



General Assembly appropriates funds for renovations, tech upgrades at public libraries

Georgia's General Assembly once again endorsed the importance of public libraries on March 30, when it ended the 2017 legislative session with a proposed budget of \$25 billion for fiscal year 2018.

The House and Senate included four library capital projects in next year's appropriations bill, bringing its total for library-related support to \$13,876,000.

That number includes a boost to the funds for major repair and renovation (MRR) grants and for computer and technology replacement that **Gov. Nathan Deal** included in his initial FY2018 spending plan.

Capital grants include:

- \$2 million to redesign and refit the interior of the 40,700-square-foot Brunswick-Glynn County Library;
- \$2 million to renovate and modernize the Roddenbery Memorial Library in Cairo;
- \$1,386,000 for a near-complete overhaul of the dated Moultrie-Colquitt County Library; and
- \$1.3 million to expand by 8,481 square feet the space-strapped Jones County Public Library in Gray.

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Burke Walker



The first free library in the state of Georgia, the Queen Anne-style Mary Willis Library in Washington features numerous stained glass windows, including one crafted by Tiffany Studios.

GPLS encourages residents to visit Georgia's 10 most beautiful libraries

From a 130-year-old English Baroque library with stained glass crafted by Tiffany to a seaside casino turned National Literary Landmark to a contemporary Atlanta architectural icon, Georgia Public Library Service's newly recognized list of the state's 10 Most Beautiful Public Libraries offers a treasure trove of charms

waiting to be discovered.

In chronological order, the list includes:

- The Mary Willis Library in Washington (1888)
- The Carnegie Branch Library in Savannah (1914)

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Beautiful

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- The Washington Memorial Library in Macon (1923)
- The St. Simons Island Public Library (1937)
- The Buckhead Branch Library in Atlanta (1989)
- The Columbus Public Library (2005)
- The Hamilton Mill Library in Dacula (2011)
- The Dog River Public Library in Douglasville (2011)
- The Porter Memorial Library in Covington (2011)
- The Metropolitan Library in Atlanta (2015)

To identify and recognize these libraries, GPLS solicited help from residents around the state. After a two-month online-submission campaign, the agency received nominations recommending a total of 60 facilities.

“Those libraries were then judged on their overall design, both in form and function, as well as for their interior and exterior styles and sense of timelessness,” explained State Librarian **Julie Walker**. “We also wanted to recognize libraries that are, or were, innovative for their time, as well as those whose design reflects and serves their respective communities.”

A panel of public library and architecture professionals reviewed the candidates this winter and, over the course of three rounds of voting, narrowed the 60 nominees down to 10. The judging panel included **Leslie Sharp**, associate vice provost with the Georgia Institute of Technology and a teacher of historic preservation in the College of Architecture there, and **Allison McCarthy**, architect and

partner with Turco McCarthy Architecture & Design, who is a former chair of the Atlanta Urban Design Commission. Panel members from GPLS were Walker; **Wendy Cornelisen**, assistant state librarian for library innovation and collaboration; **Jessica Everingham**, assistant state librarian for library development and support; **Nathan Rall**, director of library planning and construction; and **David Baker**, director of communications and strategic partnerships. Between them, Rall and Baker have nearly five decades of experience working in the design and construction industry.

The most beautiful libraries will each be recognized at a 2 p.m. ceremony on April 10 at the Mary Willis Library — the state’s first free library and the first in Georgia to be listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Headquarters of the Bartram Trail Regional Library System, the library is located at 204 East Liberty Street in Washington.

Beneath the stained glass windows at Mary Willis,

Smith Dalia Architects



Atlanta’s Metropolitan Branch Library features several design acknowledgments in remembrance of the Capitol View Baptist Church, the site’s former occupant that sat empty and crumbling for several years. Chief among these tributes is an entry-plaza installation spotlighting the four white granite Doric columns that once supported the church’s façade.

representatives from each beautiful library will be presented with a framed certificate and two individualized “10 Most Beautiful” stamps for endorsing their respective pages in promotional passports that will be available free at each recognized facility and at hundreds of other participating public libraries around the state in time for this year’s summer vacation season.

Based on the judges’ recommendations, the passports shine a spotlight on seven additional public libraries that did not make the final 10 but whose architectural significance or spectacular settings make them equally worthy destinations for travelers. These facilities include the Atlanta

Central Library, the Eatonton-Putnam County Library, the Lavonia-Carnegie Library, the Royston Branch Library, Savannah’s Bull Street Branch Library, the Senoia Branch Library and the Towns County Public Library by Lake Chatuge in the town of Hiawassee.

“Design knowledge isn’t just for architects; we can all learn from the buildings around us, and every Georgia library is a great place to begin that lesson. By highlighting the artistry and history of our public libraries, we hope the passports will be a fun way for families to explore and learn,” Walker said. “Once people experience the architecture, heritage, scenery and friendly faces that await, I’m confident they will fall under the spell of these 10 community treasures and be impressed by the immense pride and joy that the library staff who work inside them take in showing them to visitors.” ■



GLASS Atlanta mounts first photography exhibition

Georgia Libraries for Accessible Statewide Services (GLASS) has unveiled its latest, and first photography-based, art exhibition. “Just Kids” began an open-ended run Feb. 8 at the GLASS Atlanta Talking Book Center on the fourth floor of the Atlanta-Fulton Public Library System’s Central Library at One Margaret Mitchell Square.

“Just Kids” is the brainchild of photographer **Ryan Johnson**, who is a community support specialist at the Center for Leadership in Disability (CLD), a University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities located at Georgia State University. CLD serves as a bridge between university and community to support people with disabilities and their families in their journey toward a more inclusive and independent life.

Through his work with CLD, Johnson discovered his love for telling life stories through photography, mixing a documentary and portraiture style to give viewers a front-row seat to stories of families and their loved ones who have an intellectual or developmental disability.

“What strikes me about Ryan’s work is how true these photos are,” said **Elizabeth Labbe-Webb**, principal of Blue Path Group, an Atlanta-based consultancy committed to bringing the work of talented artists to wider audiences and putting that work into places that invite conversation and learning.

“These are families, beyond

Ryan Johnson



One of 18 untitled photographs from the “Just Kids” exhibition at GLASS Atlanta.

anything else, but what also strikes me is how revelational these photos are to the folks who don’t live with someone with a disability,” Labbe-Webb said of the new exhibit. “For many people, it’s like they can only see, and may fear, the challenges involved. They can’t conceive of the enjoyable times and love within these families. I believe Ryan’s work can help change that perception.”

Among the 18 portraits included in “Just Kids” are those depicting a handful of families that are members of the Chattahoochee Valley Down Syndrome Association. The association’s board vice president, Sheetul Wall, first approached Johnson at a CLD Community Advisory Council meeting last year to ask if he might be interested in putting together a dozen or so photos to be displayed at The Buddy Walk taking place on the Total System Services Inc. corporate campus in Columbus this past October.

“For the original exhibition, Sheetul and I decided to focus on the individuals and their siblings,” Johnson explained. “During my day with the families, all of the siblings impressed me. They were gracious,

kind, gentle, and they have to wear many hats. So we went with that — while also wanting the images to be empowering for the families and individuals involved.”

That goal was met, with one parent telling Johnson “...there was one that made me cry. I felt like you captured our family, but you also captured me as a mother to my daughter and how I see my role in her life.” Said another parent: “So many people are scared to embrace the differences in people no matter what that difference is. So I just want to thank you for bringing it to the public eye and especially the academic eye.”

For “Just Kids,” the 13 images from Johnson’s original untitled exhibition have been augmented by five new ones for a total of 18.

GLASS Director **Pat Herndon** is excited about hosting the exhibit due to both the moving subject matter and because “Just Kids” will be the first GLASS exhibit to subsequently tour the rest of the state.

“We are planning to exhibit at
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Appropriations

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The General Assembly increased the governor's recommended \$1 million for major repair and renovation (MRR) projects at public libraries to \$4 million and added another \$2,190,000 to his \$1 million recommendation for computer replacement.

The appropriations bill also allows for up to \$501,850 for merit salary increases for state-reimbursed library and GPLS employees that could take the total of library-related funding above \$14 million. Each of the capital grant projects, as well as the MRR grants, requires matching local funds to complete.

"This year demonstrates the value of the library supporters we have throughout Georgia coming together and speaking in one unified voice to articulate our libraries' needs," said State Librarian **Julie Walker**. "We were extremely fortunate this year to have hundreds

of library advocates and trustees who took the time to write, call and visit their representatives to relate stories about the importance of libraries to families, students, businesspeople and virtually everyone else in their communities. We're also greatly appreciative of the support of author **Karin Slaughter** — our 2016 Georgia Library Champion of the Year — whose advocacy efforts included visits with lawmakers on our behalf.

"It's clear that, in addition to Gov. and Mrs. Deal, we have many wonderful library supporters in both houses of the General Assembly who strongly believe in the value of having and maintaining excellent public libraries across our state," Walker said. She noted that critical support for library funding this year came from **Sen. Jack Hill** (R-Reidsville), chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee; **Rep. Terry England** (R-Auburn), chairman of the House Appropriations Committee; **Sen. David Shafer** (R-

Duluth), president pro tempore of the Senate; **Rep. David Ralston** (R-Blue Ridge), speaker of the House; and **Sen. Frank Ginn** (R-Danielsville) of the Senate Appropriations Committee.

Built in 1975, the Brunswick-Glynn County Library launched a previous expansion in 2003, but the main contractor went out of business, leaving other vendors scrambling to complete final stages without the information needed to solve construction and design issues throughout the building. A modernization of the interior layout will eliminate the building's wasted space, odd angles and safety concerns while increasing its efficiency, flexibility and accessibility.

"The Brunswick Library is a busy place," said **Geri Mullis**, director of Marshes of Glynn Libraries. "Our programming needs have quadrupled since 2015, and we have grown out of the space currently available within the library to house these programs."

Central to the redesign, she said, is a 400-seat public meeting space with movable walls capable of creating up to three separate meeting rooms. "We'll also gain a small meeting room, four study rooms and additional meeting space in our Heritage Room, allowing us to better serve our community for many years to come."

Cairo's Roddenbery Memorial Library must similarly upgrade to adapt to the needs of its community.

"No major improvements have occurred here for 28 years," said Director **Pam Grigg**, "and it is essential that we improve our service areas to meet the evolving needs of our community. These capital funds will help us to expand and employ parts of the building that are not

Kids

Continued from page 3

GLASS Atlanta for three to four months before sending it on a tour of other public libraries that could last for up to an additional 12 months," she said.

"We hope to begin that tour with the library systems that currently have or at one time have had a Talking Book library or outreach center. Those include libraries in Bainbridge, Augusta, Dublin, Macon and Columbus — where the exhibit first began."

A division of Georgia Public Library Service, GLASS provides eligible Georgians with access to

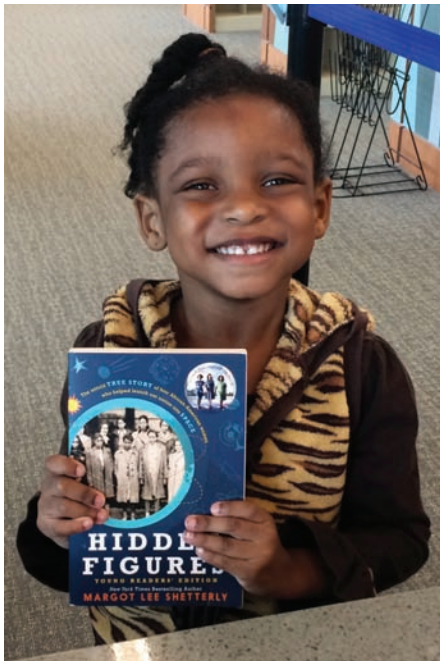
free audio materials and books and magazines in braille through the Library of Congress and the National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped. Every public library system in the state is a GLASS affiliate. GLASS Atlanta welcomes the public to view "Just Kids" from 10 a.m.-6 p.m. Monday through Saturday, with extended evening hours each Thursday until 8 p.m.

GLASS and GPLS's strategic partnership programs are supported in part by a grant from the U.S. Institute of Museum and Library Services under the Library Services and Technology Act. ■

currently well-utilized. They will enable us to have a children's room with user-friendly shelving; computer, reading and study areas specifically designed for children of all ages; a child-sized restroom; and a dedicated art/program room. Teens are excited about their new area, too, which will include a glass-enclosed flex/maker-space and a group-study room."

Additional enhancements at Roddenbery will include a covered walkway/ramp leading to its entrance; the transformation of an old storage area into rooms for family reading and computers; and far better accessibility for individuals with disabilities, as well as for the public.

Leala Sears



Visible delight

As part of a Valentine's Day contest to promote reading, the Newton County Library System gave away six copies (including three Young Readers' Editions) of the book *Hidden Figures: The American Dream and the Untold Story of the Black Women Mathematicians Who Helped Win the Space Race* by Margot Lee Shetterly. To enter, patrons filled out a heart-shaped piece of paper explaining why "I love my library." Four-year-old Amira Rose was thrilled to be a Young Readers' Edition winner at the system's Porter Memorial Library.

Since the addition of its adjacent Ellen Payne Odom Genealogy Library in 1990, the Moultrie-Colquitt County Library is another facility that has not seen a substantial upgrade in nearly three decades.

The funding will cover a near-complete overhaul of the original library, including safety and accessibility upgrades; an improved entry experience; better sightlines for staff; a larger, more visible and welcoming area for children and teens; enhanced technology access, including a dedicated computer lab; and refinements of design and layout to increase the attractiveness of the facility inside and out.

"We are so excited about this funding," said Director **Holly Phillips**. "Most of the building is the original 1965 construction, including the main circulation desk, flooring and even some furniture. While it has served us well, the building is showing many signs of wear and tear.

"We're looking forward to revitalizing it to reflect the way our patrons use the library today. The renovation will result in an attractive, safe and welcoming space the entire community can be proud of."

Phillips noted that her library's recent \$80,000 grant from the Waldo DeLoache Charitable Trust helped it satisfy the matching-funds requirement of the state capital grant.

A 2016 letter-writing campaign by Jones County community leaders; Boy Scout and Girl Scout troops; local clubs and guilds; and educators and students made elected officials aware that the 1986 Jones County Public Library — with its nearly defunct HVAC system and capacity to accommodate only six public-access computers— could no longer meet

the needs of its thriving and exuberant community.

"The residents of Jones County are thrilled to receive this opportunity to increase the size and capacity of their library's service to the community," said **Jennifer Lautzenheiser**, director of the Macon-based Middle Georgia Regional Library. "This renovation also will allow the library to increase accessibility, especially in the areas of children's services and technology literacy. Based upon the strong local commitment to advocating for and supporting this project, it truly will be the library the community built."

"Clearly, library supporters in Colquitt, Glynn, Grady and Jones counties are excited by the General Assembly's allocations for their much-needed facility improvements," Walker said, "and residents in every Georgia county will benefit from the MRR and computer funds."

The revised FY2018 budget now awaits the governor's approval and signature on or before May 8. ■

AJC names Gwinnett libraries a top workplace

Based on the results of an employee feedback survey, the Gwinnett County Public Library has been awarded a 2017 Top Workplaces, Workplace Achiever honor by *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*.

"We are very pleased to receive this acknowledgment from the AJC," said library Executive Director **Charles Pace**. "GCPL's employees are our greatest resource and their continued satisfaction with working conditions as demonstrated by this survey is very important to our overall efforts to maintain an effective library program." ■

NEWS IN BRIEF

Dorcas Davis

has joined GPLS as director of continuing education and training. She joins the agency from the University of Memphis Lambuth Campus in Jackson, Tenn., where she was a librarian. Her prior experience also includes professional positions with the Atlanta-Fulton and Cobb County Public Library Systems and the Mercer Medical Library in Macon. She holds a master's degree in library science from Clarion University of Pennsylvania and a bachelor's degree in business administration from LeMoyne Owen College in Memphis.



Davis

Asha Hagood

has become a member of the Georgia Libraries for Accessible Statewide Services (GLASS) team as an Atlanta-based outreach librarian. She joins GLASS from the International Academy of Smyrna, where she served as media specialist. She previously worked as a library associate in the Atlanta-Fulton Public Library System's learning and career center. Hagood earned a master's degree in library and information science from the University of North Texas in Denton; a master's degree in instructional design and technology from Walden University in Minneapolis; and a Bachelor of Arts degree in English from Georgia State University.



Hagood

Library Associate **Dawn Hawkins** has joined the GPLS



Hawkins

Hawkins has completed course work for a degree in business administration at Dalton State College.

Catie Tierney has been named head of public services at the Macon-based Middle Georgia Regional Library (MGRL). She has 13 years of



Tierney

library experience, including seven with MGRL, where she has served as a reference librarian, head of reference and head of the Washington Memorial Library. She earned a bachelor's degree in political science and a master's degree in library science from Valdosta State University.

State Librarian **Julie Walker** has been appointed to the Georgia Certified Public Manager Program Advisory Committee. Administered by the University of Georgia's Carl Vinson Institute of Government, the advisory committee provides strategic vision, guidance and direction in trends in the field of public management, training needs in the public sector and access to resources.

Gov. Nathan Deal has appointed **Wendy Cornelisen**, assistant state librarian for library innovation and collaboration, to the

administration group from the Northwest Georgia Regional Library System, where she served as financial administrative operations assistant for more than a decade.

board for the newly created Georgia Center for Early Language and Literacy at Georgia College and State University. The nine-member board will oversee the center and work to enhance the state's ability to train educators and improve early childhood education. Board members were selected based on background and experience in advocating for early childhood care and education across the state.

The Public Library Association (PLA) has awarded its 2017 John Iliff Award to Gwinnett County Public Library (GCPL) Executive Director **Charles Pace**. Honoring the life and accomplishments of John Iliff, an early adopter and champion of technology in public libraries, this award provides a \$1,000 honorarium to a library professional or library that



Pace

has used technology and innovation as a tool to improve services to public library users. Pace was recognized for leading the implementation of Open+, a system developed by Norcross-based technology supplier Bibliotheca that controls and monitors building access, self-service kiosks, public access computers, lighting, alarms, public announcements and patron safety. GCPL's Lawrenceville Branch became the first library in North America to offer the service in June 2016.

Elissa Checov, manager of library services at Gwinnett Technical College / Gwinnett County Public Library in Lawrenceville, has been named one of 10 national winners of this year's I Love My Librarian Award,

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News

Continued from page 6 sponsored by the Carnegie Corporation of New York, The New York Public Library and *The New York Times*. Checov was recognized for her



Checov

exceptional contributions to the community and ongoing commitment to transforming lives through education and lifelong learning. She received a \$5,000 prize at an

award ceremony and reception in New York City. The American Library Association administers the award through its Public Awareness Office.

The Georgia Room at Live Oak Public Libraries has a new digital Pro Scan Microfilm reader, courtesy of **Brenda Poku**, regional area coordinator for the system. Poku won the machine in a vendor drawing at the American Library Association's 2017 Midwinter Meeting, held in



Poku

Atlanta in January, and donated it to her system for use with its local history collection. Poku is a member of the 2016-2017 class of PINNACLE, GPLS's comprehensive leadership program that is currently underway.

This year's winner of the Georgia Peach Book Award for Teen Readers is *The Book of Ivy* by **Amy Engel**. The award, now in its 14th year, highlights and promotes the best current young adult literature for Georgia high-school-age students, encourage teens to read and promotes the development of cooperative school and public library services for young adults. This year's selection committee also named *Simon and the Homo Sapiens Agenda* by **Becky Albertalli** and *When* by **Victoria Laurie** as 2016-17 honor books. ■

Tech boot camp to begin April 25

The annual three-day GPLS Tech Boot Camp is just around corner, kicking off April 25 at Unicoi State Park and Lodge in Helen.

Hosted by **Emily Almond**, director of information technology, and her staff, the boot camp is a haven for library techies, network administrators, desktop gurus and other IT professionals representing the 63 public library systems to gather, discuss and share ideas, trends and the future of the field.

Makerspaces, coding, cloud services and wireless access are just a few things on the agenda for this year's attendees.

Now in its eighth year, the boot camp will feature an array of expert guests and panel discussions, and it will run through April 27. Registration is now open and can be accessed online at galibtech.org. ■



Staff

Positive space

Director Stacy Brown and staff members of the Conyers-Rockdale Library System welcomed county commissioners, Conyers Civic League members, trustees and patrons to the dedication of a mural in the children's department at the Nancy Guinn Memorial Library on Feb. 17. The mural consists of original artwork created by students at The Sketching Pad, a local art gallery and studio. Under the guidance of artists Jennifer Baker and Laura Woodall, students conceptualized the art for a park where animals native to Georgia interact. The mural was commissioned by the library and the Conyers Civic League. Pictured are Kara Stowers; Mary Hardy and granddaughter Violet Pino; Beth Andersen; Ashley Pearson; Brown; S'themble West; Judy Mauran, granddaughter of Nancy Guinn, and Ryver Bailey, Mauran's granddaughter; Charlotte Gellert; Beverly Gaines; Woodall; Doreen Williams; LaCoshia Williams; Carolyn Cathey; and Baker.



Staff

Happy trails

On March 1, the University System of Georgia kicked off its HealthTrails Challenge, a fun and friendly competition promoting wellness. Although GPLS staff members couldn't get away to participate in the "Walk With the Chancellor" event, the agency held its own miniwalk to coincide. In front from left are Elaine Black, Wendy Cornelisen, Whitney Payne and Julie Walker. Behind are Roy Cummings, Terran McCanna, Nathan Rall, Dorcas Davis, Chris Sharp, Myers Scott, Peggy Chambliss and Tamika Strong.



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Information presented in this newsletter will be provided in alternative formats on request. For more information about Georgia's libraries and literary events, or to post an event, visit our online calendar at www.georgialibraries.org

Michael Valentine



Double achievement

State and local officials welcomed approximately 2,000 residents to a ribbon cutting and grand opening ceremony for the West Georgia Regional Library's (WGRL) new Villa Rica Public Library on Feb. 11. The facility more than doubles the size of the old library, bringing the community multiple study rooms, a dedicated teen space, a computer lab and a drive-up window for the checkout and return of materials. Pictured from left are Rep. Micah Gravley (R-Douglasville); Sen. Mike Dugan (R-Carrollton); Villa Rica City Council members Shirley Marchman and Gil McDougal; Mayor Jeff Reese; Wayne Driver; Rep. J. Collins (R-Villa Rica); Lucie Barden, granddaughter of former WGRL Director Jim Cooper; Villa Rica Library Board Chair Brenda Gray; and West Georgia Regional Library Board Chair Clint Chance.