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Georgia Library Association - 2020 GLA Scholarship Winners

Stephanie Irvin

West Georgia Regional Library System, sirvin@wgrls.org

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

Georgia Library Association 2020 GLA Scholarship Winners

The Georgia Library Association (GLA) Scholarship Committee is pleased to announce the 2020 recipients of the Hubbard and the Beard scholarships. These awards are given annually by GLA to provide financial assistance for students pursuing a master's degree in library science.

The Hubbard Scholarship

Donald "Don" Giacomini is this year's C. S. Hubbard Scholarship winner. Don has worked as a youth services specialist at the Gwinnett County Public Library for the last four years and was an early education library associate prior to that.

Coming to the library world after teaching English to kids in South Korea, Amsterdam, and Palestine, Don is passionate about fostering curiosity and providing kids with a positive adult role model for all things literacy. His enthusiasm has helped open many doors and, as a result, Don has focused much of his work on connecting the public library to community partners in meaningful and sustainable ways. Always one to spread the importance of outreach and innovation, he has been privileged to speak to peers at prior GLA, PLA (Public Library Association), and ALA (American Library Association) conventions.

With a prior MA in English language and literature from the University of Amsterdam, Don is currently enrolled at Valdosta State University and is pursuing an MLIS degree. He hopes to grow as a librarian and to eventually lead a youth services department in a large public library system.

Don said, "I'm just so grateful to GLA for this award and recognition. I love the work I do and I feel so fortunate to be able to end each day feeling like I've done some good for my community. I'm also grateful to my own system, the Gwinnett County Public Library, for having enough confidence in my own personal vision to allow me to explore new avenues of outreach wherever they pop up and to my youth services colleagues for their collaborative spirit. I plan on taking full advantage of the educational opportunity in front of me in order to develop my own skills and to expand my network here in Georgia and beyond. The work you all do is important, and I'm honored to be a part of it."



The Beard Scholarship

Jessica Varsa is the winner of this year's Charles Beard Scholarship. Jessica is the instruction and information services specialist at the Athens campus of Piedmont College. She is currently near to completing an MLIS at Valdosta State University.

Jessica's goal as a librarian is to provide equitable access to information for everyone, enhancing lifelong learning through digital technology. As a library employee at a commuter campus, Jessica enjoys the diversity and the challenges unique to first-generation



students, transfer, mid-career, and adult learners. This service platform allows Jessica to apply her skills in public service, technology integration, information literacy instruction, and technical services.

Prior to finding librarianship, she worked in local government, shepherding many public initiatives through collaborative processes with city and county administrators, staff, and the public. She is driven daily by the opportunity to support access to information and discovery to improve the quality of life of communities.

Jessica wrote: "I am honored to receive this award as it shows ongoing support for the profession, as well as my efforts to work in this important space. Although the model for higher education is rapidly changing, librarians have excelled in rising to this challenge and providing exceptional information services, and I am proud to be among them."

Congratulations to the 2020 GLA Scholarship winners!

Complete information regarding the scholarships, including application information and how to donate to the scholarship fund, is available [on the GLA website](#).