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Advocates Turn out for Georgia Library Day

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

Advocates turn out for Georgia Library Day

On the heels of a two-week postponement due to a legislative break, nearly 150 library advocates braved a series of morning downpours March 10 to voice their love for and support of libraries with members of the Georgia General Assembly.

With Georgia Library Day originally scheduled for Feb. 25, the event's sponsors — Georgia Library Association (GLA), Georgia Association for Instructional Technology, Georgia Library Media Association and

Georgia Public Library Service — had to scramble for a makeup date when the General Assembly adjourned Feb. 18 and began a two-week break from the legislative session to work on balancing the Fiscal Year 2011 budget.

All worked out in the end, however, with even Gov. Sonny Perdue joining in the festivities by signing a proclamation declaring March 10 Georgia Library Day. State Librarian Dr. Lamar Veatch formally accepted the procla-

mation from the governor at 11:00 a.m. in the Capitol.

A number of speakers addressed the crowd, including Sen. Jack Hill (D-Reidsville), chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee, and Sen. Seth Harp (R-Midland), chairman of the Senate Higher Education Committee.

"With good libraries, we can do anything," Harp said, as he explained Georgia's need to build and maintain a highly educated work force. "We compete with the world, and an educated Georgia is the linchpin in our future success. Libraries are critically important as a source of knowledge, and knowledge is power."

Following the morning presentations, attendees visited the state Capitol to speak with elected officials, then returned to the Floyd Building for lunch with their legislators.

According to Carol Stanley, president of GLA, the sponsoring organizations hoped to convince legislators of the need to maintain FY2009 budget levels for the state's public libraries and to recognize all types of libraries and the value of their combined services to all citizens.

"We have wonderful advocates across the state," said Veatch, "and their



From left: Carol Stanley; Judy Serritella, coordinator of library media services for the Georgia Department of Education; and Dr. Lamar Veatch accept Gov. Sonny Perdue's Georgia Library Day proclamation. (Photo by David Baker)

presence at Georgia Library Day this year, especially in light of tight budgets and troubling economic times, made a powerful statement to our elected officials that Georgia's citizens believe in the value of their libraries."

The text of the governor's proclamation is as follows:

GEORGIA LIBRARY DAY

WHEREAS: Libraries are places of opportunity and lifelong learning for everyone and offer an environment filled with resources to explore. They provide citizens with the knowledge and information they need to live, learn and work in the 21st century; and

WHEREAS: Public, academic, school, governmental and specialized libraries in Georgia provide excellent and invaluable service to library users regardless of age, ethnicity or socio-economic background in every county in Georgia; and

WHEREAS: Librarians and library support staff provide knowledgeable support in person and online, as well as personal service and expert assistance in finding what is needed when it is needed; and

WHEREAS: Libraries play an active role in building the community by offering a place where people may learn together; by preserving local history and heritage; by opening their doors to civic organization and community meetings; by hosting programs and exhibits that introduce new cultures, perspectives and ideas; and by providing free Internet access to every community; and

WHEREAS: Libraries provide access to books and technology to children in their schools and communities whereas they would not have access otherwise. Schools with professional school librarians have higher achievement scores than those without; and

WHEREAS: Georgia's libraries provide

unparalleled access to information and materials through the nationally recognized and award-winning GALILEO and PINES resource-sharing programs, used by Georgians of all ages; now

THEREFORE: I, Sonny Perdue, governor of the state of Georgia, do hereby proclaim March 10, 2010, as **LIBRARY DAY** in Georgia. ▶▶



More than three dozen of the nearly 150 library advocates who attended Library Day paused for a group photo under the Capitol dome.