



ILLINOIS LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

Because Libraries Matter

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Press Release

Essie Harris, Douglass Branch Manager of Champaign Public Library, receives the Illinois Library Association's 2018 Hugh C. Atkinson Memorial Award, which is awarded annually for sustained activity and contributions having a lasting impact on librarianship.

Coming up on her fifty-year anniversary at the Champaign Public Library, Harris has been a long standing champion for bringing services, programming and collaboration to her community. Just one example is when Harris recognized that there was a dire need for improved access to computers and the internet at her library. Not only did she spearhead efforts to fix this problem, but she also helped find funding for remodeling the space.

Harris is a role model for staff at the Douglass Branch, as well as throughout the region. She encourages people to be independent and empowers them to try new methods, knowing there's much to be learned when things don't go exactly as planned. Ms. Harris selflessly shares her expertise without condescension. Her sense of humor and open style of communication provide a safe space for others to tap into their potential and display their talents, fueled by her encouragement.

Giving back to the profession, Harris has partnered with the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign School of Information Sciences to encourage graduate students to gain valuable, hands-on experience while working with real library customers during a 100-hour practicum at the Douglass Branch.

Essie Harris is the personification of the ultimate advocate for library users, especially when it comes to access and equality. Her sustained commitment to community along

with her extensive use of shared resources make Essie Harris extremely deserving of the Hugh C. Atkinson Memorial Award.

The Hugh C. Atkinson Memorial Award will be presented at the Awards Luncheon to be held on Tuesday, October 9, during the 2018 Illinois Library Association Annual Conference in Peoria. The luncheon starts at 12:00 noon.

For further information, contact the Illinois Library Association.

For Immediate Release