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The staff at O'Neal Library developed a service pledge in 2018.

"We are kind, reliable, and willing to tackle any question without preconception."

When staff adopted this pledge, no one could have predicted how important those words would become during the pandemic.

When working from home, staff had to remember that electronic communications can be difficult, and everyone took great care to be kind to each other and to patrons who communicated with us through our social media platforms. As staff returned to the library building, everyone showed kindness and consideration by following new hygiene and distancing protocols. Kindness was the key to conquering the early challenges of the pandemic.

Though our normal operations have changed, being reliable sources of information and entertainment for our patrons continues to be paramount in importance. Like other libraries, staff transitioned to virtual book groups and created take-home activity kits. Amanda Westfall, Adult Librarian, garnered a mention in the electronic newsletter for the American Library Association for her Great Brookie Bake-Off Virtual program. Matt Layne received a Lift Every Voice grant from Library of America to create poetry programming which he adapted beautifully to on-line poetry readings complimented by evocative interpretations through movement.

And while staff initially struggled with how to provide reader's advisory from afar, the Children's Department's inimitable creativity won the day. Staff remained reliable sources of book recommendations for all ages through the O'Neal Kids Reads: My Reads book request form and by creating fun Grab Bags for children with surprise book selections. The Adult Department also found innovative solutions for reader's advisory. Holley Wesley created a weekly Coffee Klatch on-line to capture and share book recommendations from our patrons.

The last part of the service pledge, "to tackle any question without preconception," has been particularly important. Over the last six months, staff and administration have tackled many, many, many questions about how to offer services safely, how to use this pandemic as an opportunity to re-examine what the Library offers, and how to make an impact.

Justin Morrison, Systems Administrator-Trainee, was asked to help create face shield headbands with the Library's 3D printer, and he tackled that request without hesitation. He researched the best way to produce face shield headbands with the equipment and supplies on-hand to create personal protective equipment for healthcare workers.

When the Library opened for limited public access in July, staff were certainly ready and willing to live out the service pledge each day - in person. Today and every day, the O'Neal Library staff strive to meet your needs in this ever-changing environment. It is our pleasure to serve you by being kind, reliable, and willing to tackle any question without preconception.

-Lindsay

Meet the Trustees

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I have been part of the library ecosystem since I arrived in Birmingham in 1994. From helping organize the Junior Patrons “Books and Blues,” to serving as Rubeus Hagrid on the Library’s Harry Potter night, to reading hundreds of books to my kids on the floor of the children’s section, the Library has played a starring role in some of my fondest memories. And I have learned so much about effective, selfless community leadership from those library volunteers who came before me—Shaun Gray, Norman Jetmundsen, Maura Goodwyn, Caroline Darby, Lee Gewin, and Ruffner and Penny Page, just to name a few.

In terms of reading, my love of books veers from habit to compulsion. I have filled two houses with books, many a shelf now sagging in protest at the demands I have placed upon them, and still I find opportunities to buy and read more. My tastes range from history (Ian Toll, Margaret Olwen MacMillan), to nautical fiction (Patrick O’Brian, Richard Woodman), to science fiction/fantasy (Lev Grossman, Steven Erikson). Musically, you can find songs on my iPhone from Nanci Griffith, CSN, Stephen Sondheim, and from other musicians I have run across over the years. The Library has played an integral role in this part of my life as well—providing countless opportunities to find and sample new authors and musicians.

I hope the Library has been and will continue to be an important part of your lives as well.

-David



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I honestly cannot remember how long I have been active with the O’Neal Library; I know it was when we were still in the old building and that was over 30 years ago.

I have always been an avid reader and have loved volunteering for the Friends of O’Neal Library. I was the Treasurer, so that was a great segue to serving on the Foundation Board.

My three grown daughters all love to read, thanks to our wonderful library and the programs offered. When they were young we didn’t have internet or a television at the lake (I still regret getting a television) and we spent many summer days reading. We all use Libby and still like printed materials that we pass around to each other.

My husband Perry and I have enjoyed the speakers that the Foundation has brought to the community, including Doris Kearns Goodwin and Madeline Miller. I am looking forward to future programs.

The staff is amazing and feel like family to me. Katie Moellering is always eager to share the title of a great book, such as a μŠ@o § ööμ2 „ μDXw μ J μ P HØμ (Š2òDÀØμ ² P (μ: ² ØP μD ÿ μ2HŠŠ (H2HŠ @ 0@PŠŠHμ@ Matt Layne single-handedly set up the Friends' Amazon account so that we can sell books online. This has been especially significant this year due to the pandemic and the postponement of the February Book Sale. Please shop our store on Amazon at Friends of O’Neal Library.

I would be remiss if I didn’t give a shout-out to Lindsay Gardner, our fabulous Director, who leads with grace, innovation and fiscal responsibility. I am very grateful for her leadership.

-LaVonda



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EDUCATORS AND STUDENTS COMMITTED TO INCREASING
 ACCESS TO DIVERSE BOOKS AND PROMOTING A LOVE OF
 READING

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The Mountain Brook Library Foundation
2020 Campaign

The Mountain Brook Library Foundation 2020 Campaign is well underway. Our donors have received copies of this year's Annual Report along with a letter from our Foundation and Library Board Presidents. We want to take this opportunity to thank each of you for sending in your annual gift! As you know, the Foundation is vital to the Library's mission to provide quality library and informational services for all the people of our community. Thanks to the gifts from generous donors, the Mountain Brook Library Foundation will continue to invest in life-long learning resources for the current and next generation of Mountain Brook residents.



CREATING A LEGACY

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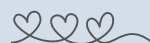
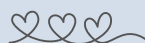
♡♡♡ A SPECIAL THANKS ♡♡♡

The Mountain Brook Library Foundation was recently honored with a bequest from Mary Brocato, a life-long resident of Jefferson County. She lived in the heart of Crestline for more than 60 years. She worked as a secretary for Mr. Frances LaToddy and later as a secretary for the office of the Chief Counsel for the Internal Revenue Service.

Mary was known for her homemade coconut cakes and Italian dishes. She was a life-long learner who enjoyed the collections of the O'Neal Library and the Birmingham Public Library. Mary Brocato passed away in April 2020 at the age of 96.

The bequest from Ms. Brocato will be invested to benefit the collections and programs of The O'Neal Library.

Gifts like these ensure that O'Neal Library can continue to spark curiosity in all ages.



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Annual Report
O'NEAL LIBRARY
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