarians’ perceptions.” Her findings will be published in a forthcoming issue of the Journal ofthe Medical Library Association.

**ABOVE AND BEYOND**

**Clare D. Membiela, Library Law Consultant at the Library of Michigan**

The Above and Beyond Award recognizes an individual who has selflessly served Michigan Libraries and library staff and has gone above and beyond in service to the profession.

“Clare provided crucial, up-to-the minute interpretation of just released Executive Orders as well as steady leadership beginning in March when the pandemic caused libraries to close their doors,” stated Elizabeth Madson who nominated Clare for the award. “She provided extended support to administrators who may have been bewildered or overwhelmed by the continually changing directives amid serious concerns for the safety of library employees and the public. Whether fielding a specific, individual question, or an issue on behalf of the collective, Clare worked to develop calm, reasonable responses with directors.”

**STATE LEGISLATOR OF THE YEAR**

**State Senator Wayne Schmidt, of the 37th State Senate District**

The State Legislator of the Year is awarded to elected officials in recognition of outstanding leadership in promoting libraries and supporting legislation or amendments that advance our legislative goals.

“This year, in the midst of dramatic budget cuts throughout our state – caused by a global pandemic and worsening economic challenges, Senator Schmidt stepped up as the sub-committee chair of the Dept of Education appropriations budget and was instrumental in adding $1 Million to Library State Aid for FY21,” stated Jenny Marr, MLA Advocacy and Legislative Chairman and Director of the Ferndale Public Library. “We are so proud to work with him this year and we know that he truly understands the value and importance of libraries throughout Michigan.”

**FEDERAL LEGISLATOR OF THE YEAR**

**Congressman Andy Levin, Representing Michigan’s 9th District**

The Federal Legislator of the Year is awarded to elected officials in recognition of outstanding leadership in promoting libraries and supporting legislation or amendments that advance our legislative goals.

“Congressman Levin is being recognized for his work to stand up and support libraries across the nation by introducing the Library Stabilization Fund Act,” stated Jenny Marr, MLA Advocacy and Legislative Chair and Director of the Ferndale Public Library. “This legislation would provide $2 billion for libraries administered through the federal Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS). The legislation would keep nearly 370,000 library workers on the job, defray costs related to safe reopening, and support a range of library services to millions of patrons.”

**LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD**

**Kevin King, Head of Community Engagement at the Kalamazoo Public Library**

The Lifetime Achievement Award recognizes a deserving librarian for their distinguished service to the library profession over the course of their career. Throughout their career, winners of the Lifetime Achievement Award have sustained a strong and consistent body of work, demonstrated leadership in their community and in the profession -mentoring and empowering library staff, providing innovative service to their community and enhancing the image and visibility of the library. They promote collaboration among libraries and librarians and have been a catalyst in special areas such as intellectual freedom, library innovation, outreach, and equity, diversity and inclusion.

“Kevin King is one of my absolute heroes,” stated Jacqueline Woodson, National Book Award Winner. “The work that he has done to bring the community and library together…the programming he’s designed and his passion for both young people and their literature deserves all the praise! He deserves to be recognized for the way he has changed both Kalamazoo and the world.”

“These award recipients represent some of the most outstanding individuals in the Michigan library community,” said Deborah E. Mikula, Executive Director of the Michigan Library Association. “In the past, the three host organizations have worked independently, but this year, our united efforts have added a whole new dimension to showcasing exemplary library staff from all library types. We couldn’t be prouder of the collaboration.”

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*The Michigan Library Association (MLA) is Michigan's oldest and largest library association. For close to 130 years, MLA has led the advancement of all libraries through advocacy, education and engagement. MLA's membership is comprised of 1,900 individual and organizational members from public, academic, school, tribal and special libraries. For more information visit*[*milibraries.org*](http://www.milibraries.org/)*.*

*The Michigan Association for Media in Education (MAME) is the statewide association for Michigan school librarians and those interested in K-12 media center topics. MAME has been providing professional development and advocating at the state and national level to provide a voice and stronger presence for K-12 library professionals. For more information visit* [*http://www.mimame.org*](http://www.mimame.org)*.*

*The Michigan Academic Library Association (MiALA) is the professional association of academic library staff and libraries in Michigan. MiALA’s work entails providing professional development, serving as a catalyst for collaboration, and promoting the value and contribution of academic libraires. For more information visit* [*https://miala.org*](https://miala.org)*.*