

**Director's Report**  
**Oklahoma Department of Libraries Board Meeting of April 4, 2007**

**On the Road.** The spring always seems to be a busy time and this year is no exception. I have represented ODL at both happy and sad occasions since we last met. The Literary Landmark committee met in Claremore to plan its next ceremony recognizing Will Rogers. The event will be held on Friday, October 26<sup>th</sup> at the Will Rogers Memorial in Claremore. Michael Wallis and Julia Brady Ratliff, co-chairs of the event, have some wonderful plans to celebrate the day.

I also attended the funeral of Glenda Lamb in Enid. Glenda was a passionate librarian who worked at the Pioneer Library System and as director of the Public Library of Enid and Garfield County. Glenda was active in the Oklahoma Library Association and in 2001 received the Special Meritorious Service Award.

I made two other trips to public libraries this month. The first was to Cushing to the grand opening of their renovated public library building. The community was also celebrating the 50 years of service by their librarian, Ruth Ann Johnson. There was a lovely retirement program for her including a bouquet of fifty roses plus a portrait of her that will hang in the library. It was clear that Ruth Ann could stay another fifty years if she wanted as far as the community was concerned. The building is now handicap accessible and is a true beauty. I encourage you to visit if you are in the area.

The other trip I made was to the Bartlesville Public Library which held a week long series of programs about the long time director Ruth Brown who was dismissed in the 1950s following her involvement in the early beginnings of the civil rights movement there. I attended a program by a retired district judge, Jan Dreiling, who spoke about the legal aspects of Ruth Brown's dismissal and appeals. The program I attended was on a Friday night and there were over 70 people in attendance several of whom had lived in Bartlesville at the time and spoke about their personal experiences. Dr. Louise Robbins, former Oklahoma librarian at East Central University and now director of the University of Wisconsin-Madison School of Library and Information Studies, was present. She wrote a book on the incident entitled The Dismissal of Miss Ruth Brown. Dr. Robbins was speaking on Saturday night and on Sunday a statute of Ruth Brown was being dedicated. Joan Singleton, the director of the Bartlesville public library, said the series which was part of the library's Centennial celebration drew more than six hundred attendees during the week and was a huge success.

**Literary Events.** Three important literary events were held in Oklahoma City. The Oklahoma Reads Oklahoma kick off event for the 2007 selection Fire in Beulah by Rilla Askew was held in the Blue Room of the State Capitol on February 22nd. Also present was Robert Conley author of Cherokee Medicine Man one of the six finalists who spoke about his book. Donis Casey, author of another finalist The Old Buzzard Had It Coming, sent a letter to be read about her book. It has been a goal of the program to recognize the value of all of the nominated titles and to encourage writings about the Oklahoma

experience. Jennifer Kidney, director of the Let's Talk About It Program, gave an overview of the titles whose authors were not able to attend. Medals and a governor's commendation were presented to all finalists and those not present will have theirs mailed to them. Judi Knapp, ODL Board chair, was present to represent the Board.

Read Across America day is a celebration of the joy of reading for young children. It is held on March 2<sup>nd</sup> the birthday of Dr. Seuss but this year's star was Curious George. The Literary Resources Center at the Oklahoma Department of Libraries has an outstanding partnership with OETA, various literacy groups, the Metropolitan Library System, and Capitol Hill High School to make it a special day for young children. This year over 900 pre-school age children attended programs at the Oklahoma City zoo for this event. Colleen Woolery of the ODL staff was the chief planner and library development staff was active in ensuring that the children had a wonderful time. Next year the plans are to amend the schedule somewhat to allow the children more time to see the exhibits because for many of them it was their first visit to the zoo.

The Oklahoma Book Awards is always a highpoint of the spring. This year the Friends of the Center for the Book had an outstanding evening. The Arrell Gibson Lifetime Achievement Award recipient was Clifton Taulbert from Tulsa whose books Once Upon a Time When We Were Colored and The Last Train North are moving memoirs about his life. The Master of Ceremonies for the event was Oklahoma Secretary of State Susan Savage who did a splendid job of setting the tone of celebration for the evening. Special guest was Maurvene Williams from the Library of Congress National Center for the Book. The Ralph Ellison award went to Muriel Wright a noted historian and member of the Oklahoma Historical Society staff who wrote major histories of the state and edited *The Chronicles of Oklahoma* for many years. We were so pleased that Wally Turner was able to attend to represent the ODL Board.

**Legislation.** The Oklahoma legislature is continuing to hold hearings on bills and the first deadline of the year to report bills out of the house of origin has been reached. Some of the bills we were monitoring which affected libraries and library funding have become dormant. House Bill 1715 which would have affected public libraries provision of access to the Internet for minors was not heard before the deadline was reached so it is no longer an active bill. The funding request for a significant increase in state aid to public libraries is still pending. As I write this report, there are comments being made by the leadership that they have reached a budget accord. By the time we meet at the Oklahoma Library Association, we may know what the funding for next year will be.

**Ethics Commission filings reminder.** As members of a state board, ODL Board members are required to file financial reports with the Oklahoma Ethics Commission. Previously these reports were due in April but this deadline has been changed to May 15<sup>th</sup>. We have been told that you will be receiving a letter with the forms necessary.