



ILLINOIS LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

Because Libraries Matter

Illinois Library Association
33 W. Grand Ave., Suite 401
Chicago, IL 60654-6799

Phone: 312.644.1896
Fax: 312.644.1899
Email: ila@ila.org

Press Release

The Illinois Library Association’s Public Policy Committee is honored to present this year’s Robert R. McClarren Legislative Development Award to Illinois State Senator Patrick McGuire. The award is given to a worthy recipient from the Illinois library community—librarian, trustee, legislator, or library—who has contributed significantly to legislative development in the state of Illinois.

Pat McGuire served in the Illinois State Senate from 2012 through 2020, and chaired the chamber’s Higher Education Committee. Prior to his term in the Illinois General Assembly, Senator McGuire held elected office as a school board member and a county treasurer. His service in the Senate was characterized by his attention to educational and library-related legislation, in recent years co-sponsoring legislation to provide the Illinois State Library flexibility in awarding per capita grant awards above statutory funding limits when the appropriated funding for the grants exceeds the amount needed to make awards to all qualifying public libraries, and flexibility for library systems to provide a type of service that extends over system geographical borders; to enable the inclusion of media literacy education in high school curricula; and to raise the floor dollar amount of capital projects for which libraries needed to advertise for bids from \$20,000 to \$25,000.

In a time of COVID-19 budget crises, Senator McGuire, an avid library user and champion for library service, saved the Joliet Public Library’s building remodel by including the \$6.3M in funds that the City had originally pledged in the FY 2021 state budget as part of the Rebuild Illinois Grant. Fortified with the promise of the future grant proceeds, the City of Joliet sold bonds for the Library’s project in October, 2020 and the project will break ground in March, 2021. Were it not for the Senator

introducing this generous grant, the remodeling of a historic building designed by famous architect Daniel Burnham in 1903 would not have been possible. The project's goals for the \$10.5M overall project include a substantial play area for children, a state-of-the-art digital media studio, an art studio for local artists in residence, and study rooms for the first time in the building's existence.

In 2019 Senator McGuire spoke strongly in support of access to needed materials for prisoners at the Danville Correctional Center. At the time, more than 200 books were removed from the Center. Overwhelmingly, the books that were removed dealt with Black history and the Black experience in America. Titles such as *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and Booker T. Washington's autobiography were not available to prisoners. Though Black people account for about 14 percent of the population in Illinois, they make up over half of prisoners in the state, making advocacy for their intellectual freedom all the more essential. Senator McGuire and State Representative John Connor also hosted a book drive for prisoners. Hundreds of books were collected and delivered to Statesville Prison and the Will County Jail.

In addition to his legacy of service to his constituents, promotion of library service, library structural renewal, and upholding intellectual freedom, Senator McGuire supported the Illinois Library Association by attending every one of the Library Legislative Meet-ups in his district during his term of service, and speaking at the Illinois Library Association Annual Conference in 2017 as part of the panel presentation "Effective Advocacy from a Primary Source," to educate attendees in the best ways to advocate for libraries with elected officials.

The Robert R. McClarren Legislative Development Award will be presented at an awards ceremony during the 2021 Illinois Library Association Annual Conference. The conference will take place October 12-14, 2021.

For further information, contact the Illinois Library Association.

For Immediate Release