

**Friends of South Carolina Libraries Annual Meeting – 2019**  
**Minutes – April 3, 2019**  
**Doctors Bruce and Lee Foundation Library, Florence, SC**

1. Registration began at 9:30 a.m., and those attending were provided with coffee, Krispy Kreme donuts, and fresh fruit. Approximately 65-70 people were in attendance and included participants from the following 17 counties: Aiken (1), Beaufort (1), Chesterfield (2), Colleton (5), Darlington (1), Dorchester (9), Fairfield (4), Florence (8), Georgetown (1), Greenville (1), Greenwood (2), Kershaw (2), Lancaster (6), Lee (1), Lexington (12), Marion (1), Richland (5), Union (1), York (2); also the keynote speaker, the Liollo architect, and one member of the State Library staff who did not identify an association with a particular county.
2. The program began at 10:00 with brief welcome remarks from the following:
  - Maurice Cherry, FOSCL Board Secretary
  - Alan Smith, Florence County Library Director
  - Bill Taylor, Friends of the Florence County Library
3. At 10:15, Leesa Aiken, South Carolina State Library Director, provided remarks titled “The State of South Carolina Libraries.” She covered the following topic areas:

**Funding for libraries at the state level:** Budget provisions have been made to provide a minimum grant of \$100,000 to every public library. The hope is that there will be an additional allotment of \$2.00/person by the legislature. She reminded attendees that several years ago there was an allocation of \$2.25/person, but it fell precipitously to \$.72/person; and it has taken several years for it to rebound to nearly \$2.00/person at the moment. Since she began her work with the State Library, through the efforts of library directors and others, the minimum allotment has risen from \$45,000 per library to the present \$100,000. Those figures provide evidence of what the efforts of library directors can achieve. She made the following charge to the audience: “One of your roles is to make sure that people understand why libraries are important to the communities they serve.”

**Partnerships:** She cited examples of partnerships libraries can make with local schools, specifically with 77 “kits” available on loan to public libraries, covering such topics as video equipment, gaming equipment, robotics, drones, and NASA (“NASA at My Library”), the latter being particularly desirable for summer reading programs.

**Maker Spaces:** The emphasis is on making spaces in the library available for people of all ages, not just for a certain age group.

**Grant Opportunities from the State Library:** For several years the State Library gave money to every library, but the procedure has changed. The State Library has \$2.6 million available for grants every year. Approximately \$250,000 of that amount is available for “impact grants,” previously referred to as competitive “sub grants.” Some of this money has been given for the continuing education of library personnel and for

conference attendance, for such ventures as ALA-sponsored classes, programs directed towards small rural libraries, and technology conferences. In response to a question from the audience, she responded that academic libraries have not been funded with “impact grants.”

**Libraries are “Safe Areas”:** She mentioned that following crises such as those in Colleton County and Orangeburg County, people chose to meet in their library, seeing it as a safe place and a “first responder.” Leesa expressed her disappointment that some years there are few applications for the funds.

**E-Rate Funds:** These are available from the government and are designated for use in addressing the “electronic” needs of libraries. Category #1 funds are allocated for phones and Internet projects. Category #2 funds are assigned to fund projects that deal with linking the internal infrastructure of a library with technology outside the library. Approximately \$2.7 million has been saved recently by libraries through the assistance of the State Library. Approximately 60%-80% of E-Rate funds have been reimbursed recently by the federal government, and the state government has offered to assist with the other 20%-40% of such funding. *She urged libraries to take advantage of this funding possibility now*, because cuts have already been recommended at the state level. Other grant funds are also in jeopardy and have been in jeopardy for a couple of years.

**Additional Comments:** At the request of an attendee, Leesa said that she would be happy to send “talking points” geared towards helping Friends groups push a library funding agenda when they meet with legislators. The State Library also offers classes and training for library directors, and Kathy Shepard is available as a resource to connect libraries with a specialist in diversity training; and Donna Lolos offers training for trustees through online resources or through visits by State Library officials. Leesa further reminded everyone of the State Library’s newsletter and its weekly updates. She suggested inviting council members, legislators, and library trustees to events sponsored by Friends groups.

4. At 11:00, following a 15-minute break, Marlena White introduced the morning program, **“2018 Library Design Showcase,”** a slide show produced by the American Library Association. What was particularly important to FOSCL meeting attendees was that the show featured two Richland County branch libraries—the St. Andrews Branch and the Ballentine Branch. As she showed the photos of libraries throughout the nation that had either undergone significant renovation or had been newly built, she read the description of each of them. Following the slide show, she introduced the two speakers—**Tina Gills, Director of Development for the Richland County Public Library,** and **Jennifer Charzewski, a principal at the Liollo Architecture Firm,** who has as one of her specialties the design of public libraries.

They noted that the St. Andrews library had been developed from an old Winn-Dixie store in an unattractive area full of billboards and other signs. The Ballentine branch, previously a video store, became a library that had the appearance of a “cabin in the woods, rooted in nature.”

Jennifer said that the goal for Richland County was to have each of the twelve libraries serve as a specific destination for some purpose. Her firm was responsible for four of the twelve branches. Two other firms designed the other eight libraries. The feeling was that it was important to have the community connected with each library explain what they wanted there. In the Ballentine area, for example, they had as a motivating goal the creation of “zero dark spaces,” that is, the concept that every space needs to be used all day for different purposes, with no unused areas. The St. Andrews community wanted to have a garden spot with green space. Community garden space was visible through large doors opening to the outside. Of the 13,000 sq. feet of the St. Andrews building, only 2000 sq. feet were new additions; the remainder of the facility was simply redone. Later in the discussion, Jennifer noted that Liollo Architecture has a community engagement tool kit they would be willing to share with interested parties.

Tina discussed the financing of the twelve Richland branches. Richland had experienced no bond referendum directed towards libraries for many years, and the goal for this referendum was to be \$59.3 million. So twenty months before the referendum was to be proposed, the planners brought in a political consultant, who told them what it would cost to undertake such a campaign. His estimate of \$250,000 was close to the actual amount of about \$194,000 needed for the initial advocacy campaign. Once the campaign began, no library staff members could be allowed to spend official time advocating for the referendum, as that would be a legal violation, and there are watchdog groups empowered to monitor the use of public funds for advocacy. Regulations are in place that limit 501(c)(3) organizations to spend no more than approximately 20% of their yearly operating expenses for advocacy. The Richland Friends and the Richland Foundations were each able to spend up to 20% of their expenses for each of the three years for this purpose. Representatives from all twelve library branches were involved in the planning process and the donations that went into the 501(c)(4) program.

To gauge likely voter support for the referendum, polling was conducted on two occasions, the second time being necessary because of some irregularities with voting the first time. The first poll showed that 94.2% of the likely Richland County voters had a favorable attitude towards the library, and only 0.5% did not. On the second occasion, the favorable view went down to 85%. About half of those polled said that if voting were to be held on that day, they would vote “yes.”

Approximately 200 volunteers under the newly established 501(c)(4) framework went into the community to encourage voters to support the referendum. When the deciding vote was taken on the referendum, it was approved by approximately 65% of the voters and was successfully implemented.

Marlena White reminded the audience that significant changes are often made through small, yet far less expensive actions that do not require bond issues or other major financial support, such as painting, repairing, or repurposing existing sites in a library or on library property. She asked the audience to share instance in their own communities where beneficial changes had taken place on a smaller scale. In Cayce, for example, there were major additions to the computer setup in the library. The Drs. Bruce and Lee Library in Florence converted and underused part of the library into an art gallery.

Marlena noted that many libraries are reducing the size of their circulation desks and repurposing them for other uses. She recommended the use of social media to encourage the public to make useful comments and said that virtually every library staff has a “laundry list” of things they would like to have or see improved. She suggested the use of specific focus groups to help libraries better define their needs. A book club, for instance, might be positioned to identify something that needs to be done. She reminded attendees that libraries to be featured in the next ALA Showcase will be those with projects completed between May 1, 2018, and April 30, 2019. Jennifer announced that the *Library Journal* Design Institute will be held on May 3, 2019, in Columbia, SC.

#### 5. **Presentation of 2019 FOSCL Awards:**

Following a delicious lunch catered by Top Hat Special Tea of Florence, Sarah McMaster recognized the winners of this year’s FOSCL Awards. She and Paul Dove reminded everyone of the leaflet detailing the requirements for the awards and noting that this year’s competition had brought forth a larger than normal number of recommendations. Paul encouraged those who had submitted the names of deserving figures who were not recognized this year to consider resubmitting nominations for them in the future. He and Sarah also noted that there were no nominees for this year’s “Outstanding Elected Official Award,” and they cautioned groups that nominees for that award “must have been previously honored by a local Friends group.”

Recipients of the 2019 FOSCL Awards follow:

***Public Library Employee Excellence Award:*** **Shiela Keaise**, Children’s Librarian for the Colleton County Memorial Library in Walterboro. She is a storyteller, an author, host of a children’s program on cable television (Miss Shiela’s World of Reading”) and a successful fundraiser for library initiatives.

***Outstanding Individual Award:*** **Dolores Gambrell**, President of the South Congaree/ Pine Ridge Branch Library in Lexington County. She has been a life-long supporter of libraries and has been especially effective in improving the library in her own community through such efforts as supporting the summer reading program, contributing an outdoor reading garden,

***John Landrum Advocacy Award:*** **George H. Seago**, recommended by Friends of the Dorchester County Public Library. Mr. Seago has promoted library activities in the area since 1976, including efforts to create new libraries and support library funding on a consistent basis, even by advocating with legislators in Washington.

#### 6. **Annual Business Meeting:**

Marlena White, FOSCL president, began the meeting with a reminder that April 7-13 is National Library Week, this year’s theme being “Libraries = Strong Communities.”

**Marlena** was nominated to begin a **two-year term as FOSCL president** (2019-2021),

and **Maurice Cherry** was nominated to serve another two-year term as **secretary** (2019-2021). Both nominations were unanimously approved.

A committee motion from the Board was made to **change the dues structure**. It will be as follows: ***Beginning in 2020***, the Friends Group membership will increase from \$20.00 to \$25.00. The entire list of membership and dues fees will read as follows:

**FOL Group rate** will be listed as **\$25.00 and up**.

The **Individual Friend rate** will be from **\$10.00 to \$24.99**.

The **Special Friend rate** will be from **\$25.00 to \$99.99**.

The **Friend Indeed rate** will be from **\$100.00 and up**.

The proposal was recommended by Paul Dove, seconded by Libby Law, and unanimously approved by FOSCL members in attendance.

Marlena called attention to the handouts provided with practical information from ALA about fundraising and building relationships with elected officials. She also called attention to the **Regional FOSCL meeting in Greenwood, SC, Wednesday, Oct. 23, 2019, from 10:00 a.m. until noon**.

#### **7. Keynote Speaker: Darion McCloud:**

Jonathan Haupt, Board member and Executive Director of the Pat Conroy Literary Center in Beaufort, introduced the keynote speaker, Darion McCloud, whose topic was “Building Strong Communities Through Libraries.” An “award-winning storyteller and teaching artist,” children’s literature advocate, and actor, his bio. reads as follows:

He founded and serves as Creative Director of both the NiA Theatre Company and Story Squad. He is a company member of Trustus Theatre and the SC Shakespeare Company and a Riley Institute Diversity Fellow. McCloud is a formally trained visual artist with a BA in Studio Art from the University of South Carolina who found his way to the stage through telling stories at the Richland County Public Library. McCloud has committed his life to the transforming power of art and enjoys crafting theatre experiences for the old, young, the initiated, and the un-initiated.

Mr. McCloud’s speaking fee was made possible through a generous grant from the Pat Conroy Literary Center. As an example of his storytelling craft, he told the story “The Golden Arm,” which he frequently uses in dealing with fourth-grade students. Asked about his future projects, he mentioned an upcoming performance with Augusta Baker’s Dozen in Columbia.

Following Mr. McCloud’s well-received presentation, the Annual Meeting was adjourned at 1:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Charles Maurice Cherry  
FOSCL Secretary