



The Wisconsin Library Association is pleased to announce the 2019 Awards & Honors Winners, selected for their outstanding contributions to libraries and librarianship:

- **Citation of Merit: Vicki Reuling, Community Library Supporter, Three Lakes, WI**
- **Library of the Year: L.E. Phillips Memorial Public Library, Eau Claire, WI**
- **Programming Innovation Award: Dementia-Friendly Programs at North Shore Library, Glendale, WI**
- **Trustee of the Year: Kathy Pletcher, Nicolet Federated Library System, Green Bay, WI**
- **WLA/DEMCO Librarian of the Year: Marla Sepnafski, Wisconsin Valley Library Service, Wausau, WI**

#### **More information about the 2019 award winners**

##### **Citation of Merit:** Vicki Reuling

Vicki Reuling was essential to transforming the Demmer Library in Three Lakes, WI. Inspired by a 2009 Wisconsin Library Association conference, she created and chaired the Demmer Library Building Committee. The committee assessed the aging building and the community's needs and The Three Lakes Public Library Foundation used the information to begin a fundraising campaign. Vicki was also a

member of the Foundation that raised almost \$1 million and led a successful tax levy for an additional \$900,000. Vicki continued to lead the building effort by chairing the building's construction committee and spending two years running community and construction meetings to ensure all details were taken into consideration. The renovated library opened on June 29, 2019 and exceeded the expectations of the community.

**Library of the Year:** L.E. Phillips Memorial Public Library

With customers, governing body and staff in mind, the L.E. Phillips Memorial Public Library continually seeks to promote lifelong learning, create collaborative spaces and support open access to diverse materials and resources that enhance the quality of life in the community. Recent years have seen a renaissance in the library, with a renewed commitment to retain and increase direct relevancy for our users through progressive policies, innovative services and enhanced collections. The library created new staff positions to serve vulnerable populations, put books on city buses, created digital access to local music and so much more! The dedication to excellence is also apparent in employee retention; half of their staff has been employed at the library for more than 10 years.

**Programming Innovation Award:** Dementia-Friendly Programs at North Shore Library

North Shore Library became the first Memory Connection Center in the nation. In partnership with the Milwaukee County Department on Aging, the Center's goal is to empower caregivers with the knowledge, resources, support and programs that are necessary to prepare families and individuals for the journey of caring for someone diagnosed with dementia. Library staff participated in intensive training to become a dementia-friendly institution before the Center opened. The library offers memory kits, reference books and reading lists to patrons, as well as a referral service to connect families with a dementia specialist. Essential to the success of the Memory Connection Center are participatory services, including a Music & Memory program aimed at providing patrons with the calming effect of familiar music. Due to the comprehensive approach of the Memory Connection Center, the North Shore Library is the recipient of the 2019 WLA Programming Innovation Award.

**Trustee of the Year:** Kathy Pletcher

Kathy Pletcher has consistently been a strong advocate for all types of libraries and serves on the Brown County Library Board and Nicolet Federated Library System Board. She also recently completed her term on the Council on Library and Network Development (COLAND). Building upon her years as a professional librarian, she has become a model trustee and now provides training for new trustees around the state. Through her mentoring work, she has contributed to a new generation of advocates dedicated to supporting libraries. Kathy's visionary

work has statewide impact and she is deserving of the 2019 Trustee of the Year Award.

**WLA/DEMCO Librarian of the Year:** Marla Sepnafski

Under Marla Sepnafski's leadership, Wisconsin Valley Library Service (WVLS) has evolved and responded as changes in society, digital resources and information technology created new demands and opportunities. Having served as the director since 2007, she is described as a leader, collaborator, educator and innovator. Her dedication to WVLS libraries and their staff members is shown through close listening, empathy and a heartfelt desire for each library to thrive. She has been a leader in creating partnerships to fill service gaps and enhance opportunities when funding is scarce, as well as a champion of professional growth for all staff. As one colleague describes, "Marla's presence has been essential to the overall success of countless endeavors and achievements of others as she conducts electricity to and through her colleagues to the people they serve." Marla Sepnafski's dedication to libraries has spanned decades and will continue to reverberate in the Wisconsin library community.

The Wisconsin Library Association congratulates each winner and will celebrate their accomplishments at the 2019 Annual Conference at the Kalahari Convention Center in Wisconsin Dells. An Awards & Honors Reception will take place on Thursday, October 10<sup>th</sup> from 5:30-7:00 p.m., with hors d'oeuvres and a cash bar.

The WLA Awards program is supported by the WLA Foundation, through individual charitable contributions, and through the generous support of EBSCO. WLA engages, inspires and advocates for library workers and supporters to improve and promote library services for the people of Wisconsin. The awards program is one way the association acknowledges the dedication of its members to provide exemplary library service.