

# TEXAS LIBRARY JOURNAL

Volume 101, Number 2, Summer 2025



**Beyond the Stacks:  
What My Library Gave Me**

**How the Art of Storytelling  
and Film Empowers the  
Fight Against Censorship**

**TLA 2025 Conference  
Wrap-up & Awards**



# Socially Bookish?

---

Get your daily dose  
of literary love and  
moments that matter  
by following *PW*  
on Instagram



Find Us  
[@publisherswkly](https://www.instagram.com/publisherswkly)



# TEXAS LIBRARY JOURNAL

Published by the TEXAS LIBRARY  
ASSOCIATION

Membership in TLA is open to any  
individual or institution interested in  
Texas libraries.

For editorial and advertising information,  
contact Wendy Woodland, TLA Director,  
Advocacy & Communications at:  
wendyw@txla.org

Opinions expressed in *Texas Library  
Journal* are those of the authors and are  
not necessarily endorsed by TLA.

## Journal Staff

**Editor**  
Wendy Woodland

**Assistant Editor**  
Priscilla Takyi

**Graphic Designer**  
Joanna King, Joannabelledesign.com

## TLA Staff

**Shirley Robinson**, Executive Director

**Jaime Bare**, Exhibits and Meetings  
Specialist

**Kelly Mantay**, Education and Programs  
Manager

**Julie Marshall**, Director of Education

**Robin Morris**, Meeting Support Specialist

**Christy Reynolds**, Information Services  
Manager

**Casey Rice**, Vendor Relations and  
Education Coordinator

**Susan Savkov**, Marketing Manager

**Priscilla Takyi**, Communications  
Coordinator

**Alison Urban**, Director of Administration

**Emily Warwas**, Member Services  
Coordinator

**Wendy Woodland**, Director of Advocacy  
and Communications



3420 Executive Center Drive,  
Suite 301  
Austin, Texas 78731

512.328.1518 | [www.txla.org](http://www.txla.org)

© Texas Library Association

Texas Library Journal (ISSN 0040-4446)  
is published quarterly in spring, summer,  
fall, and winter by the Texas Library  
Association, 3420 Executive Center  
Drive, Suite 301, Austin, Texas 78731.

## 43

**43 President's Perspective**  
Valerie Prilop

**45 Recap of the 89th Legislative  
Session**  
Wendy Woodland

## 46

**46 Beyond Barriers: Making the  
Library Accessible to All**  
Rebecca Ivey

**48 Documenting Classroom  
Collections with the Texas  
Collection Analysis Initiative**  
Susannah Gilbert

**50 How the Art of Storytelling  
and Film Empowers the Fight  
Against Censorship**  
Becky Calzada

**52 Beyond the Stacks: What My  
Library Gave Me**  
Elizabeth Chalmers

**54 Fostering Interdisciplinary  
Library Collaborations**  
Kimberly M. Gay

**57 Join TSLAC in Celebrating  
America's 250th Anniversary**  
Tim Gleisner



## 60

**60 NewsNotes**

## 66

### TLA 2025 CONFERENCE

**67 TLA 2025 Conference Wrap  
Up**

**70 2025 Branding Iron Award  
Winners**

**77 TLA and Unit Awards**

**79 2025 Sponsors**

### AD INDEX

**59 Foreword**

**65 LAUNCH Leadership**

**65 Libraries Transform Texas podcast**

**40 Publishers Weekly**

**63 Professional Liability Insurance for  
Educators**

**64 Thank you TLA FY24 Donors**

**42 TLA Career Center**

**63 TLA Engage**

**80 TLA 2026 Save the Date**

**44 TLA 2025 Membership**



## TLA Career Center

A dedicated resource for job seekers and employers alike.



### EMPLOYERS:

Find Your Next Great Hires

- **PLACE** your job in front of highly qualified members
- **SEARCH** our resume database of qualified candidates
- **MANAGE** jobs and applicant activity right on our site
- **LIMIT** applicants only to those who are qualified
- **FILL** your jobs more quickly with great talent
- **PAY** with a PO when you post your job

### PROFESSIONALS:

Search and apply for library positions

- **POST** a resume or anonymous career profile that leads employers to you
- **SEARCH** and apply to hundreds of new jobs on the spot by using robust filters
- **SET UP** efficient job alerts to deliver the latest jobs right to your inbox
- **ACCESS** career resources, job searching tips and tools

Visit [careers.txla.org](https://careers.txla.org)

For more information on recruitment options, contact Customer Service at [clientserv@communitybrands.com](mailto:clientserv@communitybrands.com) or (727) 497-6565.

**ymcareers**<sup>™</sup>  
by communitybrands<sup>®</sup>

# President's Perspective

By Valerie Prilop

**IN THE EARLY PART OF THIS YEAR, AS I PREPARED TO STEP INTO THE ROLE OF TEXAS LIBRARY ASSOCIATION (TLA) PRESIDENT,** one of my first responsibilities was to come together with the 2026 Conference Planning Committee to start working on the annual conference and develop the theme. After two days of intense work and deep conversation in response to the vision I shared with them, the committee came up with the theme *Cultivating Community, Thriving Together*.

For me, that theme is not just for the conference, but for the organization as a whole and for our profession. TLA members are a diverse group, coming from all across the state and bringing with them different backgrounds, experiences, challenges, and stories. That makes us big, beautiful, messy, and strong, and I believe we can find both joy and courage in this community.

As I write this, the 89th Legislative Session has adjourned and as a result of those bills that have passed, come fall the Texas library world will look very different. All library workers will face uncertainty about how to safely perform their jobs, and school libraries in particular face new restrictions aimed at censoring collections and limiting access. Many of us feel disheartened, scared, angry, tired — a whole range of emotions. And it is no wonder, after what libraries have been through over the last few years.

Throughout the legislative session, our members have risen to the occasion, advocating in person and making thousands of contacts by phone and email. Thank you to everyone who testified at the Capitol and spoke out against harmful legislation. And thank you to the members who shared information about what has been happening in Austin and across the state with friends and advocates in your communities. You have done this while continuing to serve your patrons, be it in small towns or big cities, kindergarten classes or graduate student symposia, hospitals or county law centers. You have shown the importance of libraries to our communities.

No matter what type of library we are in, as library staff, we strive to provide excellent resources and services to our patrons. And as an organization, TLA strives to serve the



membership in the same way. The great strength of TLA is the ability to harness the power of our collective voice and experiences to provide support for our members, advocate for libraries, drive excellence in the profession, and create opportunities for learning, growth, and leadership.

At the 2025 Annual Conference, Council approved the 2026-2029 Strategic Plan, which will guide the organization in this work over the next three years. In addition to striving to be a resilient, financially-sustainable association that is both transparent and agile, we will build on our existing strengths and resources

to champion intellectual freedom and the value of libraries, no matter the challenges and environment we face. We will also continue to grow our educational offerings to be a leader in professional growth, offering varied, inclusive and accessible professional development to meet the needs of our members.

A highlight of my conference experience this year was gathering with hundreds of you to watch *The Librarians*. The film's portrayal of our very own Texas librarians fighting censorship was both sobering and uplifting. But what moved me most was the sense of solidarity in the ballroom that evening — sharing that experience with our community was deeply inspiring and filled me with renewed courage and joy.

Our communities, all the types of communities we belong to and help grow, are what will see us through the challenges we face. And here in TLA we can work together and find ways to thrive in light of and in spite of our challenges and differences. I look forward to doing this work with all of you.

*Valerie Prilop*

Valerie Prilop  
2025-26 TLA President



# WHAT MAKES TLA SPECIAL



**A Connected  
Community**



**Advancing the  
Profession**



**Real Solutions,  
Real Support**

**SPECIAL  
JOIN TLA  
OFFER**

## WHY TLA MATTERS

We know that many librarians are feeling the weight of challenging times. But you are not alone. Together, we're one voice advocating for libraries, one community lifting each other up.

## MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

From June 1 to August 31, join TLA at a discounted membership rate which gives access all member benefits through the end of 2025. Visit the website for full details.

**INVITE A COLLEAGUE TO JOIN: [txla.org/join](https://txla.org/join)**

# 89th Texas Legislative Session Wrap-Up

By Wendy Woodland

The 89th Texas Legislative Session adjourned on June 2. During this session, 8719 House and Senate bills were filed and 1213 passed (*this does not include House and Senate resolutions that were passed*). The Texas Library Association [tracked](#) 60 bills that could have impacted library services and librarians, compared to 37 bills tracked during the last regular legislative session.



Most of the bills TLA tracked did not move through the Legislative process. The final status of the bills the association tracked is noted in the [online bill tracker](#). Those with the notation "Sent to the Governor" were passed.

## Bills that advanced but did not pass

These bills advanced through the legislative process, some were passed by committees, others made it to the full House or Senate floor, but they did not achieve final passage.

- [SB 18](#): would have prohibited municipal librarians that host an event where a man presenting as a woman, or a woman presenting as a man reads a book or story to a minor for entertainment, from receiving state or other public funding; *passed Senate, passed House Committee, placed on House Calendar, was not brought forward*
- [HB 1368](#): would have required notification if school does not have a nurse, school counselor, or librarian assigned to the school during instructional hours; *passed House, did not move in Senate*
- [HB 1480](#): would have allowed the Texas State Library and Archives Commission to award library construction grants; *left pending in committee*

- [HB 267](#): would have removed the affirmative defense from the Texas Penal Code; *identical to SB 412; House advanced SB 412 instead*
- [SB 2101](#): would have prohibited minors access to sexually explicit materials in public libraries; *identical to HB 3225, left pending in Senate Committee*
- [HB 3225](#): would have prohibited minors access to sexually explicit materials in public libraries; *passed House, passed Senate Committee, placed on Senate Intent calendar but not heard*

## Bills that passed


The following bills were passed and become effective on September 1, 2025.

TLA is developing tools and resources to support librarians as these new laws are implemented.

- [SB 60](#) allows public junior college libraries more flexibility in disposing of certain library materials by permitting them to donate items that meet specific criteria.
- [SB 412](#) removes the affirmative defense language from the Texas Penal Code, Section 43.24 Sale, Distribution, or Display of Harmful Material to Minor.
- [SB 13](#) related to school district library materials and catalog, establishment of local school library advisory councils, and parental rights regarding public school library materials and access to library materials.

## Advocacy

More than 10,000 library advocates sent over 4,000 emails to members of the Texas Legislature to advocate for libraries during the session. Many also made phone calls, sent personal messages, visited legislative offices and testified at committee hearings. Thank you so much for your support and engagement. You made a difference!



# Beyond Barriers

## Making the Library Accessible to All

By Rebecca Ivey

Like most cities in Texas, the City of Denton is a diverse community with diverse needs. The Denton Public Library System (DPL) consists of three locations, each serving a variety of populations. One of the City of Denton's Core Values is Inclusion by creating environments where individuals feel valued and supported.

In 2023, the North Branch of the Denton Public Library, the largest of the three DPL locations, began a site assessment to address many of the space and accessibility issues that staff observed. Gathering data from customers, the City of Denton Committee on Persons with Disabilities, and department-wide review of equity, accessibility, and inclusion, North Branch determined there were several opportunities to better serve our community.

Computer areas were spread throughout three different locations of the nearly 33,000 square foot space, as well as a fourth area for printing and copying. None of the computer areas were close to the Service Desk. Computer areas met the letter of accessibility but fell short on addressing the wide-ranging needs of our customers. The main computer lab didn't have workspace or room for collaboration. The North Branch has frequent customers that need additional space for walkers, wheelchairs, or service dogs. Not only were the computer areas too compact to meet these needs, but customers often needed tables at different heights to accommodate mobility devices.



*Photos by Kasey Fanucchi*



North Branch leadership learned they were going through a small improvement remodel at the same time they discovered the Texas State Library and Archives Commission (TSLAC) offered a Special Projects Grant. Work began on the library shortly after notification that we were awarded a 2025 Special Projects Grant from TSLAC. DPL was able to use this time to effectively redesign spaces, rearrange shelving, and install additional power to transition our computer spaces into one consolidated area next to the Service Desk. Temporary tables were used until the TSLAC grant funded furniture came in, but this new area provided enough space that tables housed one to two computers, with ample room for collaboration, equipment, and workspace. Additionally, North Branch set up a dedicated scanning zone in one consolidated area.

Once TSLAC grant funds became available, furniture that provided more accessibility was purchased. Every computer table in the new lab is height adjustable. The tables are wider and longer, providing space for needed assistance and room for mobility devices. A caregiver/child workstation and three height adjustable OPAC stations completed the computer area.

The entire project took almost seven months to complete, but the overall transformation has received such positive feedback from the community. Overall computer usage is up for the North Branch. There was a 15% increase in usage in April 2025, compared to April 2024. This is due to many factors, but the new workstations have had a positive impact, with community members expressing they use the North

Branch more due to the new layout and accessibility. Caregivers come in solely to use the Caregiver/Child Workstation and have indicated they are sharing this with their mom groups. One of the former computer areas with built in counters was repurposed to create a quiet room laptop bar. This restructured space has received numerous compliments and positive feedback.

The TSLAC grant, along with the perfectly timed remodel made it possible for the library to purchase accessible furniture and consolidate our four computer areas. Staff wished to consolidate these areas for multiple reasons, but it wasn't until looking at the report from The City of Denton Committee on Persons with Disabilities that staff realized the mobility issues that arose from having multiple areas throughout the library. My practical advice for those facing similar issues is to be open to change, talk to your customers, and observe your surroundings. Seeking input from stakeholders and representing your community is vital to the continued success of our libraries and our future.

*Rebecca Ivey is the North Branch Manager at the Denton Public Library.*

*Denton (population 158,349) is located in the heart of Denton County. Throughout its history, Denton has been known as a university town, home to two state universities, the University of North Texas, and Texas Woman's University. This project is made possible by grant #SPP-25003 from the **Institute of Museum and Library Services**.*

# Documenting Classroom Collections with the Texas Collection Analysis Initiative

By Susannah Gilbert

**IN AUGUST OF 2024, THE TEXAS STATE LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES COMMISSION (TSLAC)**

launched the Texas Collection Analysis Initiative (TXCAI), a new set of tools and services developed in partnership with TeachingBooks. This initiative gives free statewide access to all Texas educators, intended to support them as they identify materials in their classroom collections in compliance with the School Library Program Collection Development Standards (13 Texas Admin. Code §4.2).

As required by House Bill (HB) 900, 88th Leg., R.S. (2023), TSLAC adopted mandatory collection development standards for school libraries in January 2024. Each Texas public school district board or governing body must approve and institute a collection development policy that describes the processes and standards by which the district acquires, maintains, and withdraws materials as outlined in the standards. HB 900 further specified that a school library collection development policy is “required for all library material available for use or display, including material contained in school libraries, classroom libraries, and online catalogs.” Additional information about the standards, including FAQs and guidance for districts, is available on the [TSLAC website](#).



TeachingBooks®



TEXAS STATE LIBRARY  
AND  
ARCHIVES COMMISSION

## Inventory Your Classroom Collection



Register today!

**TeachingBooks.net/TXRegistration**

*The Texas Collection Analysis Initiative is funded by the Texas State Library and Archives Commission for exclusive use by Texas school districts, school libraries, and educators.*

Using the tools on TeachingBooks, educators can efficiently create lists of their classroom titles with a variety of import options. These title lists can be easily shared as a spreadsheet or webpage link with administrators, parents and guardians, and any others as determined by the district. Collections can be documented in a consistent format, with districts able to decide which sharing method best meets their local and community needs. Sharing classroom collection lists with other teachers, as well as administrators, parents, and guardians, can inspire collaboration, as educators learn about other collections in their buildings and district, expanding a community’s reading culture.

These tools are freely available

on [TeachingBooks](#), to all Texas educators who register for the initiative at [TeachingBooks.net/TexasRegistration](#).

As of May 2025, the initiative has registered users in all 20 ESC regions across Texas. Since its launch, TeachingBooks and TSLAC have incorporated feedback from Texas educators and made significant enhancements to the tools and support offerings. The most recent of these is the ability for a designated district administrator to generate a report of all classroom collections documented in their district. Available for download as a spreadsheet, this report includes a summary of all lists, as well as individual title information. Beyond these administrative reports, classroom



## Kindergarten Room 9 - TeachingBooks Elementary - Austin ISD

Titles	Authors
Noche antigua	Álvarez, David
Mr. S	Arnaldo, Monica
I Have a Question	Arnold, Andrew
Books Aren't for Bears	Barry, Mark
Song in the City	Bernstrom, Daniel
Boopl	Birdsong, Bea

collection lists on TeachingBooks are only visible to the person who created them until a link or spreadsheet is shared.

“Since the initiative’s introduction last summer, Texas educators have logged more than one million items in their classroom collections,” said Jeremy Selvidge, TSLAC’s statewide resource sharing manager. “We especially appreciate the feedback these teachers and librarians have shared to help TeachingBooks and TSLAC improve these tools, making it easier for districts to effectively and efficiently meet statewide standards and manage local collections.”

Classroom collections offer an invaluable opportunity for young readers to encounter books that will spark their interest, encouraging independent reading and providing

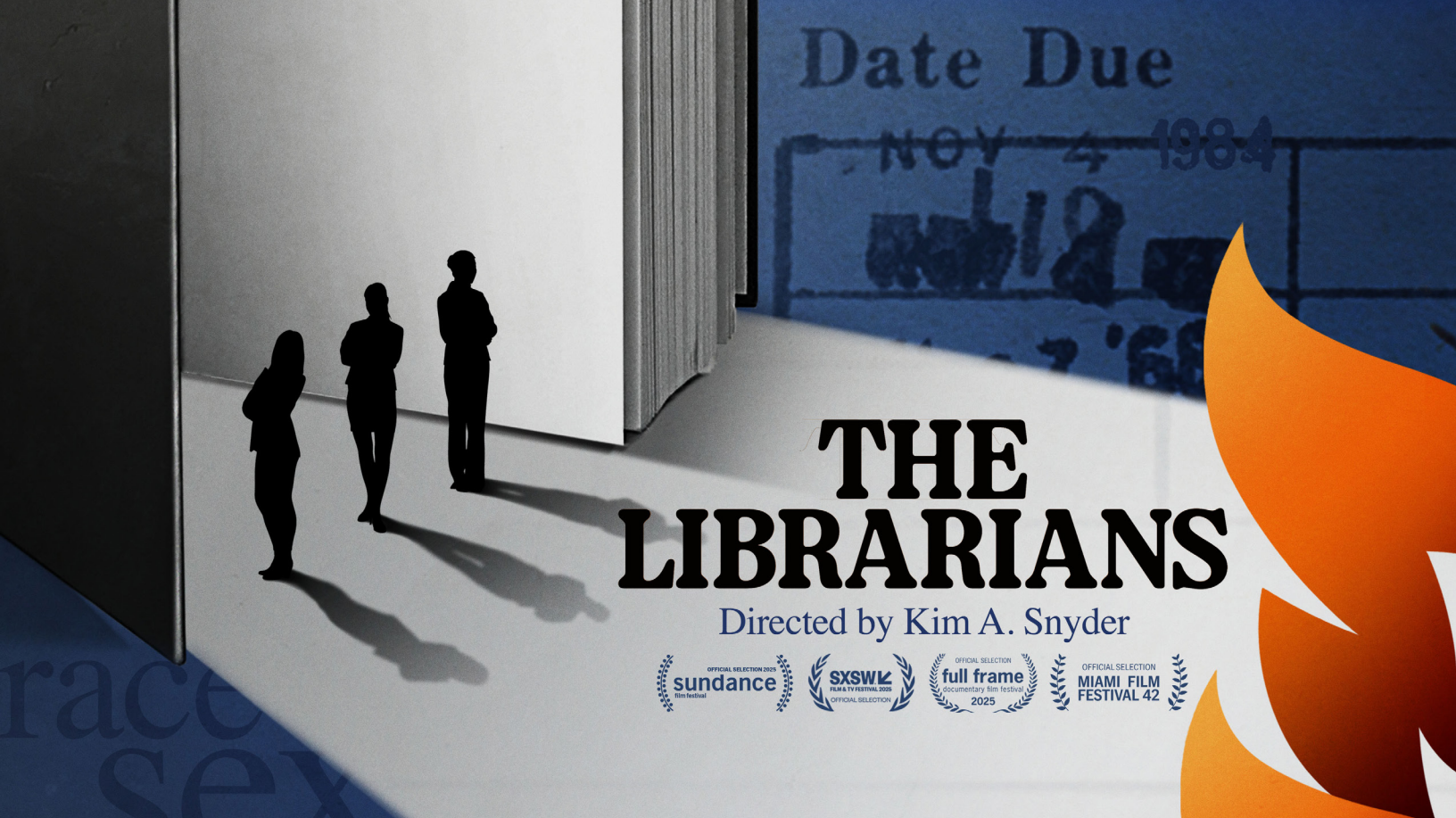
space for students to become stronger — and lifelong — readers. In addition to features that help districts to meet the documentation requirements in state standards, the TXCAI gives school librarians and teachers access to book resumes for the titles in their collections that appear on TeachingBooks. They can also view collection data including genre, recency, and grade ranges, as well as other resources to support book selection decisions and determine the strengths and areas for growth in a classroom collection.

Included in the initiative is technical support and training from TeachingBooks. Users can access a tutorial video, a step-by-step handbook, and other support materials. Webinars demonstrating the tool and highlighting new features are offered regularly and information about upcoming trainings

can be found at [TeachingBooks.net/TXCAITraining](https://teachingbooks.net/TXCAITraining). Beyond individual assistance for users creating lists, support is available for rolling out the initiative in your district. Reach out to [help@teachingbooks.net](mailto:help@teachingbooks.net) at any time with questions, requests, and feedback.

*The Texas State Library and Archives Commission provides Texans access to the information they need to be informed, productive citizens by preserving the archival record of Texas; enhancing the service capacity of public, academic and school libraries; assisting public agencies in the maintenance of their records; and meeting the reading needs of Texans with disabilities. For more information about TSLAC services to school districts, contact [K12@tsl.texas.gov](mailto:K12@tsl.texas.gov) or visit [www.tsl.texas.gov](http://www.tsl.texas.gov).*

*Susannah Gilbert, MLIS, is the implementation lead of the Texas Collection Analysis Initiative and is a Project Coordinator at TeachingBooks, an OverDrive company.*



# How the Art of Storytelling and Film Empowers the Fight Against Censorship

By Becky Calzada

**I AM A FAN OF MOVIES**, and one of my favorites is *Mona Lisa Smile*, a 2003 film starring Julia Roberts. She plays Dr. Katherine Watson, a recent UCLA graduate hired to teach art history at the prestigious all-female Wellesley College in 1953. In the film, Dr. Watson poses the question, “What is art?”

Art is a broad term that describes the use of imagination and skill to create objects or experiences intended to be appreciated. Visual arts encompass painting, sculpture, photography, and architecture. The performing arts include theater, dance, and live performances. Literary arts involve literature, including novels and poetry. The musical arts incorporate music, from composition to performance. Finally, film encompasses movies and other moving images which are

---

“My hope is that the intersection of our profession’s current intellectual freedom challenges and this documentary will move viewers beyond awareness and into action within their local communities.”

---

often used with students in schools and libraries.

Throughout my professional career — as an elementary librarian, a district library coordinator, and now as President of the American Association of School Librarians (AASL) — I have prioritized sharing school library stories. Library storytelling provides insight into the vital work that happens in school libraries, whether school librarians are teaching students, collaborating with teachers, or advocating for strong partnerships with administrators. The storytelling goes beyond data points, yet there remain knowledge gaps in many individuals’ understanding of the role of the school librarian. Additionally, some groups intentionally misrepresent the work of school librarians, spreading disinformation under the guise of protecting children.

Enter *The Librarians*, a documentary that premiered at the 2025 Sundance Film Festival in Park City, Utah, this past January. Executive produced by long-time library supporter and reading advocate Sarah Jessica Parker and directed by Oscar-nominated, Peabody Award-winning filmmaker Kim A. Snyder, the film highlights “librarians under siege who join forces as unlikely defenders fighting for intellectual freedom on the front lines of democracy.”<sup>1</sup>

These librarians emerge as first responders in the battle for free access to information, facing harassment, threats, and even laws aimed at criminalizing their work. Audiences witness the escalating conflict through heated community meetings that expose the arguments for censorship. Several school librarians are featured in this powerful film, which delivers a riveting take on the alarming surge of book bans across the country.

As a co-founding member of Texas #FReadom Fighters, I, along with my Texas colleagues Carolyn Foote and Nancy Jo Lambert, were approached by Kim Snyder and her producer Janique Robillard about creating a film that captured the current reality of school librarians on the intellectual freedom frontlines. What began in Texas in 2021, soon spread across the country, and TX #FReadom Fighters helped connect the film team with other impacted school librarians across the country.

At this year’s Sundance Film Festival in January, several school librarians and I attended a featured panel entitled *ACLU & Storytelling: Driving Change in Uncertain Times*, where several key takeaways resonated with me:

- Entertainment art should be used as both a mirror and an advocacy tool.
- The intervention of storytelling in urgent moments can be a force for disruption and resistance.
- Storytelling plays a crucial role in policymaking and public awareness.
- Films can serve as pivotal educational tools.

We were fortunate to have the opportunity to show this film at the TLA 2025 Annual Conference in April. More than 600 librarians gathered to watch the special screening and left feeling less alone and more strongly connected to the library community as a whole. What a powerful example of the art of film being a connector in building community!

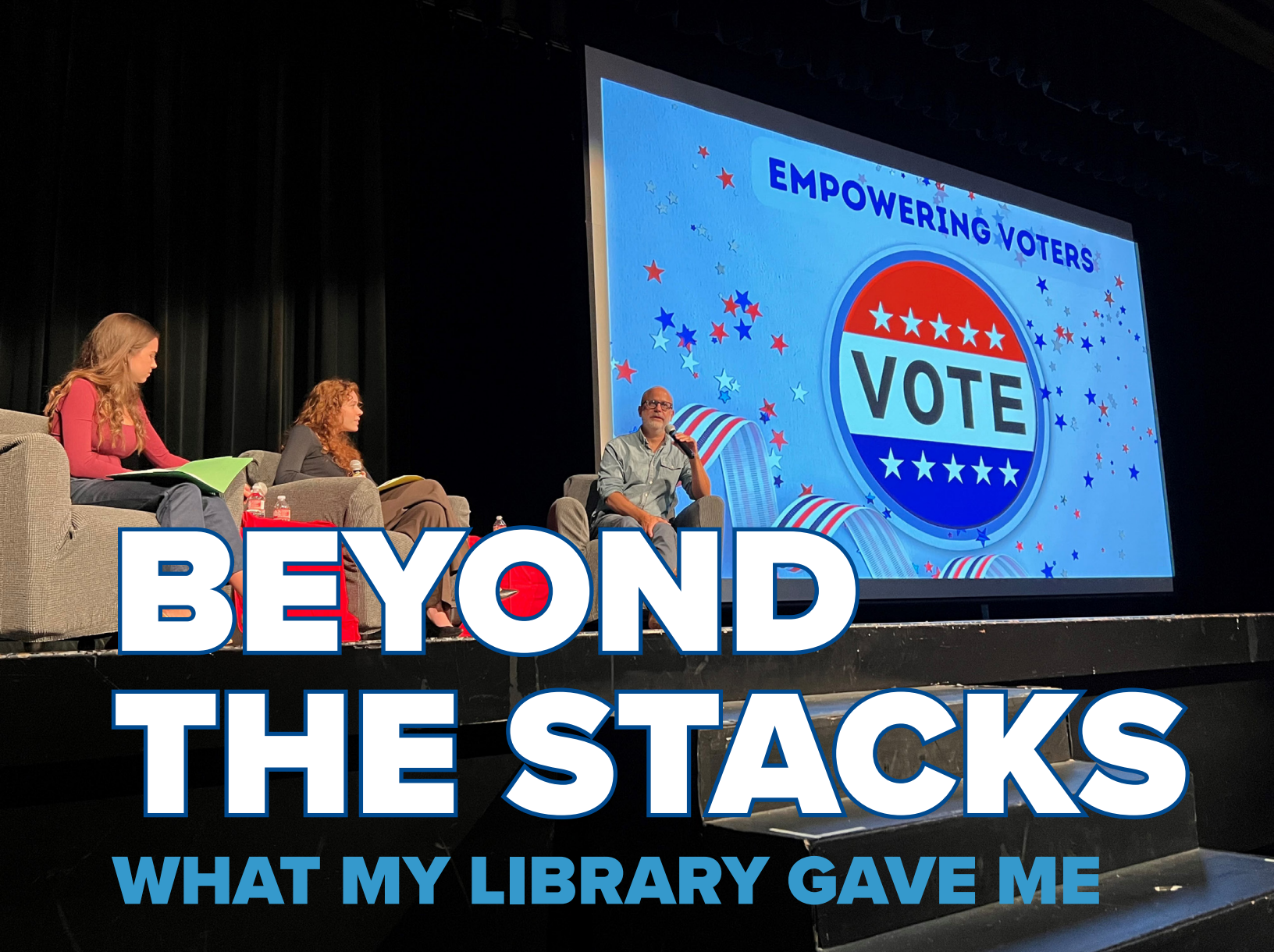
*The Librarians* documentary shines a much-needed spotlight on the tireless, behind-the-scenes, critical work of school librarians in defending the right to read. Art often serves as a vehicle for social change, raising awareness about issues such as access to information and intellectual freedom. My hope is that the intersection of our profession’s current intellectual freedom challenges and this documentary will move viewers beyond awareness and into action within their local communities. School librarians are in desperate need of allies, and this documentary might be the catalyst to inspire the engagement school librarians so urgently require.

If you are interested in hosting a screening of the documentary or would like to partner with the producers to use the film as an educational tool, visit [thelibrariansfilm.com](https://thelibrariansfilm.com).

*Becky Calzada is President of the American Association of School Librarians (AASL) and the District Library Coordinator for Leander ISD.*

*Elements of this piece were originally published in the [March/April 2025 issue of Knowledge Quest](#).*

<sup>1</sup> Roka, “Sundance 2025,” *The Utah Review*.



By Elizabeth Chalmers

Community is something so valuable and hard to come by, especially in a big city. But a community is just the tip of the iceberg when it comes to what my high school library provided for me.

**LEAVING HIGH SCHOOL AS A SENIOR**, I never expected to miss Clark High School so authentically, but it's hard for me to imagine leaving behind a place that fostered so much growth in my friends and me.

My favorite location in the school, of course, has to be the library, but not for the reasons most would expect. I adore books. Reading for me has always been an escape from when reality becomes a little too stressful. It was a comfort in-between periods of hard core studying and gave my mind a break and a sense of peace to wander.

But my school library gave me more than just books, it gave me opportunities to explore things I didn't even know I would love.

My junior year, I got to partner with my amazing librarian,

Lucy Podmore, and together we worked on an event that would help spread awareness of News Literacy across our campus.

I am going to college for journalism, and always had an interest in the field, so my goal with the project was to help combat some of the misinformation that is spreading like wildfire across the digital landscape.

Mrs. Podmore came up with the idea to also have a voter registration drive at the same time, since misinformation and educating young voters can go hand in hand. After weeks of planning, we hosted the drive in the courtyard during lunch and successfully spoke with over 100 students about how to avoid misinformation and teaching them about the importance of voting.

I'll never forget after the event, when I was nursing a very unfortunate sunburn, a student below my year came up to me and told me how much he appreciated the event and how informative it was.

From that point on, I knew that I wanted to keep educating students on the importance of voting, especially since at the time, it was an election year. Mrs. Podmore invited me to work



Opposite page photo caption (l-r): Clark High School students Elizabeth Jackson and Elizabeth Chalmers interview author Marc Favreau; This page photo caption (l-r) Elizabeth Jackson and Elizabeth Chalmers at voter information event.

on another event at the beginning of my senior year, where I got to interview Marc Favreau the author of “Represent: The Unfinished Fight for the Vote” on stage and then provide resources for students who want to avoid misinformation when researching candidates online.

I remember specifically how the entire library staff came together to help with the event, and several other organizations came to support. We all met in the library right before to chat and regroup, and I’ll never forget the sense of belonging and pride I felt surrounded by people who cared so passionately about education and supporting students’ voices.

That is what I will forever take away from high school; how much one community can boost the voices of thousands.

Without the library, and my librarian, I would never have had these opportunities. I would have also never met Heather Eichling, the founder of YouthDoVote, who introduced me to working elections as a student. I ended up working the recent presidential election in Bexar County, and it was an experience worth more than I think anyone could ever understand.

Knowing that for that day, I was making a difference, and

helped hundreds of American’s voices be heard unconditionally was a realization that changed the fundamental way I think.

It was also beyond inspirational, and my work with my community of educators and librarians has inspired me to pursue not just journalism but political science as a degree at Northeastern University in the fall.

As I leave one city for another, the idea that I will have so much to miss sort of baffles me. If you had asked me four years ago what I would miss the most about leaving San Antonio, I would have never guessed that it would be a place I miss the most.

But my library has given me more than I can ever repay, and it has provided me with a community of people who have supported me throughout my school career, and I know, will continue to support me beyond.

That support is what I know will stay with me and drive me forward no matter where my next journey takes me.

*Elizabeth Chalmers graduated from Tom C. Clark High School, Northside ISD in May 2025. She is attending Northeastern University.*

# Fostering Interdisciplinary Library Collaborations

## A UNIVERSITY LIBRARIAN'S ROLE IN ENHANCING STEM EDUCATION THROUGH PARTNERSHIPS

By Kimberly M. Gay

**LIBRARIANS AND LIFELONG LEARNING ARE DEEPLY ROOTED AND CONNECTED**, as librarians take center stage in the process of supporting reading and critical thinking at all age levels. Whether in academic, public, school or special libraries, librarians support individuals at all stages of life in developing knowledge, comprehensive skills, and analytical understanding. Academic librarians work through a core mission to help develop these essential skills at the college and university level in students, faculty, staff, scientists, and researchers. From offering a variety of library resources, programs, services, and teaching strategies, as an academic librarian, I am always grounded in the responsibility of the foundations of librarianship - to acquire, organize and provide access to information. These three fundamentals allow me the opportunity to foster lifelong learning and information literacy for my university community.

The journey to reimagining my library liaison services at [Prairie View A&M University](#) (PVAMU) and the [John B. Coleman Library](#) included exploring innovative collaborations that would involve making Agriculture Education the centerpiece in teaching and learning through STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math). As the library liaison to the College of Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources (CAFNR), I am always looking for ways to transform my library outreach services to other colleges and schools while coupling and collaborating within my dedicated liaison area.

The College of Education (COE) reached out to share that there is a serious need for recruiting, preparing, and retaining K-12 STEM teachers, but many of these teachers may not have STEM majors. I was excited to work with the COE in their goal to increase STEM content knowledge of students who want to be STEM K-12 teachers.

PVAMU has a very robust Agriculture education program, which includes an 800-acre demonstration farm. The [Governor Bill and Vara Daniel Farm and Ranch](#) is dedicated to aiding the needs of the academic, extension, and research programs of the university.

From hosting library research workshops on agribusiness



Photos courtesy of Kimberly M. Gay

sustainability, to studying plant and soil erosion in organic farming, to animal science and animal welfare, to bovine breeding styles and cover-cropping, and greening and smart agriculture technology, I was excited to work with COE to share the extensive resources of CAFNR.

In *The Experiential Library: Transforming Academic and Research Libraries Through the Power of Experiential Learning*, author McDonnell (2017) acknowledged that as academic libraries and academic librarians are seeking ways to transform themselves and create collaborative library synergies within their universities, experiential learning offers an exciting way to integrate information literacy into a library's offerings (McDonnell, 2017). These experiential learning concepts range from integrated service learning and information literacy instruction that takes the class out of the classroom to unique experiential approaches to learning. McDonnell further noted that the value of librarians using experiential learning in their teaching strategies can help support their institutions' missions and contributions to student success, by grounding these curriculum services on a sure methodological footing that notes hands-on learning concepts and presents diverse aspects of experiential learning in academic libraries across the spectrum of educational levels (McDonnell, 2017).

As I emerged myself in the possibilities of experimental learning through agriculture curriculums to non-STEM students who wanted to be STEM K-12 teachers, I asked the following questions:

- What are the different learning and teaching styles that can benefit from teaching STEM through agriculture education?
- How could these students learn the concepts of science, technology, engineering and math in pedagogy methods about agriculture?

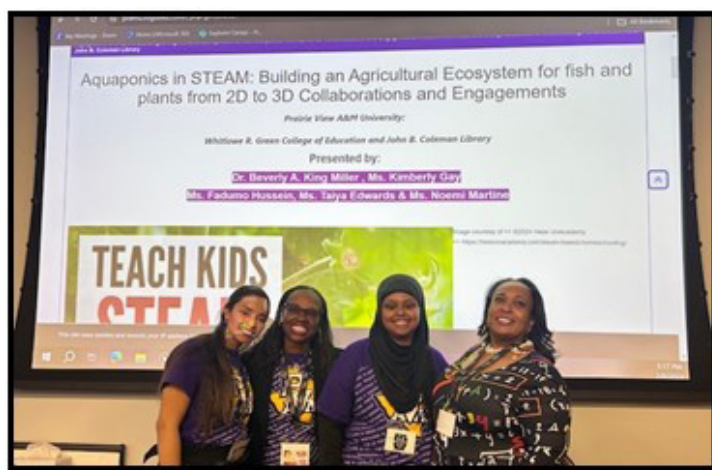
Agriculture education resonates with more inclusive and dynamic teaching and learning methods by allowing students and teachers to approach content in ways that reflect real world aspects through both animal and plant sciences.

It by default allows you to be hands-on and tactile with all things related to animal and plant science. Students can learn by doing and gain practical understanding of how Agriculture education is embedded into all aspects of STEM knowledge.



Experimental learning shows how students can naturally learn and express themselves through eight learning styles. Collaborating in experimental learning, STEM and Agriculture curriculum builds on the learning process of these learning styles.

Learning Styles: STEM to STEAgricultureM	
<p><b>1. Visual Learners (Seeing &amp; Observing)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>STEAM Fit:</b> Diagrams of crop cycles, soil layers, or irrigation systems; infographics; data visualizations.</li> <li>• <b>STEM:</b> Biology, Geology, Ecology, GPS, Soil is composed of the many different types of Atoms, Photosynthesis, Chemistry, Experiment, Data Analytics, Design, Hypothesis</li> <li>• <b>Agricultural Application:</b> Designing garden layouts, interpreting satellite imagery, or creating art from botanical specimens.</li> </ul>	<p><b>5. Verbal/Linguistic Learners (Reading &amp; Writing)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>STEAM Fit:</b> Writing about agricultural innovation, reading scientific articles, or scripting educational videos.</li> <li>• <b>STEM:</b> Artificial Intelligence (AI), Data Science, Software, Internet of Things (IoT), Algorithm</li> <li>• <b>Agricultural Application:</b> Creating farm journals, writing food blogs, or developing informational brochures on sustainable practices.</li> </ul>
<p><b>2. Auditory Learners (Listening &amp; Speaking)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>STEAM Fit:</b> Discussions, storytelling, songs, podcasts, or presentations about agricultural processes.</li> <li>• <b>STEM:</b> Automation, Internet of Things (IoT), Software, Audio Technology</li> <li>• <b>Agricultural Application:</b> Listening to farmers' oral histories, creating farm-related music, or participating in agri-podcasts.</li> </ul>	<p><b>6. Interpersonal Learners (Social Interaction)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>STEAM Fit:</b> Group projects, collaborative garden design, team debates on agricultural ethics.</li> <li>• <b>STEM:</b> Internet of Things (IoT), Design, Civil Engineering, Manufacturing, Construction, Prototyping, Audio Technology</li> <li>• <b>Agricultural Application:</b> Community gardening, working on agri-service projects, or co-designing farm-to-table programs.</li> </ul>
<p><b>3. Kinesthetic Learners (Touching &amp; Doing)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>STEAM Fit:</b> Hands-on experiments, building models, fieldwork, and interactive simulations.</li> <li>• <b>STEM:</b> Design, Manufacturing, Prototyping, Civil Engineering, Infrastructure</li> <li>• <b>Agricultural Application:</b> Planting, harvesting, building irrigation systems, or designing sustainable farming tools.</li> </ul>	<p><b>7. Intrapersonal Learners (Self-Reflection)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>STEAM Fit:</b> Independent research, reflective journals, or personal art expressions tied to food and farming.</li> <li>• <b>STEM:</b> Experiment, Hypothesis, Evolution, Internet of Things (IoT), Computer Technology</li> <li>• <b>Agricultural Application:</b> Keeping a growth log of their own garden project or reflecting on personal food choices and their impact.</li> </ul>
<p><b>4. Logical-Mathematical Learners (Thinking &amp; Reasoning)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>STEAM Fit:</b> Coding agricultural drones, data analysis, measuring soil pH, or crop rotation planning.</li> <li>• <b>STEM:</b> Biology, Geology, Ecology, GPS, Soil is composed of the many different types of Atoms, Photosynthesis, Chemistry, Experiment, Data Analytics, Design, Microscope, DNA, Reaction, Probability, Statistics, Graphing, Hypothesis</li> <li>• <b>Agricultural Application:</b> Using engineering and math to design efficient farming systems or analyze climate impact on crops. systems, or designing sustainable farming tools.</li> </ul>	<p><b>8. Naturalistic Learners (Nature-Oriented)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>STEAM Fit:</b> Environmental design, nature-based art, ecological restoration projects.</li> <li>• <b>STEM:</b> Design, Civil Engineering, Environmental Science, Ecology, Hypothesis, Biology</li> <li>• <b>Agricultural Application:</b> Studying ecosystems, creating eco-art from natural materials, or mapping biodiversity on a farm.</li> </ul>



Fostering interdisciplinary library collaborations with STEM to STEAgricultureM gave me the opportunity to not only work with the PVAMU COE and CAFNR but also led to presenting at the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) Space Center Houston's Space Exploration Education Conference ([SEEC](#)) and the Society of Science's Regeneron International Science and Engineering Fair ([ISEF](#)).

This innovation of experimental learning aimed to create a comprehensive support system for student teachers and faculty to engage STEM disciplines of Agriculture in their new teaching and learning experiences.

From farm tours where the students got the opportunity to see engineering and technology in practice through farm equipment and drones to understanding the biology concepts of chickens and egg production in the Poultry Center to discovering the importance of how the [Periodic Table of Elements](#) can be represented through soil samples and soil cultivation to presenting at STEM conferences and volunteering at the PVAMU College of Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources-Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo's Education Outreach Booth, the students and faculty of the College of Education gained new perspectives on the value of collaborative learning. Through these engagements, I was able to showcase to the faculty and students at PVAMU how learning STEM through Agriculture education can create life-long learning inter-connections. Students gained a new skill set in understanding STEM concepts when it was tied to their everyday living.

Authors Clark et al., (2013) stated institutions of higher education need to be prepared to lead the way through new program offerings and pedagogy that integrate interdisciplinary perspectives, experiential learning and community engagement. Such academic learning environments strengthen students' capacity for civic engagement and ability to critically think (Clark et al., 2013)

The key components of this STEM to STEAgricultureM endeavor include:

- **Curriculum Integration:** Collaboratively designing and integrating STEAgricultureM focused instructional content that aligns with the educational goals of both the College of Education and College of Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources. This includes modules on data

management, scientific communication, agriculture library resources and services and critical thinking skills.

- **Research Support:** Offering targeted research assistance and resources tailored to the focus on the needs of STEM teacher students and faculty. This includes providing access to specialized STEM databases, library research guides, and one-on-one consultations with subject librarians.
- **Professional Development:** Conducting joint professional development sessions for educators to enhance their understanding of STEM pedagogy and the effective use of library resources in teaching and research. These sessions also address emerging trends in STEAgricultureM education and research methodologies.
- **Community Engagement:** Organizing outreach activities that engage the broader university community, including K-12 schools, local businesses, and government agencies, to promote STEAgricultureM literacy and awareness. These activities aim to bridge the gap between academia and the public, fostering a culture of lifelong learning and curiosity.

By leveraging the unique strengths and resources of each collaboration, I was able to highlight the value of librarians and the library for its extensive collections, research support, and information literacy programs that helped to serve as the central hub for these experimental learning interdisciplinary efforts. The collaboration included developing specialized instructional materials, co-hosting STEM/STEAgricultureM workshops, and seminars, plus providing integrated support for research projects. In addition, the partnerships explored the best practices for STEM teachers and professors to showcase their STEM integration through agriculture even though they do not have an agriculture education background.

Texas USDA Grade-A Dairy farming has been deeply rooted in my family for more than nine generations. Serving as the College of Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources Academic Research Librarian II at PVAMU for about 20 years now, I continue to work with the CAFNR it plays an important role in addressing the value of how agriculture education reaches through everything we do. From food and clothes to shelter and beyond, Agriculture is the glue that holds everything together.

*Kimberly M. Gay is the Head of Reference and Information Services Academic Reference and Instruction Librarian II at Prairie View A&M University- a part of the Texas A&M University System's John B. Coleman Library. Her work experience includes more than 20 years of professional Academic Librarianship*

## REFERENCES

Clark, S., Byker, C., Niewolny, K., & Helms, J. (2013). Framing an Undergraduate Minor

through the Civic Agriculture and Food Systems Curriculum. *NACTA Journal*, 57(2), 56-67.

McDonnell, P. (2017). *The Experiential Library: Transforming Academic and Research Libraries Through the Power of Experiential Learning*. Chandos Publishing.



# Join TSLAC in Celebrating America's 250th Anniversary

By Tim Gleisner

**AS 2026 APPROACHES**, the Texas State Library and Archives Commission (TSLAC) is busy preparing for the celebration of the 250th Anniversary of the United States. TSLAC is one of five state agencies that have been honored by the Texas Legislature with an appointment to the state's [Texas America250 Commission](#), tasked with leading the Lone Star State's celebration of this national milestone.

The 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence provides all Americans with a unique

opportunity to pause, reflect on our past, and share our hopes and dreams for the future.

With this heady assignment, TSLAC has been planning how best to share the Texas treasures it holds in the State Archives with people of all ages across the state. TSLAC's programming will be an invitation, intended to bring Texans together while providing opportunities both to remember key moments in our state's journey and to join the national commemoration.

## WAYS FOR TEXAS LIBRARIES TO PARTICIPATE IN TEXAS AMERICA250

### TRAVELING EXHIBITS

Our [Texas America250](#) traveling exhibits, along with supporting materials, will be distributed to libraries and other local institutions statewide, encouraging all Texans to learn more about our history in 2026.

We have created 500 sets of [Texas America250 traveling exhibits](#) (each consisting of five pop-up banners) that highlight historically significant Texas

treasures from TSLAC's collections to loan to Texas libraries; several are already on display around the state, thanks to librarians we met at the TLA Annual Conference in Dallas in April. [You can see photos of an exhibit on display in a library here.](#)

TSLAC is seeking Texas school, public, and college or university libraries to host *Texas America250* traveling exhibits. The exhibits are free, and libraries are not expected to return them, although we do encourage hosting libraries to hold an event featuring the exhibit. They are available on a first-come, first-served basis. We anticipate that sets will be available starting in July 2025, and host institutions may display their exhibits any time from receipt through the America250 celebrations in 2026. Please complete our [online form](#) or contact [rsvp@tsl.texas.gov](mailto:rsvp@tsl.texas.gov) if you are interested in hosting an exhibit.

We also provide a media kit, including a press release template, digital graphics, and printable collateral like posters and bookmarks, to share with hosting libraries. Learn more about the exhibits [in this video](#).

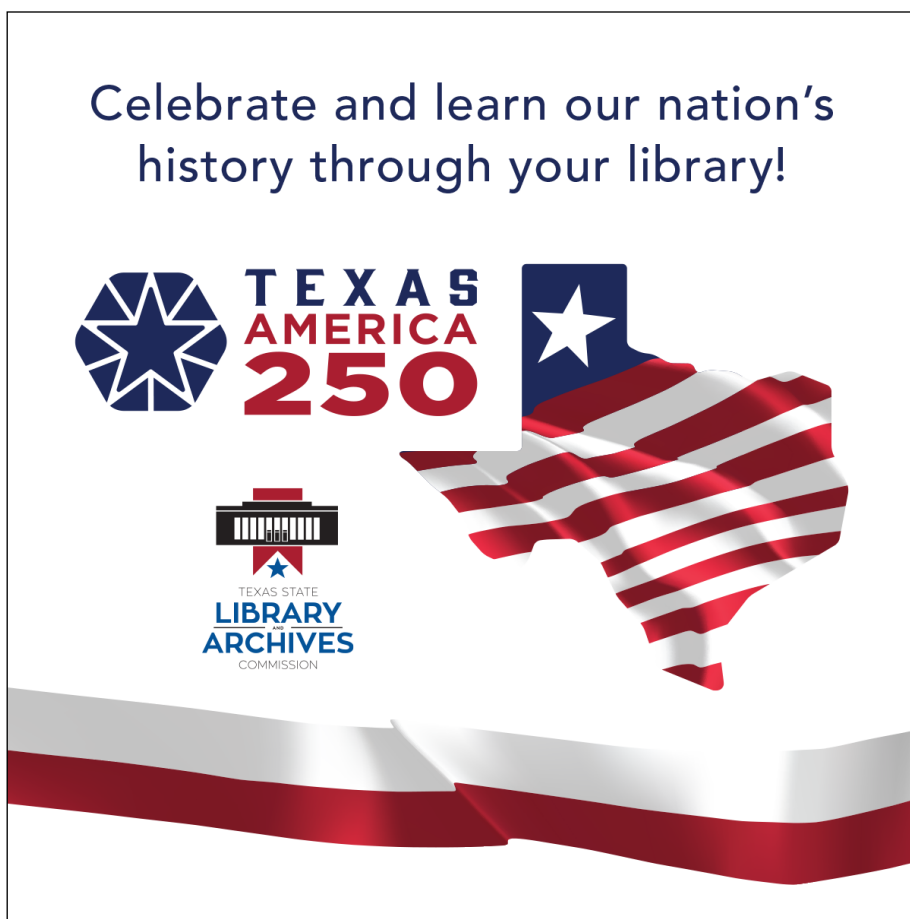
### READING CHALLENGE

TSLAC is also excited to announce the [Texas America250 Reading Challenge](#)! From January 1 to December 31, 2026, the Texas Center for the Book invites Texans of all ages to log 2,500 minutes (41.6 hours) of reading or service activity in honor of our nation's 250th anniversary. We will share more details later this year, including reading logs, suggested reading lists, and downloadable certificates for those who complete the challenge. Keep an eye on the Texas America250 Reading Challenge [webpage](#) for updates.

### BACKGROUND: WHAT IS AMERICA250?

The 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence is an opportunity to reflect on the nation's past, honor the contributions of all Americans, celebrate the nation's rich cultural heritage, and look toward its next 250 years.

The America250 Commission hopes to "foster shared experiences... inspire service in our communities... and celebrate the resilience of the United



States of America."

To help make this all happen, America250 is comprised of federal, state, and resource partners across the country. Federal partners include the Library of Congress and the National Endowment for Humanities, among others. Resource partners include the American Association for State and Local History, the National Women's History Museum, and other corporate sponsors. Finally, there are the state partners. Each state and territory of the United States has a commission mandated to organize America250 commemorations in their individual states or territories.

The Texas America250 Commission was created by the Texas Legislature and is comprised of five state agencies: Office of the Governor, Economic Development and Tourism; Texas Parks and Wildlife; State Board of Education; Bullock Texas State History Museum; and the Texas State Library and Archives Commission. Each of these state partners has the goal of "highlighting Texas's contribution to the formation of America."

### LEARNING ABOUT TEXAS HISTORY

State Librarian Gloria Meraz said upon the launch of Texas America250, "As the steward of Texas government archival records, TSLAC is broadening access to historical primary records so that Texans of all ages can learn about our state and nation. We hope this special programming allows families and communities to come together to read and learn more about Texas through our collections—available online, on exhibit, and in person—throughout this 250th anniversary celebration."

With Texas America250, TSLAC is working to support an increased level of knowledge and deeper connection with Texas and American history in school, public, and academic libraries around the state, as students, families, and all patrons learn more about the Texas treasures preserved at TSLAC.

*Tim Gleisner is the Assistant State Librarian of Texas.*

# Foreword

DEDICATED TO THE ART OF BOOK REVIEWING



For over 27 years, *Foreword* has been the most trusted trade source for reviews of independently published books. *Foreword's* foundation was built on reviewing literary fiction, poetry, children's picture books, translations, and topics like climate change, diversity, and multiculturalism. Most importantly, we strive to promote voices that are unheard, overlooked, or even silenced. And, our reviews are syndicated to your favorite wholesale databases for ease of ordering. Subscribe today!

[forewordmagazine.com](http://forewordmagazine.com)

## TLA Executive Board Candidate Nominations Now Open

Have you ever thought about serving on the TLA Executive Board, or know someone who would bring vision, dedication, and fresh ideas to our statewide leadership team?

This is the time to take action. Nominations are open through July 25.

The TLA Nominating Committee is looking for passionate leaders from across Texas who reflect the perspective, strength, and expertise of our library community. Serving on the TLA Executive Board is a unique opportunity to shape the future of our association and champion libraries at every level.

[Learn more and submit your nomination here.](#)



## LAUNCH LEADERSHIP TRAINING

New to the library field or looking to build your confidence in the profession? LAUNCH is a TLA leadership program designed for library professionals with less than five years of experience. Participants will learn and expand leadership skills, which will serve them throughout their careers through group work, self-directed learning, and internal reflection. Each session will be taught by a dynamic leader in the field.

[Register](#) today!



“I appreciate the opportunity to participate in this training, which exceeds expectations and provides lasting value.”

— Rene, past Launch participant

## TLA 2026 CALL FOR PROPOSALS CLOSE JUNE 23

Call for Proposals for TLA 2026 is open! We are seeking proposals for the TLA 2026 Annual Conference held in Houston on March 29 – 31st! The deadline to submit is June 23. To get more information and a link to submit, [click here](#).

CULTIVATING COMMUNITY  
THRIVING TOGETHER



TEXAS LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

HOUSTON ★ MARCH 29-31



## TCAL CONFERENCE

This year's TCAL Annual Conference is where knowledge, innovation, and collaboration come together and giving you the opportunity to learn from leaders in the academic community, gain insights from the experiences of fellow deans and directors, and come away with actionable insights. The conference will take place from September 28th to 30th at the SpringHill Suites Historic Stockyards in Fort Worth, Texas. [Register now for the best rate!](#)

## TLA RECEIVES \$550,000 GRANT FROM THE MELLON FOUNDATION

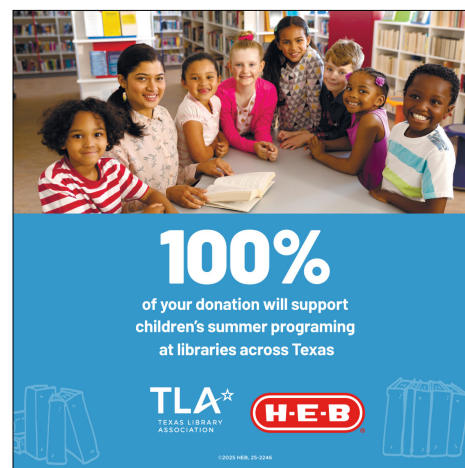
The Texas Library Association has been awarded a two-year grant of \$550,000 from the Mellon Foundation. This grant will support TLA's work in demonstrating the value of Texas libraries and librarians, as well as celebrating their vital roles in our communities through research, education, and outreach. The study outcomes will also surface new pathways for TLA members and supporters to raise awareness of the important work of libraries and librarians. The Texas Library Association is grateful for this opportunity to partner with the Mellon Foundation in this critical, transformative work.

[Learn more here.](#)



## H-E-B 2025 SUMMER AT THE LIBRARY CAMPAIGN

For the second year, H-E-B has selected the Texas Library Association as the beneficiary of the Summer at the Library checkstand donation campaign. From June 4 - July 1, customers at any H-E-B store will be able to give when they check out. Proceeds from the campaign will support summer reading programs and initiatives at libraries across Texas. The impact of this partnership will make a significant difference in the services libraries can provide to their communities during the summer months. The next time you're at your local H-E-B, be sure to check the terminal pad and add your donation.



## TLA Awards \$293,945 in Summer Programming Grants

Last year, TLA was the beneficiary of H-E-B's Summer at the Library check stand campaign. Thanks to the generous donations of customers from across the state, a total of \$293,945 was awarded to 73 libraries to support summer programming this year.

### Congratulations to the Summer at the Library grant recipients!

Archer Public Library  
Arlington Public Library  
Brookshire Pattison Library  
Brownwood Community Library  
Burleson Public Library  
C.F. Goodwin Public Library  
Castroville Public Library  
Chambers County Library System  
City of Denton Public Library  
City of Wolfforth Library  
Claude ISD Library  
Cooke County Library  
Crosby County Library  
Daggett Elementary Library, Fort Worth ISD  
Dickinson Public Library  
Dr. Hector P. Garcia Memorial Library  
Dublin Public Library  
East Travis Gateway Library District  
Eastland Centennial Memorial Library  
Ector County  
Electra Public Library  
Ella J. Baker Montessori, Houston  
Escondido Elementary, Judson ISD  
Giddings Public Library  
Hillsboro City Library  
Hondo Public Library

Honey Grove Library & Learning Center  
Houston Public Library  
Howe Community Library  
Hutchins - Atwell Public Library  
Hutto Ninth Grade Center, Hutto ISD  
Hutto Public Library  
Irving Public Library  
Jacinto City Branch Library  
Jones Public Library  
Kennedale Public Library  
Klein ISD  
Kruse Elementary, Pasadena ISD  
Lago Vista Public Library  
Laguna Vista Public Library  
Lake Dallas Public Library  
Lake Travis Community Library  
Lancaster Veterans Memorial Library  
Little Elm Public Library  
Lovett Memorial Library  
Lucy Hill Patterson  
Marathon Public Library  
McAllen Public Library  
Mesquite Public Library  
Mission Junior High, Mission CISD  
Morton Ranch Junior High, Katy ISD  
Mount Pleasant Public Library  
Navasota Public Library

Nesbitt Memorial Library  
Nichols Mock Elementary Library, Alvin ISD  
Northeast Lakeview College Library  
Nueces County Public Libraries  
Orange Public Library  
Penny Payte McLeaish LRC, Sharyland ISD)  
Pilot Point Community Library  
Rice Public Library  
Robert B. Frazier Elementary, Pasadena ISD  
Round Rock ISD Library Services  
Sammy Brown Library  
San Augustine Public Library  
San Benito CISD School Libraries  
San Juan Memorial Library  
Seagoville Public Library  
Sgt. Fernando De La Rosa Memorial Library  
Sherman Public Library  
Taylor Public Library  
Texas A&M University-Central Texas  
Waco-McLennan County Library

## 2025 Texas Great Read

The Texas Center for the Book at the Texas State Library and Archives Commission (TSLAC) is delighted to announce its Texas Great Read youth and adult selections for 2025.

Youth selection: *Matagorda Magic: The Hidden Life of a Texas Bay*, written by Kimberly Ridley and illustrated by Rebekah Raye.

Adult selection: *Viva Texas Rivers! Adventures, Misadventures, and Glimpses of Nirvana along Our Storied Waterways*, edited by Steven L. Davis and Sam L. Pfister.

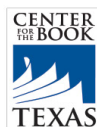
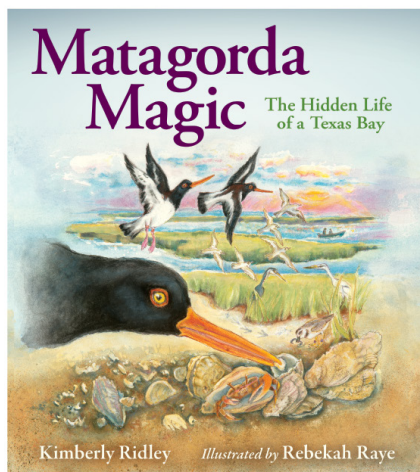
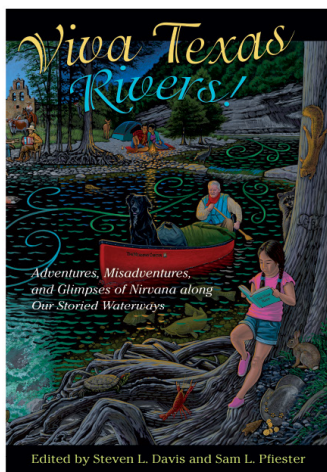
Every year, the Library of Congress asks each state Center for the Book to select titles that represent the state's literary landscape to highlight at the National Book Festival, an event showcasing the importance of books and reading.

This summer, the Center will host two video webinars, one for each book, including a video interview with the authors and editors and the opportunity for readers to ask questions. Stay tuned for registration. These events will be free, open to the public and available on TSLAC's YouTube channel after airing.

Readers are also invited to a Texas Great Reads #TXBookChat LIVE event in October, at the Lorenzo de Zavala State Archives and Library Building in Austin. There will be an in-person author talk and an opportunity to purchase the books and have them signed.

[Learn more about the 2025 Texas Great Read Program.](#)

## 2025 Texas Great Read Adult and Youth Selections



### TLA OFFICER GOVERNANCE TRAINING & WORKSHOP

TLA committee and unit officers are encouraged to plan to attend the TLA Officer Governance Training and Workshop to prepare for their 2025-2026 roles. The workshop will be held from Thursday, July 10, to Friday, July 11, at the Austin Marriott North in Round Rock, Texas.

The [registration](#) deadline is July 3rd.

### CONGRATULATIONS TLA AMBASSADORS!

In May, TLA ran a member-get-a-member campaign encouraging current members to become TLA Ambassadors and recommend membership to colleagues.

Congratulations to our TLA Ambassadors:

- Mary Cohn, Austin Memorial Library
- Amanda Gavin, McKinney ISD
- Celeste Rainey, San Augustine Public Library
- Harvey Smith, Follett Content Solutions
- Katie Smith, Manvel Public Library

Thank you for helping share your passion for our association. Our community is at its best when we work together!



## Safeguard Your Career with Professional Liability Insurance

**TLA**★

### TLA Member Benefit

Librarians are vital to our Texas communities, but today's challenges may require extra protection for your career.

Ensure your peace of mind with professional liability insurance.

Add the policy to your TLA membership when you join or renew.

### Eligibility

- Be a TLA member
- Work in Texas
- Employed by a public, school, academic, or special library

Insurance policy year is January 1 - December 31.



### Why Choose This Insurance



#### Financial Security

Safeguard your career against the costs of legal actions and financial devastation.



#### Legal Assistance

Discuss your legal exposure with experts.



#### Discounted Rate

TLA members can purchase professional liability insurance at reduced premium rates of \$44.

Learn more at: [txla.org/membership/individual/](https://txla.org/membership/individual/)

**TLA★Engage**  
TEXAS LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

TLA Engage, the online member community, is a member benefit that provides access to a vibrant and dynamic space.

It's a hub for TLA members to connect with and learn from library professionals from all library types.



#### CONNECT

Develop meaningful connections



#### LEARN

Engage in discussions around current topics



#### SHARE

Collaborate on projects or share best practices



## TLA Engage

**Your Hub for  
Networking,  
Collaboration,  
and Sharing**

Access Engage:  
[engage.txla.org/](https://engage.txla.org/)

Questions? Email:  
[tl@txla.org](mailto:tl@txla.org)

**THANK YOU TO OUR FY 2024 TLA DONORS!**

**We appreciate your support!**

**Corporate/Foundation**

**H-E-B**

**Nora Roberts Foundation**

**Tocker Foundation**

**Farmers Insurance**

**Champion (\$2,000+)**

Janis Roberson

**Pillar (\$1,000 – \$1,999)**

Jennifer Bates

Jessica Morales

Shirley Robinson

Mary Dodson Wade

**Promoter (\$250 – \$499)**

Rhoda Goldberg

Terri Harkey

Valerie Prilop & Kim Herrington

**Mentor (\$100 – \$249)**

Kellye Abernathy

Sharon Amastae

Steve Brown

Daniel Burgard

Maurice Fortin

Tosca Gonsalves

Dorcas Hand

Cynthia Levinson

Pat Mora

Janice Newsum

Mary Perroni

Melissa Rippy

Patricia Smith

Kitty Spalding

Sandra Waltmon

Mary Woodard

**Patron (\$50 – \$99)**

Jeanne Avandsalehi

Catherine Clark

Joe Dahlstrom

Virginia Davis

Israel Favela

Ana Frade

Norma Fultz

Jo Giudice

Mark Gottschalk

Deborah Hall

Sheila Henderson

Kathleen Hymel

Nicole Ittner

Lois Jerolleman

Howard Marks

Emma McDonald

Dale McNeill

Susan Savkov

Brittany Schicker

Katherine Thonen

Ben Toon

Vona Van Cleef

**Donor (\$15 – \$49)**

Melanie Bowen

Sandra Cannon

Brett Carter

Janell Constantino

Nancy Eskridge

Loreen Henry

Lindy Hutchison Baldwin

Kristen Kiesling

Karen Knutson

Ann Jacobus Kordahl

Kimberly Lopez

Julie Marshall

Sally Rasch

Elvia Rodriguez

# LIBRARIES TRANSFORM<sup>®</sup> TEXAS PODCAST

**TLA's Libraries Transform Texas Podcast is your go-to destination for all things Texas libraries!**

Hear from librarians and authors about their work, trends shaping libraries, and inspiring insights.

You'll laugh, learn, and you might just discover your next big idea.

**Find the podcast on your favorite platform.**

[txla.org/tools-resources/libraries-transform-texas/](https://txla.org/tools-resources/libraries-transform-texas/)

**TLA**★

**LAUNCH**  
Career Lift Off

**"I appreciate the opportunity to participate in LAUNCH, which consistently exceeds expectations and provides lasting value." - Rene**

## **NEW TO LIBRARIES? READY TO LEAD?**

LAUNCH is your springboard to develop practical skills, fresh confidence, and real connections to fuel your career.

**Spots are limited, apply now at [txla.org/launch](https://txla.org/launch).**

**Date:** July 19 – 21 in Austin, TX

**Registration deadline:** July 14

**Hotel Deadline:** June 19





# Conference Wrap Up

LIBRARY RENAISSANCE  
OUR QUEST FOR RENEWAL

**TLA**★ **2025**

TEXAS LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

DALLAS ★ APRIL 1 – 4



# TLA 2025 Conference Wrap Up



The TLA 2025 Annual Conference, held in Dallas April 1-4, drew over 4,000 attendees. Librarians from across Texas gathered to connect, learn, and renew their passion for the profession, united under the theme “Library Renaissance: Our Quest for Renewal.”

Over the four days, more than 250 educational sessions, 200 author signings, and 200 exhibitors showcased advancements in library technology, education, outreach, and more. Conference attendees had the opportunity to explore downtown Dallas’ vibrant arts district, its rich history, and book-friendly neighborhoods.

The Exhibit Hall featured over 200 booths, showcasing an array of library-focused products and services. Attendees could explore everything from emerging technologies and finding library service providers to author signings and book vending machines. Visitors also had the opportunity to stop by the booths of TLA units and divisions to learn more about getting involved with TLA,

while participating in fun activities such as crafting friendship bracelets, meeting the popular Pigeon, and petting furry animals.

At the 2025 Texas Bluebonnet Award luncheon, guests heard from winning authors Glenda Armand and Kim Freeman about their book *Ice Cream Man: How Augustus Jackson Made a Sweet Treat Better*, illustrated by Keith Mallett. The book received thousands of votes and captured students across Texas.

The *Quest for Renewal* game gamified the conference experience into an exciting competition, where attendees explored hidden gems, TLA history, and shared their library expertise to win prizes. Popular conference favorites Illustrator Sketch-Off

# TLA 2025 Conference Wrap Up

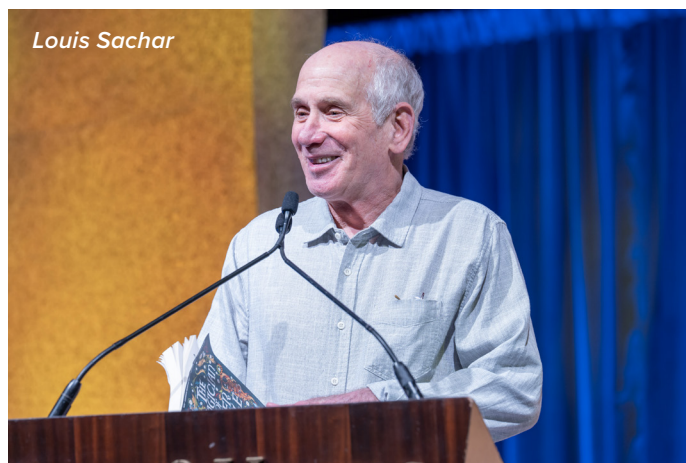
and Battledecks were back again this year, filling rooms with people eager to hear talented artists compete for the title of best storyteller, sketch artist, or funniest presenter. It was a whirlwind of creativity, competition, and laughter!

For the first time at the conference, a Newbie Series was introduced to support first-time attendees. It began with a kickoff event featuring the New Member Round Table and Conference Planning Committee members, followed by the Connections Coffee Hour, and a Newbie Renaissance Feast

Brown Bag Lunch. The series created a welcoming environment for new attendees to connect on their conference experience, share takeaways, and recharge with support from long-time attendees.

Additionally, the inaugural Career Connections event fostered discussions among members and volunteer leaders about career pathways and the value of engagement.

Thank you to the TLA executive board, conference planning committee, staff, and volunteers for their hard work in planning this year's conference!



## TLA 2025 Keynote Speakers

Bestselling author Taylor Jenkins Reid opened the conference at General Session I with an engaging discussion about her passion for storytelling. In conversation with Conference Planning Committee Co-Chair Erica Richardson, she spoke about her love for writing ambitious, driven female characters whose journeys often unfold alongside compelling love stories. Reid gave attendees a glimpse into her upcoming novel, *Atmosphere*.

At General Session II, Louis Sachar, beloved for his classic children's books, captivated attendees with insights into his writing journey and the enduring appeal of his stories. During his discussion with Dr. Joe Pendleton, he shared anecdotes that spoke to both his early influences and the lessons he learned as he embarked on publishing his first book for adult readers, *The Magician of the Tiger Castle*.

Misty Copeland concluded the 2025 Annual Conference at General Session III. Copeland is an acclaimed ballet dancer, performer, and New York Times bestselling author. Best known for breaking barriers as the first African American female principal dancer with the American Ballet Theatre, she was welcomed to a cheerful audience to be interviewed by Conference Planning Committee Co-Chair Zinnia Bayardo. During their conversation, she discussed her latest children's book, *Letters to Misty*, which inspires young readers to pursue their dreams and embrace their unique identities. Copeland emphasized the significant role libraries play in empowering young minds to explore their passions and highlighted the continued need for libraries as pillars in our communities.

# TLA 2025 Conference Wrap Up

*Zinnia Bayardo and Misty Copeland*



# 2025 Branding Iron Awards

Across Texas, librarians plan and execute inventive and inspired marketing plans to promote their services, programs, and events. The Texas Library Association's Branding Iron Awards honor their creative and memorable work with awards presented in several categories, and one overall Best of Show winner.



## DIGITAL MARKETING: PUBLIC LIBRARY

### Pflugerville Public Library, Blue Career

Through funding from the Pflugerville Community Development Corporation, the Pflugerville Public Library launched Blue Career, an electronic resource from EBSCO that connects users with careers in skilled trades. The library sought to increase awareness and usage of the service through a dynamic online social media campaign, press release, and email marketing. The outreach led to high usage of the service in its initial phase, and a locally televised promotional segment featured on high-traffic webpages such as Yahoo News and the Workforce Solutions Capital Area website.

## BEST IN SHOW

### McKinney Public Library, Interactive Art Installation

The 2025 Best in Show winner was the McKinney Public Library. The library commissioned a 3D chalk artist to create an interactive art installation in a public park before a Halloween event that attracted over 6,000 attendees. The project increased the library's social media interactions and resulted in strong event attendance. Through this unique experience, the library effectively connected with the broader community, displaying effective engagement strategies that can be replicated to captivate residents across age groups.

A graphic for the Blue Career program. At the top left are the logos for Pflugerville Public Library and PCDC (Pflugerville Community Development Corporation). The text "BLUE CAREER" is prominently displayed in large, bold, yellow and white letters. Below this, a circular inset shows a smiling man wearing a green hard hat and a high-visibility safety vest, holding a clipboard. To the left of the circle, text reads: "Use our new electronic resource to uncover your true passions and unlock a fulfilling career path in the skilled trades!". At the bottom, an orange button with white text says "AVAILABLE NOW!".

# 2025 Branding Iron Awards



## READING PROGRAM: SCHOOL LIBRARY

### Leon Sablatura Middle School, Adopt A Shelf

The “Adopt A Shelf” at Leon Sablatura Middle School empowered students to take ownership of their library space by applying to create personalized library displays. Students were given the creative freedom to select a theme, design a captivating display sign, and curate books from the library’s collection. This hands-on approach generated excitement and interest among students, increasing book circulation numbers and motivating students to become active participants in their library community.

## READING PROGRAM: PUBLIC LIBRARY

### San Antonio Public Library, Summer with SAPL

Summer with SAPL is San Antonio Public Library’s (SAPL) largest annual initiative. The program features programs for children, teens, and adults designed to inspire learning and increase library engagement. Last summer, SAPL staff planned various programs to engage their community and collaborated with local businesses to facilitate unique programming.

A unique “Meet the Paletas” campaign, featuring new paleta characters, was introduced weekly to engage young patrons. Staff created reading lists and backstories, giving the characters a diverse range of interests. Teen programs, planned by teen patrons, included music production, book explorations, tech discovery, art creation, and video gaming. SAPL offered a limited-edition tote bag to appeal to adult patrons, driving thousands of residents to the library to collect their summer incentive. The library recorded nearly 36,400 people participating in various events and activities, a 6% overall increase in visits and circulation, increased website engagement, media outreach that reached an audience of over 595,500 people, \$57,319 in publicity value, and book distributions to 17,700 children.



# 2025 Branding Iron Awards



## PRINT MARKETING: PUBLIC LIBRARY

### Irving Public Library, Beyond the Stacks

The Irving Public Library's (IPL) "Beyond the Stacks" program guide was created to enhance program attendance, accessibility, and inclusivity. The project sought to replace an overwhelming array of individual fliers with a quarterly program guide to a high-quality program booklet. IPL staff considered the demographics of their community in the design process, including Spanish content and visual aids to assist older patrons with visual challenges. The collaborative effort between library staff, graphic designers, and community-focused team members saw an impressive initial distribution, with 4,200 copies delivered to library locations in the first quarter of 2025 alone. Program attendance increased from 6,909 attendees in the final quarter of 2024 to 15,219 attendees in the first quarter of 2025, showcasing the project's success.

## SPECIAL EVENTS: ACADEMIC LIBRARY

### Mary & John Gray Library - Lamar University, Ghost Stories Halloween Event

The Mary & John Gray Library at Lamar University offers recreational programs to engage students and support stress relief. In the Fall of 2024, the library hosted a ghost story reading event for Halloween. For the first time, the library incorporated posting short-form video content to market the event to increase attendance and determine whether video content would be effective as a future marketing tactic. The event recorded increased attendance, and the short-term videos used in promotion were highly successful. The videos reached over 800 viewers and nearly 100 engagements. The metrics indicated that short-form video content was highly effective in reaching the library's audience and therefore increased its use of video content in marketing future events.



# 2025 Branding Iron Awards



## FUNDRAISING: SCHOOL LIBRARY

### Oak Run Middle School, ComicCon

In 2024, Oak Run Middle School hosted the district's first-ever Comic Con. The event aimed to promote literacy, creativity, and engagement by showcasing comics, graphic novels, and other forms of storytelling. The librarian utilized social media and local outreach to promote event attendance.

Local partnerships were established with comic book shops, artists, and vendors who donated comics, hosted workshops, or set up booths. The event exceeded expectations, with over 700 attendees. Parents and students reported a greater awareness of the library's expanded offerings, including digital resources, creative spaces, and literacy programs. The event demonstrated the library's role as a dynamic and engaging space for creativity and learning while building a stronger connection between the school and its community.

## PRINT MARKETING: ACADEMIC LIBRARY

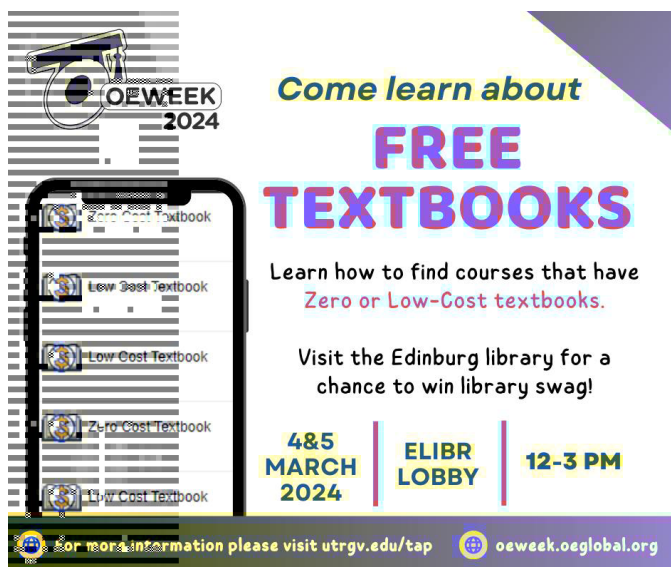
### Smith Library - Southwestern University, Distinctive Collections Zine

Southwestern University's Distinctive Collection library has over 20,000 volumes and 2,000 linear feet of archival materials. To address the low use of the library's materials, Digital Initiatives and Collections Assistant Christina Gerardo created a zine to promote, educate, and guide students on using the collection. The zine's design focused on visually engaging, bright colors and fun layouts to help ease students' anxiety about visiting the space and using the materials.

The distribution of the zine significantly increased student engagement. Every first-year student who toured Distinctive Collections received a copy of the zine, and with placement displayed outside the Tower Reading Room entrance, collecting a copy of the zine was easily accessible to all visitors. Since the zine's introduction, walk-in visits and inquiries about accessing the collection and collection materials have seen a noticeable rise.



# 2025 Branding Iron Awards



## DIGITAL MARKETING: ACADEMIC LIBRARY

### University of Texas Rio Grande Valley, Affordability Advocate Campaign

The University of Texas at Rio Grande Valley's (UTRGV) Affordability Advocates campaign recognizes faculty participation in the Affordable Textbook Adoption (ATA) grant program, which offers a \$1,500 stipend to redesign courses using zero or low-cost materials. The university's library raised awareness of the ATA grant and honored faculty commitment to affordability and teaching excellence. Faculty are featured on the program's website, receive letters of support for annual reviews, and benefit from communications to department leaders highlighting their work and student savings. Since 2019, the campaign has engaged over 1,000 faculty across 60 departments, offering professional development and open textbook review opportunities.

## DIGITAL MARKETING: SCHOOL LIBRARY

### Region One Library Services, Innovative Librarian Recognition Program

Region One Library Services launched the "Innovative Librarian Recognition Program" in 2024 to elevate the visibility of school librarians and showcase the creative practices they bring to their campuses. Despite being a small team of three librarians, the Library Services department supports approximately 700 campuses from Brownsville to Laredo.

The program unified librarians across the region through personalized storytelling, high-quality visuals, and a phased campaign that included pre-launch content, newsletter features, and multimedia spotlights. Newsletter signups surged by 46% in January 2024, professional development participation grew by over 30%, and library recognition expanded into local media. As librarians, educators, and district leaders engaged with featured profiles and success stories, the initiative inspired collaboration and set the foundation for ongoing recognition and support of innovative library practices.



# TLA 2025 Awards

## LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT

Kate Horan



Kate Horan is the Library Director at the McAllen Public Library. Under her leadership, the McAllen Public Library has expanded its community programming and integrated innovative technologies to enhance library access. She has been a driving force in creating opportunities for learning and connection, launching signature events that have earned national and international

## LIBRARIAN OF THE YEAR

Minda Anderson



Minda Anderson is a librarian at Ann Richards School for Young Women Leaders. Her leadership has helped shape training and guidelines for using artificial intelligence in Austin ISD libraries. She is a trusted mentor for Austin ISD librarians and has mobilized library supporters through cofounding the Friends of Austin ISD Libraries program.

## DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD

Karina Quilatan-Garza



Karina Quilatan-Garza began her library career in 2015 and has since made significant contributions to the Texas library community. She has served as chair of the Texas Maverick Graphic Novel Reading List Committee, a Conference Proposal Reviewer for the American Association of School Libraries, and as Vice President of the Library Special Interaction group of the Texas Computer Education Association. This year, she is Chair-Advisor to the Texas Maverick Graphic Novel Reading List Committee, a MagiKids Libraries Lead, and an Advisory Board Member of Manga in Libraries. Karina's expertise has fostered collaboration among teachers, students, and librarians, creating valuable learning opportunities in hybrid learning environments.

## BENEFACTOR AWARD

Keralee Clay



Keralee Clay, Interim President and CEO of the Amarillo Area Foundation, was presented with the Benefactor Award. Through her efforts, the Amarillo Area Foundation and the Friends of Amarillo Public Library secured grant funding for the library's Makerspace from the Texas State Library and Archives Commission and the Institute of Museum and

Library Services. The Makerspace offers a facility for art projects, repairs, and business experimentation and has been integral to boosting library attendance and meeting the community's evolving needs over the past two years.

# TLA 2025 Awards

## OUTSTANDING SERVICES TO LIBRARIES

### Amanda Kennair

Amanda Kennair organizes the Friends of Fort Bend ISD Libraries, a group of parents, educators, and community members committed to protecting student access to diverse books. She has worked to keep her community informed about the district's reconsideration process and advocated for librarians' inclusion.

## LIBRARIES CHANGE COMMUNITIES AWARD

### City of Lubbock Libraries



The City of Lubbock Libraries, under the leadership of Library Director Hannah Stewart, organized the 2024 Back-2-School Bash with Texas Tech University. This event was designed to ensure that Lubbock students could start the new school year confidently and well-prepared. The event drew over 11,000 attendees and collaborated with 107 community partners to provide cost-free resources. The Lubbock City Council recognized library staff and leadership for the successful reinvention of Bash.

## SAM. G. WHITTEN INTELLECTUAL FREEDOM AWARD

### Laney Hawes, Frank Strong, and Anne Russey (Founders of the Texas Freedom to Read Project)



Laney Hawes, Frank Strong, and Anne Russey, the Founders of the Texas Freedom to Read Project, were awarded the Sam G. Whitten Intellectual Freedom Award. This award honors anyone actively promoting or fighting for intellectual freedom in Texas.

The Texas Freedom to Read Project strives to defend, protect, and preserve the rights of every Texan to read and access information and ideas freely. The group has become a prominent advocate for many Texans who oppose book banning. Their efforts have been essential in promoting collaboration and creating a unified message for legislators and the public.

# TLA 2025 Awards

## OTHER ASSOCIATION AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

### **Christina B. Woll Memorial Fund Grant**

Navasota Public Library

### **Demco Upstart Innovative Programming Award**

Nolan Catholic High School

### **Escue Paraprofessionals Conference Stipend**

Charlie King

### **Jeanette and Jim Larson Mystery Grant**

Navasota Public Library

### **Ray C. Janeway Scholarship**

Aisha Lavalis

### **Texas Youth Creators Award Bob Bennet Best in Show**

1st place: Sharyland ISD - Sharyland Advanced

Academic Academy, Felito's Finest

2nd place: Antonian College Prep HS Archdiocese of San Antonio, Freedom Found: Dion Harrell's Story

3rd place: Lamar CISD - Dr. Thomas E Randle HS, Party Night

### **TLA Summer School Scholarship**

Ashlee Masters

### **Vivian Greenfield Award**

Melenie Eskridge

### **Walter H. Escue Memorial Scholarship**

Kennedy Castillo

## DISTRICTS

### **District 8 Conference Stipend**

Joshlyn Thomas

### **District 2 Conference Stipend**

Jacob Workman

### **District 5 Conference Stipend**

Heather Lassley

### **District 7 Conference Stipend**

Amanda Trowbridge

## DIVISIONS

### **College and University Libraries Division Conference Stipend**

Annie Birtciel

### **Public Libraries Division Conference Stipend**

Michelle Goldman

Justin Swink

Kourtney Warner

Jacob Workman

### **Texas Association of School Librarians Media Virtual Presence (MVP) Award**

Rachel Welsh

### **Texas Association of School Librarians Distinguished Library Service Award – School Administrator**

Dr. Melissa Leigh - Humble ISD

### **Texas Association of School Librarians – Texas PTA Shirley Igo Award**

John Hoffman Elementary - Northside ISD

### **Texas Association of School Librarians Travel Stipend**

Kelly Morgan

Marilou Garcia

Jessica Johnson

### **Texas Association of School Librarians Scholarship**

Ashton Braly

Brandy Kerr

Rebecca Smith

Julie Tietze

## ROUND TABLES

### **Black Caucus Round Table Ashley Bryan Award**

Kwame Alexander

### **Black Caucus Round Table Stipends**

Brandi Grant

Makilah Sullivan

Felice Sanders-Johnson

### **Children's Round Table Stipends**

Norma Medina

Kimberly Chittenden

Gina Niemeyer

Tinese Ammons

### **Jack Alton Strawn Standing TALL Award**

Heather Hornor

# TLA 2025 Awards

---

## **Library Friends, Trustees, & Advocates Round Table Conference Stipend**

Victoria Pena

## **Siddie Jo Johnson Award**

Suzan Nyfeler

## **Small Community Libraries Advocate Award**

Dianne Connery

## **Small Community Conference Stipend**

Gina Niemeyer

## **Small Community Libraries Award**

Michael Hardrick

## **Young Adult Round Table Conference Stipend**

Karina Arroyos

Jamie Henry

Melinda Lanham

Stephanie Galvan Russell

Liliana Alonson

Monica DeLeon

Jennifer Freeman

Christina Guadalupe

Theresa Klepac

Jackie Leven-Ramos

Linda Martinex

Crystal Mendoza

Alexandra Cornejo

Christina Guadalupe

Rebecca Fox

## **Young Adult Reading Incentive Award**

Amanda Hunt

## **AFFILIATED AWARDS**

### **J. Frank Dobie Library Trust Awards**

Cross Plains Public Library

De Leon Public Library

Lee-Bardwell Public Library

Marion Community Library

Olga V Figueroa Zapata County Public Library

Pottsville Area Public Library

LIBRARY RENAISSANCE  
OUR QUEST FOR RENEWAL

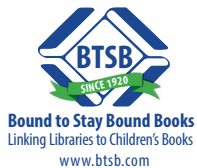
**TLA**★**2025**

TEXAS LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

DALLAS ★ APRIL 1 – 4

# Thank You TLA 2025 Sponsors

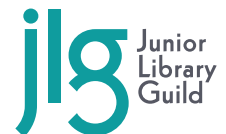
## DIAMOND



## PLATINUM



## SILVER



# We appreciate their support!

# Cultivating Community Thriving Together

**TLA★2026**

TEXAS LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

HOUSTON ★ MARCH 29-31



## Save the Date!

Registration will  
open in October

[txla.org](http://txla.org)