



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

Joseph Filapek, President of the Board of Trustees at the Aurora Public Library District, is the 2022 Illinois Library Association (ILA) Trustee of the Year Award recipient. This annual citation is awarded to a public library trustee for contributions to local library, system activities, and involvement on the state and national levels, as well as notable leadership qualities, years of service, offices/positions/committees, and accomplishments.

Filapek has served on the Aurora Public Library Board since 2007. As a librarian, he brings his professional education and library experiences to his service on his library board and with the Illinois Library Association. Filapek has previously served in *varying capacities with the Warrenville Public Library and Naperville Public Library including Circulation Manager and Head of Adult Services*. Since 2013, he has served as the Director of Continuing Education and Consulting with Reaching Across Illinois Library System (RAILS).

In 2020, when the Aurora Public Library became a separate governmental body from the city of Aurora, Joe took an active leadership role. In 2021, as the library transitioned from an appointed to an elected board, Filapek was elected to a six-year term.

In the midst of the pandemic, with over 70% of the board newly elected, Filapek's leadership as the library's first Board President was invaluable. "Joe set a calm, competent, thoughtful, and responsible tone and example for an entirely new elected board. He was one of two trustees who were on our board previously, and one of three who have ever served on a library board before," said Aurora Public Library Executive Director Michaela Haberkern. "While they all had excellent intentions and a strong

determination to serve the community, they had absolutely no preconceptions about library operations, library law, or municipal finance – and no experience working together. Most of them had never met. This group of strangers has become a cohesive, amicable, curious, and effective board under Joe’s leadership.” Board Secretary, Suzanne Stegeman, agrees. “Joe’s fundamental knowledge of library operations, combined with his institutional knowledge of the Aurora Public Library District has provided our board with both hindsight and foresight. His leadership during this exceptional time provided the Board with institutional memory, stability, and an environment that supports diverse opinions.”

A member of the Illinois Library Association since 2006, Filapek has served on the ILA Intellectual Freedom Committee and the ILA Executive Board. During his time on the Executive Board, Filapek has served as ILA Treasurer and liaison to various committees and forums, including the ILA Trustee Forum. He has presented continuing education programs for trustees, librarians, and support staff at ILA Annual Conferences and Reaching Forward Conferences. Filapek’s professional library experience, love of libraries, and strong leadership skills make him worthy of ILA’s prestigious Trustee of the Year award.

The Trustee of the Year Award will be presented at an awards ceremony during the 2022 Illinois Library Association Annual Conference. The conference will take place October 18-20, 2022.

For further information, contact the Illinois Library Association.

For Immediate Release