Viola Davis Takes a ‘Bow’

Viola Davis can’t get enough of New Orleans. “This is one of my favorite cities,” she announced to an auditorium packed with library professionals. “You can blow a fuse in this city, though, between the vodka and the fried oysters.”

Oscar, Emmy, and Tony-winning actor Davis was the Closing Session speaker at the American Library Association’s 2018 Annual Conference & Exhibition in New Orleans on June 26—and the crowd couldn’t get enough of her. Davis received a standing ovation before the program even started. “I didn’t realize so many people would be in the audience!” she exclaimed.

Author of the forthcoming children’s book Corduroy Takes a Bow, her take on Don Freeman’s iconic bear, Davis was interviewed on stage by Andrew Medlar, former Association of Library Service to Children president, about her relationship with books and libraries, her love of theater, and her connection to the original Corduroy story published 50 years ago.

“We didn’t have bookshelves in our apartment,” said Davis. “When you’re poor, there is very little access to anything. That’s the language people don’t understand.”

Davis found that access at Adams Memorial Library growing up in Central Falls, R.I. “The librarian there, Denise, she would save her lunch for me,” she said. “I was like Pavlov’s dog waiting for a tuna fish sandwich.”

Viola Davis discusses her new children’s book during the Closing Session.

Slam Poet Gayle Danley Shares Her Craft

Champion slam poet Gayle Danley captivated ALA attendees on June 25 during the final Auditorium Speakers Series event. With pink zebra sequined pants and a spellbinding stage presence, she launched into an emotional slam poem telling of a time she spoke at a juvenile detention center. She recounted the emotional repression of the boys there, the way the officers verbally abused them and shouted them into submission. She was there to teach the boys the basics of slam poetry to help them express themselves in a healthy way, but they were not allowed pencils to write their stories. She spoke to the boys about losing her mother and connected with one of the boys whose mother had also passed.

“Let them come to you and be loved,” Danley said, addressing librarians in the room who work with children. She acknowledged that many young people coming to the library may have difficult home lives, and that libraries provide a space of safety. She encouraged librarians to help their young patrons express themselves: “Share something from your heart and encourage them to do the same.”

She shared additional poems about surviving and escaping an abusive relationship, learning to live without her mother, and the teacher who made her a poet.
Michelle Obama: A Master Class in Work-Life Balance

by Michelle Kowalsky, Rowan University, NJ

Like two sorority sisters catching up on the news of their lives, former First Lady Michelle Obama and Librarian of Congress Carla Hayden reminisced about favorite books, traded jokes, and exchanged advice about motherhood and careers during the June 22 Opening General Session. Mentions of Obama's education programs, as well as her recommendations for empowering women and young people, were met with multiple rounds of applause from the large crowd, many of whom waited in line for hours to secure an up-close seat for the discussion.

“The Obamas are readers,” she explained, as she discussed her views of reading as an essential element in raising children, and especially as part of their development as members of a community of sharing. She told stories of getting her first library card and of her most recent reads, noting that her chief of staff, Melissa Winter, was so excited to be at a librarians’ conference where she could pick up some new reads for the boss. Obama’s own memoir, Becoming, will be simultaneously released in 24 languages. She is still editing the manuscript in print form, noting that she still enjoys the physical forms of books and writing, much to the delight of those in attendance.

Obama revealed many details of her life as a working mom both before and during her husband’s presidency, and her easygoing “real person” style was as evident in this talk as it is promised to be in her forthcoming memoir. She was especially grateful for the help of her mother in raising her two daughters, who “helped to keep the whole White House grounded and humble” with her tell-it-like-it-is manner and her infinite capacity to listen to everyone’s problems without trying to step in and solve them. This particular theme is one which Obama and her staff would repeat many times, as her team provided mentoring for many children over many years, ensuring that each knows that his or her voice is valuable and is worthy of being heard.

“We should measure kids on how they act, and on whether they are good people in the world,” Obama stated. “Kids are... see page 9

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Attendees Enjoy Screenings of “the public” with Filmmaker Emilio Estevez

Writer/director Emilio Estevez joined ALA for special screenings of his new film “the public.” Also starring Alec Baldwin, Jena Malone, Christian Slater, Taylor Schilling, Che “Rhymefest” Smith, Gabrielle Union, Jeffrey Wright, and Michael K. Williams, this drama tackles some of our nation’s most challenging issues, including homelessness and mental illness.

In “the public,” an unusually bitter Arctic blast has made its way to downtown Cincinnati – and the Cincinnati Public Library. The story revolves around the library’s patrons, many of whom are homeless, mentally ill, and marginalized, and their interactions with the exhausted and overwhelmed staff of librarians who have built emotional connections with them. At odds with library officials over how to handle the extreme weather event, the patrons turn the building into a homeless shelter for the night by staging an “occupy” sit in. But what begins as an act of civil disobedience, becomes a standoff with police fueled by a storm of media coverage outside the library.

Following the film, a packed audience engaged in Q&A with Estevez, moderated by Ryan J. Dowd.

ALA President Loida Garcia-Febo

What an amazing time we had at Annual!

I thoroughly enjoyed the conference and sincerely hope that you did as well. The thrilling speakers, educational sessions, and fun social celebrations kept us busy and informed.

Through the many conversations that I had with conference attendees and colleagues while onsite, I sensed a collective aspiration toward making a difference in not only our respective communities, but in all communities. We know that our communities need us now – more than ever! Hopefully, through this conference you’ve gained insight to future forecasts, learned what legislative policies, positive or negative, might go into effect that may influence your library, or taken the opportunity to speak with other library workers to discover best practices.

Much of my mission over the course of this next year is to ultimately assist you in creating and building effective, innovative, and constructive libraries. I look forward to bringing change to impact public policy and ALA will be the leading voice advocating our libraries and library users while maintaining our core values. We will build coalitions with those who share our values, work hard to promote diversity and equity within ALA, and offer ALA members the training they need to lead, serve, and empower our libraries, patrons, and communities.

This is why I encourage you to join us at the 2019 ALA Midwinter Meeting & Exhibits in Seattle. Highlights include top-tier speakers, award-winning authors, topical discussions, book award announcements, and a dynamic Exhibit Hall with events and more than 400 exhibitors showcasing the latest technologies, titles, services, and products.

The Symposium on the Future of Libraries (sponsored by ALA’s Center for the Future of Libraries) is included in your Midwinter registration, offering three days of in-depth exploration of the many futures for academic, public, school, and special libraries.


I look forward to seeing you there!

Loida Garcia-Febo

See You in 2019

ALA Midwinter Meeting
January 25-29, 2019
Seattle, Wash.

ALA Annual Conference
June 20-25, 2019
Washington, D.C.
Librarian of Congress and Archivist of the United States Discuss Collaborations

by Katelyn Sanders, University of Oklahoma

Librarian of Congress Dr. Carla Hayden and Archivist of the United States David Ferriero are passionate about accessibility of information and engaging history. Their June 24 discussion was riddled with competitive banter, though the respect they have for each other was clear. As they talked about their work, they peppered one another with historical jabs and quips about which institution has the most interesting artifact or more exciting program. While Hayden teased Ferriero that the Library of Congress completed digitalization of Alexander Hamilton’s letters to his wife, Ferriero shot back that the Archives have his wartime documents from his time as George Washington’s aide de camp.

The two discussed collaborative projects, including the Library holds the documents that the Wright brothers wrote about their plane, while the Archives have the patents, and the Smithsonian has the plane itself. Hayden described their collaborative work as “cross-fertilization between institutions.”

Both have developed programs to engage the public. Ferriero has developed exciting initiatives to involve children, including a sleepover at the Archives, to which Hayden joked that she wants to poach the program, and that the Library of Congress has Thomas Jefferson’s recipe for macaroni and cheese that they could serve the kids.

Jonathan Eig Doesn’t Pull Any Punches

by Paige J. Dhyne, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign’s School

Jonathan Eig is curious, which is a good thing, as it’s the number one quality of a successful biographer. His curiosity led him to tell the story of the boxer who just wouldn’t quit: Muhammad Ali. In the June 24 Auditorium Speaker presentation, Eig discussed his book, “Ali: A Life,” a PEN/Faulkner award winner. Eig discussed his role in solving the disconnect between his enchantment with Ali’s story and the truth of Ali’s story. “The storyteller’s job is to find the motive, explain the meaning,” he said. “And that is the challenge. If you’re going to write this book and it’s going to be worth a damn, you need to be able to explain what made the person.”

One of Eig’s greatest challenges was writing about a man with which he shares nothing in common—except, as the attendees learned, a sense of humor. As a biographer, Eig visited the places that Ali had boxed and met people who influenced him. But Eig took it a step further to try and understand the black kid who grew up in the Jim Crow South and overcame the political and racial intolerances of his time.

On the morning he was to interview Ali, Eig ran the exact route that Ali ran as a child, 60 years earlier. Eig understood that Ali used to race the city bus every morning to school and would stop at every city block on the way until the bus caught up. He asked Ali, “Is there anything you want to say? The last word in the book should be yours.” Ali never answered him, however, as he was too ill, but Eig received word later from Lonnie, Ali’s wife, that Ali wanted the book to be read to him by Eig. Unfortunately, he never had the chance with Ali’s sudden passing.

In a time in which people isolate themselves and differences can seem scary, Eig feels privileged to know strangers intimately through his career as a biographer. “Every story belongs to someone, but it belongs to all of us as well. Ali left his to me,” he said. “It was his life, but it’s my story. I’ve pulled no punches, it’s all in there.”

More Than a Cookbook: A History Revealed

by Paige J. Dhyne, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign’s School

The ALCTS President’s Program, sponsored by the University of Kentucky Libraries, featured the James Beard Book Award winner Michael Twitty, author of The Cooking Gene: A Journey through African American Culinary History in the Old South. When Twitty approached the podium, he dished out the truth about his identity, his culture, and what it means to track the legacy of his ancestors through cuisine and the political erasure of the historical South. “This is not a cookbook filled with recipes. My work is not about making the food, but how the food makes us,” he said.

The book came from a need to place himself and his ancestors on the timeline of the South, something he realized he needed to do after experiencing the death of his mother and realizing she too was a whole person—a child who grew into a woman with many stories to tell. When he first approached publishers, they had asked him to write about different topics that embraced only one aspect of his identity. But he wanted to write about real food, his Southern food “daily cooked, daily eaten,” made by people who hold complex identities like himself: Black, Jewish, Gay, and African-American.

Twitty read from his book while dispensing multiple truths. He discussed the enslavement of his people, our people as American citizens, and the research process which revealed documents that invalidated their identities and instead assigned them a monetary value. He told of how people in enslavement—a distinction he makes in that his people were not nouns (i.e., slaves), but living and suffering due to an assigned title that described free laborers—were brought to America based on hungry fueled by rice and sugar. “We all have a cooking gene that codes to the same phenotype,” he explained.

“The food on the table as inspired by other cultures and countries.”

Lastly, Twitty addressed the librarians in the audience about the politics of the library spaces we cultivate. Archive materials about black and African Americans de-humanize them in the way they were recorded, but librarians can help ease the discomforts of reading these documents by evolving spaces and services. Beyond being accepting, Twitty urged, “Use spaces to create family, to bridge people, and to create the peace and civility we desperately need right now in this country.”

Twitty will continue to explore other aspects of his identity in the next book of this trilogy, K Chester Soul.
2018 Andrew Carnegie Medals for Excellence Celebration

Jennifer Egan accepts the 2018 Andrew Carnegie Medal For Excellence in Fiction from Bill Ott, editor and publisher of Booklist. The medals are sponsored by ALA’s Booklist and RUSA.

Featured speaker Sue Halpern and 2018 Fiction Medal winner Jennifer Egan delighted an enthusiastic audience that included authors, editors, publishers, ALA leaders, and conference attendees, celebrating the seventh Andrew Carnegie Medals for Excellence in Fiction and Nonfiction on June 23 in New Orleans.

ALA President Jim Neal introduced “one of adult literature’s most exciting events,” reminding the audience that “at this time, we are particularly conscious of the need to support and share great literature to combat ignorance and intolerance.”

Featured speaker Sue Halpern described the inspirations for the setting of her latest novel, Summer Hours at the Robbers Library (HarperCollins). One was her unexpected dive into librarianship when she was asked to help found a library in the Adirondack town where she lived. The town had never had a library and it allocated $15,000 to pay for everything, including a librarian, books, and furniture. Halpern and her colleagues miraculously pulled it off, and the new library was so popular that the 500 library cards they had printed ran out in three weeks. Within a year, they had signed up 1,500 people in a township of 1,800.

The library became a community space for multiple activities and spurred the creation of an arts center, which in turn spawned a coffee shop. Halpern saw firsthand how essential public libraries are to civic vitality and human connections, to fostering communication as well as learning. Her novel’s setting was also inspired by a feature she was commissioned to write on the original Carnegie Library in Braddock, Penn., outside Pittsburgh, where she saw how Andrew Carnegie’s vision of turning a library into a community hub by making everyone welcome became a reality.

Halpern then turned the podium over to Egan, describing Egan’s novel Manhattan Beach (Scribner) as “Promethean.” After accepting the 2018 Andrew Carnegie Medal for Excellence in Fiction from Booklist editor and publisher Bill Ott, Egan described how the novel began to take shape when she had a research fellowship from the New York Public Library. Librarians showed her old photographs of the city’s waterfront, and she was hooked. Her spellbinding speech highlighted the value of preserving memories, including archiving personal materials. Her starting point for the novel was New York during WWII, a period when being a port was crucial to the city’s identity: “It was the waterfront, and ultimately the sea itself, that led me into the various realms the novel occupies, including the Brooklyn Navy Yard, the Merchant Marine, deep-sea diving, and organized crime,” she said, emphasizing throughout her acceptance speech how essential libraries and archives are to her work.

Victoria Caplinger, 2018 Carnegie Medals Selection Committee chair, introduced both speakers, who mingled with attendees over dessert and drinks after the program. The event’s lead sponsor was once again “NoveList,” whose outgoing founder and general manager, Duncan Smith, offered remarks. NoveList has also long supported RUSA’s Book and Media Awards at Midwinter, where the winners of the Carnegie Medals are announced. Gold sponsors of this 2018 celebration included HarperCollins, Penguin Random House, and Simon & Schuster.

The Andrew Carnegie Medals were established in 2012 by ALA and Carnegie Corporation of New York and are cosponsored and administered by Booklist and RUSA.

Jennifer Egan

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Sally Field Tells of Making Herself Whole

by Paige J. Dhyne/University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign School

Sally Field received a standing ovation as she entered the auditorium June 23, to which she responded, “Yay, librarians!” But seconds after sitting down with Donna Seaman, editor at Booklist, things turned serious as the conversation transitioned to talking about Field’s upcoming memoir In Pieces, which chronicles her troubled childhood and how she learned to deal with it. When asked what she did to de-stress, she responded, “Journaling.” “I had a story to tell, I just didn’t know what it was, when, or how I would ever do it. And so these journals were my friends. They were my confidantes. It really saved my life.”

She emphasized that she felt empowered by writing. Journaling was not just escapism, but a form of survival and activity she could do “offstage,” because onstage, she became undistracted and alive. Field said that while writing kept her separated from her broken childhood, acting was how she rediscovered herself in childhood journals. The memoir took seven years to write as she was the only way to understand her own story and the relationships that had unfinished ends, particularly with her mother.

Seaman asked if Field would continue writing, to which she responded, “Oh, I haven’t stopped. I’ve always written.” She admitted she wasn’t always a reader, “I haven’t stopped. I’ve always written.”

In Pieces is the collective experience of Field chasing “fireflies” through her childhood, current-day struggles, and the dark times that were not so full of sparkle.

In Pieces is the collective experience of Field chasing those ‘fireflies’ through her childhood, current-day struggles, and the dark times that were not so full of sparkle. The memoir took seven years to write as she rediscovered herself in childhood journals. Connecting with those garbled pieces of herself was the only way to understand her own story and the relationships that had unfinished ends, particularly with her mother.

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Sally Field discussed journaling and chasing “fireflies” on June 23.

Robert Fieseler: A Book Talk to Restore Remembrance

by Paige J. Dhyne, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign School

Everyone has a story, and Robert Fieseler gives voice to the historically silenced. In his nonfiction work, Tinderbox: The Untold Story of the Up Stairs Lounge Fire and the Rise of Gay Liberation, Fieseler tells the stories of 32 victims of the New Orleans Up Stairs Lounge Fire of June 24, 1973, the largest murder in the LGBTQA+ community prior to the Pulse nightclub shooting in 2016. Covered up by the media both locally and worldwide, this event was previously unknown to Fieseler even though it took place between the Stonewall Riots and the assassination of Harvey Milk. “I couldn’t believe it. With my knowledge of gay history, I thought I was an expert,” Fieseler remarked, “and I realized I was missing this whole time where the early gay rights movement was nascent, just getting started.”

Fieseler’s book is a culmination of his research, as pulled together from police and fire marshal reports, and from interviews with the survivors who, after the Pulse nightclub shooting in 2016, felt a calling – an obligation – to tell their stories and claim their identities. He urged that this story does not just belong to them, but to all of us in a time in which diverse voices must speak loudest and be echoed by allies. To this day, there are continuing efforts to bring justice for the victims of the fire, a result of what Fieseler called “a collective amnesia” that swept not only New Orleans, but the world in 1973 and forced the closeting of gay individuals to remain silent in their suffering. In attendance was the family of Ferris LeBlanc, who was a victim of the fire, and his family still fights to bring him home for a hero’s burial as a veteran of World War II.

Collectively, the story of the victims and survivors of the Up Stairs Lounge Fire has new life in the hands of LGBTQA+ historian Fieseler, who resurrected the proverbial phoenix from the ashes in the name of compassion, humanity, and activism. Fieseler concluded with the words they used to sing in the Up Stairs Lounge from the 1970s musical group, Brotherhood of Man: “United we stand. Divided we fall / And if our backs should ever be against the wall / We’ll be together, Together you and I.”

In memoriam of the 45th anniversary of the Up Stairs Lounge fire, a service was held at St. Mark’s United Methodist Church June 24, followed by a Second Line parade to the location of the historical plaque commemorating the victims of the fire.
WE ARE MORE THAN A GRADUATE PROGRAM.

Our faculty and students are involved in various community-building partnerships, including those focused on collecting and digitizing historical material in Eastern Appalachian African-American communities. Not only do we offer a high-quality academic experience, we also offer experiential learning opportunities that allow students to make a real difference in the world.

WE ARE VOLUNTEERS.
Attendee Mohammed Malharnan at a display of ALA gifts and program materials near the ALA Store.

Troy “Trombone Shorty” Andrews and his kids perform at the Opening General Session.

At the end of a standing-room-only PopTop Stage event June 25, an exciting new READ poster and bookmark was revealed. Bestselling author and Caldecott Medal-winning artist Brian Selznick reimagined the art for all seven Harry Potter books in the design, in collaboration with Scholastic and ALA Graphics.

Lois Ann Gregory-Wood, retiring after 50 years of outstanding service, poses for a picture with the ALA Council.

Loida A. Garcia-Febo takes the presidential gavel from Jim Neal.

ALA attendees explore the Exhibits, featuring hundreds of companies and the latest in products, services, titles, authors, and technologies.

Attendee Mohammed Malharnan at a display of ALA gifts and program materials near the ALA Store.
Doris Kearns Goodwin Explores Leadership in Turbulent Times

By Kate Sanders, University of Oklahoma

Presidential historian and Pulitzer Prize-winning author Doris Kearns Goodwin addressed a full auditorium June 23. She interspersed reading selections from her forthcoming book, *Leadership in Turbulent Times*, with anecdotes discovered from over five decades of research on U.S. presidents. Her only fear, she quipped, is that there will be a panel of presidents in the afterlife judging the work she has done.

She began by telling of her love of libraries, and the way the books sustained her invalid mother. The stories she encountered fueled her career in historical research. Rather than leave behind any of her “guys,” Goodwin chose to write using a theme that united them all—leadership.

She outlined major parts of her book: Abraham Lincoln (who brought the country through the Civil War), Theodore Roosevelt (who gave the people hope and progress during the Great Depression), and Lyndon B. Johnson (who fought for civil rights and racial equality). She highlighted each story by telling about their first attempt for public office, their resilience through crises, and their time in the White House.

She began her career at age 24 as a White House Fellow under President Johnson, with whom she maintained a friendship until his death. She was able to study him closely and published her first political biography, chronicling his life and career. She described him as a man who loved to tell tall tales and who appreciated her company because she was a great listener. When he brought her to an outdoor picnic to “discuss their relationship,” she feared it was a romantic overture. However, he told her that, “More than any other woman I have ever known, you remind me of my mother.”

Through her research Goodwin identified no single common factor that led each of these men to the White House. They came from varying financial and family backgrounds, with differing academic performances and financial histories. She did conclude, however, that they each had the confidence to surround themselves with strongminded people who would challenge them. They did not coddle themselves in echo chambers of yes-men. In addition to their advisors, they made regular contact with the public and communicated with them in everyday language. Lincoln met regularly with soldiers and heard from his countrymen; Roosevelt was accessible via the newspaper; and FDR joined folks in their living rooms with his fireside chats. Finally, she found that, except for Johnson, each of these men found it necessary to make time for themselves to relax and set aside the burden of running the nation. Johnson later had three heart attacks, demonstrating that being unable to take time off was not the healthiest of choices.

She concluded by quoting Abigail Adams—“Great necessities call out great virtues.”

Charlemae Rollins President’s Program: The Influence of Books on American Children Today

By Wendy Bundy, Clarion University, PA

Everywhere we look we see division and negativity as it is reflected in all forms of media, including books. But what do “quality” and “excellence” really mean in the canon of American literature for children? Panelists at the ALSC President’s Program on June 25 explained that we must consider the child when we evaluate books for distinction.

Debbie Reese, educator and advocate for Native representation, said that children may learn to not like who they are because of portrayals of other Native Americans in books. She referenced the book *Little House on the Prairie*, because the way it represents Native Americans. When it comes to choosing the best books for children, “if they shape us in good ways, they can shape children in bad ways as well,” Reese emphasized.

Ebony Thomas, assistant professor, University of Pennsylvania, noted that instead of being so focused on diversity in children’s books, we should be more focused on whether a child is reading, period.

Award-winning author and 2018 National School Library Month spokesperson Jason Reynolds agreed with Thomas, that looking at whether a child is reading is important. Additionally, the bigger question to answer if a child is not reading, is why that child is not reading. It could be that the child does not have access to books to read or anything that appeals to their demographic. Children especially need to see demographics like their own, characters they can relate to, and stories that will motivate them.

Margaret Engle, the current National Young People’s Poet Laureate and award-winning author said, “Children are the only possible peacemakers of the future.” We must give them the tools to be those peacemakers. Tools that come in the form of knowledge and words, tools that they only can get from reading.

Obama

> From page 2

resilient… even one interaction with them can change a kid’s life for the better,” she said. She noted that librarians are often those who provide these opportunities to children, and that none of us parent in isolation.

Obama is hoping that those who feel faceless or invisible will take pride in their own stories, as she continues to help others advocate for themselves. She said that in this way, we can remember the humanity and experiences of each and every person and learn to be more open to what we can learn from them. “You can have it all,” Obama declared, “but perhaps just not all at the same time!”
President’s Program Welcomes Tracy K. Smith and Jose Vargas

By Wendy Bundy, Clarion University, PA

Author and poet Tracy K. Smith, opening speaker at the June 24 ALA Awards Presentation and President’s Program, feels poems have a unique way of helping people work through obstacles. Although poetry can be very personal and moving for individuals, Smith highlighted how it is a community tool. “I often tell my students who are eager to start the process of becoming poets, that investing in the work of peers can really be like sustenance along the long and meandering path toward publishing your first book.”

Smith was quick to note that most of the resistance to poetry has to do with subject matter. “However, these are conversations that we, as a society, need to be having. They are conversations based in our history. We cannot move forward in society without acknowledging this past and these stories, and poetry is an outlet that allows for multiple stories to be told in one.”

“Poetry focuses on the story, jumping right in from the start,” Smith said. “This is why I selected prose for my memoir instead.” She said she wanted to tell the entire truth, not jumping right into the story or leaping away from it either. Her memoir, Ordinary Light, comes out in September.

J a n e a n d J o s e

Jose Antonio Vargas came to the United States from the Philippines at the age of 12. Now, as an established journalist, he helps people understand why he does not apply for and become a U.S. citizen. It’s a question that he is often asked. The fact that so many people do not understand the process or the obstacles he has encountered gives him cause to continue to tell his story.

Vargas has found that people expect him, as well as other immigrants, to “earn citizenship.” The issue is far more complex. “With the stigma surrounding illegal immigrants, people like me are being detained and deported. We are not being asked to speak at the American Library Association.” His story is relevant and important, but he was advised strongly not to tell it. “After talking to 28 lawyers, all of whom said not to do it, the more they said don’t do it, the more I thought I should do it.” Vargas said. “I outed myself.”

His book, Dear America: Notes of an Undocumented Citizen, will be available this fall.

Jose Antonio Vargas

“I have never seen a therapist before, and the book was the biggest therapy I could have ever given myself.” This is why ALA Ethnic for him, but also for all those who will learn from his story.

Coretta Scott King Book Awards to Mark 50 Years

In 2019, the American Library Association (ALA) will celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Coretta Scott King Book Awards. Given annually, the awards serve as a guide for parents, librarians, and caregivers, for the most outstanding books for youth by African American authors and illustrators that affirm African American culture and universal human values.

The Coretta Scott King Book Awards were established in 1969 by Glyndon Flynt Greer, a school librarian in Englewood, N.J.; Mabel McKittrick, a school librarian in New London, Conn.; and John Carroll, a book publisher. These three founders envisioned an award that would recognize the talents of outstanding African American authors and encourage them to continue writing books for children and young adults. The award commemorates the life and work of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., and honors his wife, Coretta Scott King, for her courage and determination to continue the work for peace and world brotherhood.

Winners are selected by the Coretta Scott King Book Awards Jury and announced annually to a waiting national audience at the ALA Youth Awards Press Conference, held on the Monday of the ALA Midwinter Meeting. Award recipients are selected within three categories, including the Coretta Scott King (Author) Book Award, Coretta Scott King (Illustrator) Book Award and Coretta Scott King/John Steptoe New Talent Award. The awards are sponsored by ALA Ethnic and Multicultural Information Exchange Round Table (EMIERT) and supported by ALA’s Office for Diversity, Literacy, and Outreach Services (ODLOS).

The first Coretta Scott King Award was presented in 1970 at the New Jersey Library Association conference in Atlantic City, N.J. The award went to Lillie Patterson, author of Martin Luther King Jr.: Man of Peace. In 1974, the committee honored an illustrator for the first time. The award went to George Ford for his illustrations in Ray Charles by
Celebrating Grand Families Telling Our Stories

Karen Lemmons, chair of the 2018 Reading is Grand! Celebrating Grand-Families Telling Our Stories @ Your Library selection committee, announced that four libraries will receive the 2018 Reading is Grand grant. Reading is Grand! celebrates the important role African American grandparents and older adults play in the lives of children. It is through their infinite wisdom and experience that children learn the unique cultural and familial values that help them grow into valuable contributors to the community.

The grant-winning libraries — Broward County Library, Fort Lauderdale, Fla.; Kinard Elementary School, Clover, S.C.; Middle College High School, Memphis, Tenn.; and Uniondale Public Library, Uniondale, N.Y. — were selected based on the level of creativity and originality of program criteria, action plans, level of involvement of grandparents in the activities, and impact of the program on the community.

Winning Programs
Broward County Library

The theme, “Cooking with Carver Ranches: History, Literacy, and Love at the Library” is a months-long new initiative of the Carver Ranches Library in partnership with the City of West Park. The first phase of this initiative will take place during the month of September in celebration of Grand Families and Grandparents Day. Beginning September 4, and for the following three weeks, preschool age children and grandchildren will read books together. Grandparents will share stories of growing up in the Carver Ranches Community as well as share a favorite recipe from their childhood. This interaction will continue throughout the second phase, in which the grandparents and youth together will prepare the grandparents’ recipes. The recipes and stories will be compiled into a story/cookbook.

Kinard Elementary School

The theme, “Mawmaw & Pawpaw, You’re Telling Me a Story!,” begins September 10, with the Mayor of Clover issuing a proclamation declaring Grandparents Week at Kinard Elementary School. During that week, elementary students will use iMovie to introduce their Mawmaws and Pawpaws sharing life stories. Other activities include a grandparents’ read-a-thon in the library; Mawmaw’s favorite recipe day, in which students will produce a Mawmaw’s Memories Cookbook. The culminating activity will be breakfast with the grandparents.

Middle College High School

The theme, “March On! Memphis! (Remembering the 1968 Sanitation Strike),” begins in August. All the students from Middle College High School will read the book, Memphis, Martin, and the Mountaintop: The Sanitation Strike of 1968. After reading the book, students will write a personal literary response to the book. In September, during a school-wide assembly, students will hear a guest panel of five grandparents and one Memphis sanitation worker discuss their memories of the Memphis strike, the personal impact of King’s Mountaintop speech, and his assassination. Questions and answers will follow the presentation and students will present their written reflections on the 1968 strike and King.

Uniondale Public Library

“Reading is Grand: Bridging the Generations to Celebrate African American Heritage” is a three-part series which will bring together grandchildren and their grandparents so that these children can learn about and document their family history, culture, and traditions. The first part will be an intergenerational fundamental genealogy workshop. The second part will be a freedom quilt craft workshop in which grandparents will work with their grandchildren to make “no sew” freedom quilts. The culminating activity will be a food heritage celebration and intergenerational dialogue in which grandparents and their grandchildren will discuss the importance of knowing one’s heritage, while participating in a communal dining experience.

JCLC to Host National Conference

The Joint Council of Librarians of Color (JCLC) will host the 3rd National Joint Conference of Librarians of Color, “Gathering all Peoples: Embracing Culture & Community,” September 26-30, 2018, in Albuquerque, N.M. This conference is open to all library staff, students, influencers, and decision-makers interested in exploring inclusive policies, practices, and issues of diversity in libraries and how they affect the ethnic communities who use library and information services.

On June 23, the Council hosted a social and fundraising reception, which raised over $8,000. The group hopes to reach its $25,000 goal before the conference in September. Donations can be made by check or online via Crowdrise, https://www.crowdrise.com/o/en/team/jclc-2018-conference.

Exhibitor and sponsorship information is available by contacting jclc2018exhibits@gmail.com. Individual supporters may send their donations to Dora Ho, Treasurer, JCLC Inc., P.O. Box 71644, Los Angeles, CA 90071-0644. For more information about the upcoming conference, please visit: http://www.jclcinc.org/conference/2018/.

Follow us on twitter @JCLC2018 and share your photos using the official hashtag #JCLC2018.
Multiple library leaders from each state gathered in New Orleans to report on their library advocacy action plans for influencing state legislative priorities and local budget decisions. Organized as part of this year's State Ecosystem initiative, these tactical teams from various states included each state's library association president, school library association leaders, representatives of the state library, and public library administrators, as well as ALA and American Association of School Librarians (AASL) elected leaders and ALA staff members.

These intense inter-agency collaborations, which started at Midwinter, aim to develop a statewide ecosystem for taking collective action to preserve and restore the value of libraries. Using these collaborative techniques, librarians in the state of Washington gained a legislative victory which included a state budget allocation of $20 per student for library materials. Similarly, Virginia advocates helped to defeat a bill which relaxed requirements for school librarian certification. Marcia Merola, director of the Office of Library Advocacy, is collecting the strategies and specific examples which will resonate with your particular local or state decision makers.

Members of the Maryland ecosystem team also attend fellow organizations' events and local town and school board meetings. “You can have your say in person when you attend. You can explain why libraries are important, and it’s harder to disagree in person,” he explained. When organizations work together and fight for common goals, their power is exponentially increased. To join or start an ecosystem in your state, follow the AASL, ALA's Office for Library Advocacy (OLA), and the Chapter Relations Office (CRO) on ALA Connect or visit http://www.ala.org/advocacy/state-ecosystem-initiative.

### Exponential Library Advocacy Through a Team Approach

By Michelle Kowalsky, Rowan University, NJ

“We need to learn each other's talking points,” explained Denise Davis, president of the Maryland Library Association. “Since school libraries, public libraries, and many other organizations have similar goals and values, we need to work together to support each other on local issues and statewide problems,” she said. A team of organized library advocates helped the Talbot County, Md., school to save five school librarian jobs this year which were set to be cut from the budget. The team mobilized social media such as LinkedIn and Facebook to successfully reach potential advocates during a school break. They also obtained support letters from the presidents of ALA and AASL, which were then read by library leaders at the school board meeting. The letters recounted influential research which describes the benefits of school library programs for student learning.

“It is important that the school librarians themselves are not the only ones speaking up to save their jobs,” stated Emmanuel Faulkner, president of the Maryland Association of School Librarians. He encouraged the group to find effective speakers among community members, and to identify specific examples which will resonate with your particular local or state decision makers.

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### Denine Torr from the Dollar General Literacy Foundation Recognized with AASL Crystal Apple Award

Denine Torr, senior director of community initiatives at the Dollar General Literacy Foundation, has been selected as the recipient of the 2018 Crystal Apple by American Association of School Librarians (AASL). The Crystal Apple recognizes an individual or group that has had a significant impact on school libraries and students. President Steven Yates presented Torr with the apple during the AASL Awards Ceremony and President’s Program on June 23.

“At the heart of the Dollar General Literacy Foundation is Denine Torr and her team – raising funds, administering programs, and changing the lives in the communities Dollar General serves,” explained Yates. “The ability of the grant program to bring normalcy back to students’ lives after a natural disaster and to open a school library’s doors as soon as possible has directly impacted more than 100,000 students. Denine is the person behind the foundation’s whose dedication to the power of literacy and lifelong learning has made this possible.”

Dollar General Literacy Foundation’s commitment to the “lifelong learner” funds grants and literacy programming of a movement that has provided literacy, comfort, and hope in times of rebuilding and AASL is fortunate to have such dedicated partners in service to school libraries.

“For 25 years, the Dollar General Literacy Foundation has invested in programs that help individuals learn to read, prepare for the high school equivalency test, or learn English,” said Torr. Since its inception, the foundation has awarded more than $154 million to nonprofit organizations, schools, and libraries that have helped more than 10 million individuals advance their literacy and basic education. We are honored to partner with the American Library Association to strengthen communities, extend hope, and increase opportunities for others to achieve their American Dream.”

### Be a Money Smart Week® Library

Since 2009, the American Library Association has partnered with the Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago to sponsor Money Smart Week®. This national initiative, which now includes additional partners such as the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, provides financial education programming to help members of your community better manage their personal finances.

Libraries of all types can and do participate in Money Smart Week®, providing programming for all ages and all stages of life on financial topics such as basic budgeting, managing student debt, teaching financial literacy to teens, retirement planning, home purchasing, saving money through couponing, and how to prevent identity theft. ALA and its partners make it easy for libraries to participate with tips and guides on successful programming done by peer libraries; free posters, bookmarks, and other promotional materials; and the opportunity to be part of national and local contests, such as Money Smart Kids Essay Contest, Geocache for Cash, Big Read, and others.

Learn more about Money Smart Week® at http://www.ala.org/offices/money-smart-week and by following #MoneySmartWeek.

In 2018, over 1,000 public, academic, school, prison, and other libraries in 50 states participated.

Mark your calendar for March 30 – April 6, 2019 to take part.

### Viola Davis

And beyond Denise's generosity, Davis found a sanctuary that stoked her imagination.

“The freedom to be able to read as many books as you can, to disappear in the land of Dr. Seuss and Curious George,” she said, “was an escape for me because I didn’t want to go home.” Davis said she would stay at the library until closing every day and then run home in the dark.

Corduroy was one of the books Davis read as a child, but she recently rediscovered the book’s power when she began reading it to her daughter Genesis “over and over and over.”

“Don Freeman inspired me with [the characters of] Lisa and Lisa’s mom,” said Davis, who noted how impactful it was to see African Americans depicted in picture books. She was also incredibly moved by Lisa’s love for Corduroy and the adventures the bear had.

“It’s a book about friendship and it’s a book about curiosity,” said Davis. “He goes into the department store and everything looks interesting to him. It was a great way to encourage curiosity and not to attach it with fear.”

Though Davis centered her Corduroy story on the theater, drawing from experiences on Broadway, she was insistent that Lisa be kept in the book. “I thought, you know, she had a 50-year contract. I didn’t want to fire her,” Davis joked. “I like her because she loves Corduroy. I didn’t want to break up that friendship.”

Like the library, the stage was another sacred and inspirational place for Davis. “It’s a place without judgment. It’s almost like praying,” she said. “It’s a place where I found myself.”

A Q&A period followed the conversation between Davis and Medlar, where Davis was asked what she had recently read (Manchild in the Promised Land by Claude Brown, Braving the Wilderness by Brené Brown, and a script for the upcoming film “Toupe Zero”) and why she asked to change her character’s occupation to “Beautiful Creatures” from a maid to a librarian (“I find that someone putting me in the box of maid or best friend is a way of squelching the complexity of my humanity”).

“We want to be seen. That’s just the bottom line,” Davis said of casting people of color in three-dimensional roles. “And we don’t want a big introduction and explanation as to why we’re in it.”
Conversation with Dr. Carla Hayden: Library Services in Today’s World

By Wendy Bundy, Clarion University, PA

Former ALA President Courtney Young sat down with Librarian of Congress Carla Hayden to discuss various hot topics facing libraries today at the RUSA President’s Program on June 23. Conference attendees were eager to hear Hayden’s perspectives on library service in today’s world and what she thinks is most important for libraries and their staff moving forward. Hayden joked, “You can teach an old dog new tricks,” referring to veteran staff and how they need to embrace change.

Hayden sees libraries as a way to expose people to cultures and ideas they may not otherwise encounter. “Be the window to the world for people.” She urged librarians to be flexible and noted that one obstacle in the library world is the division that can sometimes occur between academic and public libraries. “This doesn’t have to be – and shouldn’t be – the case.”

People should feel history and have those “pinch-me moments” when exposed to documents and artifacts from the past. Hayden is striving to make this a reality for all people, noting that the Library of Congress is the people’s library. She is strongly advocating for digitalization in hopes to get more history and information to the people. Hayden often uses this quote to emphasize her point that people need access to information and reading material because it impacts society on a larger level.

Hayden said that librarians have been dubbed the original search engine and society is embracing the fact that they can gain information that has value and authority without judgment. “This is, in fact, one of the greatest arguments for libraries in the 21st century.” Hayden urged the audience to use the Library of Congress as an extension of their service.

“Having pride in what you do, making it fun, and sharing that joy with others is what librarianship was built upon and [we] should continue to embrace,” concluded Hayden.

CSK Awards

Sharon Bell Mathis. Mathis also received the Coretta Scott King Author Award. That year, the Coretta Scott King seal was designed by Lev Mills, an internationally renowned artist in Atlanta, to identify book jackets of award winners.

In 1979, on the 10th anniversary of the King awards, the Coretta Scott King Awards Task Force was formed and became a part of the ALA’s Social Responsibilities Round Table with Glyndon Greer as chair. Greer died in 1980, having seen the award succeed as one of ALA’s most prestigious honors. In 1982, the Coretta Scott King Book Awards became an official award of the American Library Association.

Currently the Coretta Scott King Book Award Anniversary Committee is planning 50th anniversary celebration events to take place during 2019. Additional information regarding Coretta Scott King Book Award 50th Anniversary activities will be available within the coming weeks at www.ala.org/csk.

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AASL Beyond Words and the Dollar General Literacy Foundation Award $100,000 in Grants to Two Houston Schools

Two Houston schools extensively damaged by Hurricane Harvey are the recipients of the 2018 catastrophic disaster relief grants offered as part of the American Association of School Librarians’ (AASL) Beyond Words: The Dollar General School Library Relief Fund. Thompson Intermediate School and Moore Elementary School both suffered devastating losses to the school libraries in the hurricane and its aftermath.

Flood waters entered Thompson Intermediate School late Saturday, August 26, 2017, and the school library received six inches of water damaging books, flooring, and furniture. Due to roads blocked by high water, the school building remained inaccessible until Wednesday, August 30. Thompson’s entire nonfiction collection, located on the bottom shelves, sat submerged in water and all 10,772 books in the school’s collection were exposed to high humidity and mold during this extended period. Out of caution, district leadership declared the entire collection unfit for student use.

Like at Thompson School, workers were unable to start rescue operations for several days and the delay caused wet items to become waterlogged and items above the waterline to develop an active mold infestation. Along with the 20,000 books in the library’s collection, other media, technology, equipment, and fixtures were destroyed or contaminated to the extent of being unsalvageable. The school library was declared a total loss.

“Again last year, catastrophic storms devastated communities in our country,” said Jennisen Lucas, chair of the grant jury. “Families lost their belongings, their homes, and their schools. When whole schools are destroyed, the loss felt can be profound, especially for those students who turn to the library as their safe places. The recipients of this year’s catastrophic grants are already working tirelessly to build back up that sense of safety that their libraries provide, and the money from these grants will alleviate some of the stress of starting over.”

Since 2006, the Beyond Words grant program has provided relief to public school libraries nationwide that have suffered material losses because of major disasters such as hurricanes, tornadoes, flood, earthquakes, fires, or an act recognized by the federal government as terrorism.

“During times of devastation like Hurricane Harvey, the impact is magnified when students and teachers do not have access to their school libraries,” said AASL President Steven Yates. “I remain in awe of the unwavering commitment of the Dollar General Literacy Foundation to provide the critical resources needed to respond in times of disaster.”

American Dream Literacy Initiative Celebrates a Decade of Influence

by Kate Sanders, University of Oklahoma

“No one should have to go without the basics of life,” said Denine Torr, head of the Dollar General Literacy Foundation, quoting J.L. Turner, the company’s founder. For the literacy foundation, its partners, and grant recipients, the basics of life include literacy and access to quality literacy instruction. They believe that everyone should have access to empower themselves, lift themselves up, said Torr, addressing the audience who came to hear the published results of 10 years of work. She explained that the original role of libraries was to help fulfill the American Dream – giving everyone, regardless of their station, regardless of the color of their skin, or gender, access to information that could transform their lives.

To date, the program (partnered with the ALA office for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion) has awarded 214 grants to libraries across the country, totaling more than $1.5 million. Recipient libraries use those funds in a variety of ways to support literacy instruction and English Language Learning (ELL).

Librarians from two recipient libraries came to ALA to share the impact the grants have had in their communities.

Jesi Saire, public relations and adult services coordinator for the Terrebonne Parish Library in Louisiana, was eager to share the good that the grants have done for the Terrebonne Parish system. The system supports nine libraries serving a large Hispanic population. Through Conectando, an umbrella of bilingual literacy programs, they have used the grants for parts of their service area that were previously lacking resources, thereby strengthening the connection between the library and community. The programs offered with ADLI funding include Historia Para Todos, a twice-monthly bilingual book club focusing on the works of Gabriel Garcia Marquez, and Tiempo de Cuentos, bilingual storytime.

Ari Baker, Blount County Public Library, Maryville, Tenn., is the instructional librarian working primarily in developing public classes for workforce development and ELL.

Partnerships are emphasized, such as working alongside the county recovery court to teach life skills and soft skills to formerly incarcerated persons.

Kristin LaHurd, assistant director for literacy and continuing education for the ALA Office of Diversity, Literacy, and Outreach Services, shared some of the statistical results of the 10 years of the American Dream Literacy Initiative. “Eighty-seven percent of libraries report the grant helped patrons access print and digital resources. Nearly 15,000 students across the nation have participated in ESL classes. More than 65% of libraries reported that the funding improved connections with community partners and other libraries,” said LaHurd. She emphasized the important roles community partnerships play in creating sustainable programming and outreach. “Grantees that developed partnerships were seven times more likely to have sustained their ELL services.”

Information about the American Dream Literacy Initiative and how to apply for the grants can be found at https://apply.ala.org/americandream2018/.
ALP President Loida Garcia-Febo Announces “Libraries = Strong Communities” Advocacy Effort

On June 26, American Library Association President Loida Garcia-Febo introduced “Libraries = Strong Communities,” a national advocacy effort aimed at highlighting the value of academic, public, and school libraries. This initiative is uniquely positioned to ignite public awareness of the value of libraries and library staff and create a groundswell of support at the local, state, national, and global level. Garcia-Febo announced the effort during the ALA Annual Conference & Exhibits Inaugural Banquet in New Orleans.

In an era filled with political and social strife, our nation’s libraries continue to play an invaluable role in providing resources and expertise that foster community engagement and transform lives through education and lifelong learning. “As cornerstones of democracy, libraries empower users to make informed decisions by providing free access to information,” said Garcia-Febo. “Libraries provide more than just books. They support community engagement and the delivery of new services that connect closely with patrons’ needs. As libraries transform we should seize every opportunity to showcase their magnificent work.”

Garcia-Febo will tour a series of libraries in support of “Libraries = Strong Communities” to call attention to the significant role libraries of all types play within their communities. The cross-country tour currently consists of six U.S. stops and will conclude on June 22, 2019, during the ALA Annual Conference & Exhibition in Washington, D.C.

Tour locations will provide an opportunity for Garcia-Febo, participating library leaders, and local advocates to address local and national issues as well as generate public awareness of programs and resources. “Libraries = Strong Communities” will include messaging used in conjunction with ALA’s Libraries Transform public awareness campaign. Publicity tools, including a press release template, flyer, Because statements, and Facebook frame, will be available for participating libraries as well as advocates at large. Additional information regarding the tour will be available within the next few weeks, and those interested in following tour activities in real time may follow the hashtag #LibrariesStrong.
Eloise Greenfield Honored During Reception

Eloise Greenfield was honored at the Coretta Scott King Book Awards – Virginia Hamilton Award for Lifetime Achievement Reception on June 23. She discovered a love of reading and writing early in life and realized there were few books that showed the fullness of African American life. She published her first book in 1972 and went on to write and publish more than 40 books.

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Thousands of ALA attendees wait in line to see Opening General Session speaker Michelle Obama. The former first lady spoke to more than 9,000 Annual Conference attendees June 22.
Diversifying STEM Librarianship

by Paige J. Dhyne, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign iSchool

ACRL’s Science and Technology Section (STS) Hot Topics committee held a Q&A session on “Integrating Diversity and Inclusion into STEM Librarianship Practices” in which panelists talked about their experiences in piloting programs, creating student groups, and revising libguides. Topics included diversity, inclusion, and social justice initiatives, gender equity in tech including those with disabilities, and the career development of minority populations.

Inspired by an ALA Annual 2017 address from Reshma Saujani, founder and CEO of Girls Who Code, Carmen Cole, a librarian from Penn State, created her own program: Code for Her (CiH). CiH was a free, nine-week program that consisted of beginner workshop sessions in coding for women and gender-diverse individuals. It was met with success and arose from an identified need to create a space for diverse individuals to code outside of a male-dominated field.

STEM programs are often the focus of creating diverse opportunities. Examples given included a Wikipedia edit-a-thon focused on celebrating Chicago-based STEM women researchers/workers hosted by Illinois Institute of Technology, and the creation of a library, co-sponsored student chapter of the Association of Engineers in Education through University of Arizona libraries. Building collections and partnerships with university organizations is important too, as both MIT Libraries and Illinois Institute of Technology Libraries explained.

Tee Franklin signs her book Bingo Love and talks with Ruth Monnier in the Exhibit Hall.

Librarians Stacey Smith-Brown (left) and Shlonda McCrae take a photo with The Incredibles in the ALA Lounge.