

## **ODL Board Meeting of June 17, 2005 Director's Report**

**Legislative Report.** The Oklahoma legislature adjourned on May 27, 2005. The Oklahoma Department of Libraries' appropriation bill is included under tab E of this packet. There is both good and bad news about the appropriation. The very good news is that the Legislature added \$400,000 to our budget to be used for increasing state aid to municipal libraries. The increase is due to the hard work of many librarians and library supporters including members of the Legislature. Although it isn't the full amount that is needed, this is a significant increase that will make a demonstrated impact on the services that municipal libraries can offer to their customers. Next year we will seek to increase the funding again to the level needed. I very much appreciate the support of the Oklahoma legislature and the hard work of the library advocates who informed them of the critical need for this increase.

The bad news in this appropriation is that there are mandated increases in retirement contributions and health insurance costs that weren't funded. This means that we will have to reallocate our existing budget to cover an estimated \$100,000 in new expenses. Combined with a shortfall in federal funds in Federal Fiscal Year 2006, ODL will face another very tight budget year. The only consolation is that our agency was treated exactly the same as other agencies. No agency was funded for these increases. The only increase was for the second half of the pay raise promised last year.

Also included in the appropriation bill is the raise in the director's salary maximum. The Legislature sets the maximum amount that the director can receive and the governing Board has the responsibility to determine the salary up to the maximum. The amount listed in the appropriation bill is the \$700 total increase over last year's salary. The rest of the ODL staff will automatically receive the increase.

**ODL Board members.** One of the other activities of the Oklahoma Senate was to confirm two individuals to serve on the ODL Board who were nominated by the governor. Hannibal Johnson was confirmed to complete a partial term ending on July 1, 2009. Another appointment confirmed by the Senate is that of LaWalta "Wally" Turner of Kremlin, Oklahoma. Wally is currently the President of the Public Library of Enid and Garfield County so she has wide experience of the rewards and challenges municipal libraries face.

We will be saying "thank you and farewell" to Doyle Kinney for his service on the ODL Board at our June meeting. Doyle has served on the ODL Board from 1996 to 2005. He completed a partial term on the Board before serving a complete term of his own. Doyle has been a strong advocate for rural libraries. He has served on numerous committees of the Board including the personnel committee. I think Doyle's easy manner and sense of humor have been appreciated by all ODL Board members and ODL staff who have known him. In the face of challenging issues, Doyle has managed to be fair and balanced to all sides. I appreciate his service to the state in helping to improve library service.

**Library visit.** It was my pleasure to attend the Okmulgee Public Library dedication on April 5<sup>th</sup>. The building was renovated with a large addition and modernization of the original building. The architectural work was done by Roger Coffey, a well known architect with experience in many library projects. I was very impressed with the seamlessness of the remodel and the amount of space and light in the building. If any of you are in the area, I urge you to stop by for a visit. I think you will be impressed as well. The original building was the first public library supported by public dollars in Oklahoma. I enjoy seeing landmark buildings made usable and beautiful for a new generation of customers.

**Commercial.** I participated in my first television commercial in April. I was contacted to participate in a commercial on the importance of reading to your children. The filming was done at the Dulaney-Browne Library of Oklahoma City University where I was director before coming to work at ODL. It was exciting to see all the changes and improvements that have occurred there in the last nineteen years since I left. The filming took over three hours for about 10 seconds of airtime. I haven't seen the final product but I was told it turned out well. If it did, it was because of the importance of the message and the high quality of the crew who were outstanding. I have a deeper appreciation of those involved in the creation of visual messages. Others featured in the commercial will be Dr. Marny Dunlap, a pediatrician at the OU Health Sciences Center, Tom McDaniel, president of Oklahoma City University, and the warden of Mabel Bassett Correctional Center. The commercial has not yet been shown but it is my understanding that it will be aired on cable television aimed at programs likely to attract women viewers.

**Oklahoma Reads Oklahoma.** On May 18<sup>th</sup> a very special event was held to launch the Oklahoma Reads Oklahoma 2005 book tour. Susan Feller, our development officer, coordinated the event. Representative John Carey and Senator Jay Paul Gumm were the hosts of the event. The Choctaw tribe provided a grant to ODL to purchase hard cover copies of Walking the Choctaw Road by Tim Tingle which he autographed and presented to legislators in the House lounge on May 18<sup>th</sup>. In the Senate, Senator Gumm presented a Senate Resolution recognizing Tim and the Oklahoma Reads Oklahoma project. Proclamations and commendations from the Governor were read by Scott Meacham, Treasurer Designate. Tim also received front page coverage in the Daily Oklahoman which some of you may have seen. The tour of libraries will begin this month and 60 communities have requested a program by Tim. I will have copies of the commendations and photos to share with you at our Board meeting.

**National Library Advocate Honor Roll.** In 2000 the American Library Association and the Association for Library Trustees and Advocates created a way to recognize the contributions of advocates for libraries. The purpose of the first honor roll was to honor advocates from 20<sup>th</sup> century, and states were invited to submit up to ten advocates. The names of those honorees are now engraved on plaques hanging in each state library. For

the 2005 Honor Roll, each state, knowing best that deserves such recognition, was invited to select up to three additional advocates to be honored at the banquet, particularly those who have been active throughout the past five years.

It was my pleasure to nominate Julia Brady Ratliff, Representative Barbara Staggs, and the Samuel Roberts Noble Foundation for this recognition from Oklahoma. Julia Ratliff has been active as a library advocate for many more than five years. Julia has been a leader in the Tulsa Friends of the Library, revitalized the statewide group Friends of Libraries in Oklahoma (FOLIO), and served on the ODL Board.

Representative Barbara Staggs introduced legislation in 2001 which funded seed grants for construction and renovation of public library buildings. Fifteen communities have received these grants to date. The transformation of the public library in these communities has seen dramatic increases in the circulation and usage of the library. Thanks to the good work of Representative Jari Askins, a resolution recognizing Barbara Staggs was introduced and passed the last day of session. I have included a copy of it following my report.

The Samuel Roberts Noble Foundation has provided grants to public libraries in the state for many years. In addition, the Foundation has provided its conference facilities for the Oklahoma Library Association's leadership retreat and leadership development institute and for Board retreats of the FOLIO group. These retreats have built the leadership and organizational capacity of these groups thereby strengthening the service provided to library customers throughout the state. All of those selected for this honor are demonstrated library advocates of the highest order. I appreciate the opportunity to recognize their contributions to the citizens of Oklahoma.