

4-1-2021

Georgia Library Association - Advocacy Committee

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Recommended Citation

Glowcheski, A. (2021). Georgia Library Association - Advocacy Committee. *Georgia Library Quarterly*, 58(2). Retrieved from <https://digitalcommons.kennesaw.edu/glq/vol58/iss2/8>

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

Georgia Library Association Advocacy Committee

Representing all Georgia libraries, the Georgia Library Association (GLA) Advocacy Committee's primary charge is to maintain and grow the relationship between libraries and legislators. Activities include working to answer the questions of legislators and legislative groups as well as discovering ways to effectively communicate the goals and needs of libraries.

Ensuring that various voices across the state and the profession are heard, GLA organizes several advocacy efforts allowing libraries to share with legislators the outcomes and impacts of both local and statewide decisions affecting libraries and the communities they serve. 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 capitol where representatives from various types of libraries work together to distribute an art print by Debi Davis to every state legislator. There is always much excitement around distributing these

gifts. Prints from previous years are on display and framed in many of the offices at the capitol. With prints in hand, these advocates greet legislators and office staff with smiles as they discuss library needs.

This year, a small group was able to safely continue this work at the capitol. On March 8, 2021, they delivered an art print by Debi Davis to the office of every state legislator. The 2021 Library Day print depicts a scene from Jack Hill State Park (formerly Gordonia-Alatamaha State Park). Senator Jack Hill was a long-time supporter of Georgia's public libraries and led the way in providing matching state funds for libraries. The creation of the prints is a collaborative effort between the GLA, Georgia Council, Georgia Public Library Service, and Gale. The committee and GLA especially wants to thank Gale for continued support of the program over the years.



Pictured from left to right: Laura Burtle, past president of Georgia Library Association (GLA); Angela Glowcheski, GLA advocacy chair; Julie Walker, state librarian; Gina Martin, Georgia Libraries for Accessible Statewide Services (GLASS) outreach manager; and Wendy Cornelisen, assistant state librarian and GLA president.
Photo credit: Brandon Hembree.

The Advocacy Committee is dedicated to promoting the needs of all libraries in Georgia. As libraries continue to evolve in the services offered and groups served, and in meeting changing demands, government relations must

be a primary function of library leadership and the GLA. As advocates, the committee must shift the conversation from pleading for what libraries want to demonstrating community outcomes and taking advantage of political intersections. Yes, the committee focuses on continued funding support from the state, but the committee must also create relationships allowing it to fully inform legislators, so they are able to make appropriate decisions that help libraries and communities grow. The fostering

of legislative relationships is neither easy nor quick. Advocacy 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.

Stay up to date with GLA Advocacy Alerts by clicking “ADVOCACY” at the top of the GLA Website at <https://gla.georgialibraries.org/>.