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From the President

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From the President

Southeastern Library Association members had a marvelous time in Memphis in early April as we explored The River of Knowledge. Tulips were in bloom, barbeque was smoking and Tennessee Library Association pulled out all the stops to make SELA members feel welcome. On Tuesday afternoon, a group of volunteers chatted about library and personal events as they packed materials for attendees. It was a wonderful way to meet many members of the TLA Conference Program Committee and to thank them for their relentless hard work. Lead by TLA President, Cathy Taylor of the White County Public Library and TLA Executive Director, Annelle Huggins of the University of Memphis and Conference Co-Chairs Leah Allison of St. George's Independent School and Jennifer Cowan-Henderson of the Upper Cumberland Regional Library, their year long efforts were visible in every facet of the program.

SELA Vice-President/President-Elect Faith Line from Sumter County Public Library in South Carolina led the SELA volunteers. Faith worked tirelessly on the last three joint conferences. In addition to her Memphis efforts, she also served on the planning committees for Charleston and Charlotte. Faith brought a wealth of expertise and experience to her work with the planning committee.

Memphis was also the site of the first American Library Association Regional Library Institute. There were members present from our state, regional and national library organizations. This three hour program was designed to assist librarians and library supporters develop grassroots advocacy efforts. In addition, there were numerous valuable pre-conferences dealing with topics including leadership development, statistical information, medical reference materials, cataloging and professional image.

In a letter of welcome, the Honorable Harold Ford, Jr. who represents the 9th congressional district in Tennessee noted, "This conference attests to the importance of libraries as a tool of education and cultural advancement in our community... You, the participants in this conference, understand and respect the integral role of libraries in fostering community development and acting as the primary resource to the public for knowledge and information."

In addition to networking and exploring continuing education opportunities, SELA members also took the time to celebrate member achievements. Olga "Dee" Wood of the University of Kentucky representing the resolutions committee thanked all involved for their hard work preparing the excellent conference and also recognized Kentucky Library Association for their centennial.

The 2006 recipient of the 2005 Ginny Frankenthaler Memorial Scholarship, Leah Mickens was in attendance along with the 12 recipients of the 2006 Frances Coleman/Thomson Gale Conference Grants. They are Bradley Brazzeal (MS), Courtney Bruch (AL), John Crawford (KY), Shirley French (KY), Deana Groves (KY), Christina Hull (SC), Michael Jason Martin (FL), Bethany Skaggs (AL), Lisa Vardaman (AL), Shaundra Walker (GA), Susan Wilkins (KY) and Amy York (TN).

The Birmingham (AL) Public Library received the Outstanding Southeastern Library Program Award for BPL @ Your School. For the project, "each of the Birmingham City K-8 Schools is partnered with a nearby branch of the Birmingham Public Library. A Birmingham Public Library card is issued for each classroom (grades 4-8) in each of the participating schools." In the application it was noted that the "ultimate desire is to build future readers by inspiring students to read for fun and to read often."

Doug McNamara, President of Munford Library Books, Inc. was the recipient of the SELA President's Award. The letter of nominations read, "Doug McNamara is well known among political and professional leaders, peers and colleagues, as one who is extremely qualified and unconditionally committed to the causes, and the effectiveness of libraries throughout the Southeast region of our nation." Upon receipt of the award, he noted that the plaque will be "prominently displayed" in his office and said that the recognition was "quite meaningful" to him. Although Mr. McNamara was the last recipient of this award; the

honor is not disappearing. In 2008, the SELA President's Award will become the Charles E. Beard Award. Named after the late distinguished Georgian, Charles Beard served as SELA President and was a strong advocate for libraries and a mentor for library workers on the local, state, regional and national levels.

The announcement of the 2006 Rothrock Award recipient was greeted by acclaim. Ann Hamilton, Past-President of SELA from Georgia Southern University graciously accepted the plaque and discussed her personal history with SELA and the Rothrock Award. The nomination letter noted that "As a colleague, she networks to share new and pertinent library develops occurring not only in the Southeast, but across the nation. As a mentor, she offers encouraging words and an enthusiastic welcome to new librarians...As a friend, Ann is willing to take the time to assist an individual through a dilemma, a crisis or just lend a friendly ear."

SELA continues to look to the future. The board unanimously approved the new committee structure as outlined in the Leadership Conference documents at <http://sela.jsu.edu/Conferences.htm>. This new organizational model will be effective January 1, 2007 with the start of the new biennium.

Thanks again for making Memphis a memorable joint conference.

All the best,

Judith Gibbons
SELA President