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Georgia Library Association - Advocacy Committee

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*People, Libraries
and Agencies* **IN THE NEWS**

Georgia Library Association Advocacy Committee

Representing all Georgia libraries, the primary charge of the Georgia Library Association (GLA) Advocacy Committee is to maintain and grow the relationship between libraries and statewide legislative efforts. This involves working to understand the needs of legislators and legislative groups as well as discovering ways to effectively communicate the goals and needs of libraries to these legislative groups and individuals.

Ensuring that various voices across the state and our profession are heard, GLA organizes several advocacy efforts allowing libraries to share with legislators the outcome and impact that both local and statewide decisions have made benefitting libraries and the community they serve. Also, these efforts give libraries the platform to foster important relationships with government agencies. For example, through the Advocacy Committee, GLA coordinates a Library Day at the state Capitol, where library staff from various types of libraries work together to distribute an art print by Debi Davis to every state legislator. There is always much excitement in distributing these prints. Prints from previous years are on

display and framed in many of the offices at the Capitol. With the print in hand, legislators and office staff often greet these advocates with a smile as advocates petition for library needs.

On March 4, 2020, a group of library advocates, including library staff and trustees from across the state, gathered together before breaking into small groups and hand delivering prints by Debi Davis to the offices of the legislators. This year's art print highlights the Carnegie



Photo Credit: Angela Glowcheski

Education Pavilion, more commonly known as the Carnegie Monument.

The Advocacy Committee is dedicated to advocating for all libraries in Georgia. As libraries continue to evolve in services offered, groups served, and in meeting changing demands, government relations must be a primary function of library leadership and professional organizations.

Library advocates must shift the conversation from pleading for library needs to demonstrating community outcomes and possible political intersections. Yes, the committee focuses on gathering funding support from Georgia legislators, but librarians must also create relationships allowing us to fully inform legislators, so they are able to make decisions that help libraries and communities

grow. The fostering of legislative relationships is not a short-term or easy effort. Advocacy efforts require consistency and dedication, a stern will, and belief in what libraries offer. The

GLA Advocacy Committee looks forward to continuing its good work with all GLA divisions, interest groups, and committees to sustain these long-term efforts.