



ILLINOIS LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

Because Libraries Matter

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Press Release

Becky Keane, the President of the Niles-Maine District Library in Niles, Illinois, is the 2023 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.

Keane started her role on the Niles-Maine District Library Board as an appointed Trustee in the fall of 2020. The 2021 election in Niles saw an extremely low turnout of voters which resulted in a turnover of the Board of Trustees. The new slate of officers immediately invoked a hiring freeze, passed a greatly reduced budget, and ultimately forced out the library's director. Keane was outspoken against the cuts and actions of the newly elected members. She worked with local community groups, as well as with national leaders like EveryLibrary, to keep the residents of the Library District informed. Her actions in support of the library led to a court battle as one of the newly elected board members filed a suit against her appointment to the Board of Trustees. It was an unsuccessful attempt to remove her.

Keane spent the next two years building on her relationships with community leaders and state legislators to continue to raise awareness of the situation at the library.

Together they were able to establish a slate of candidates called "Reclaim Our Library." The group gained a lot of interest and were enthusiastically backed by the community. A large group of volunteers, including library staff and union members, canvassed the community to support them in an effort to put the library back in the hands of pro-

library trustees. The Reclaim Our Library slate was overwhelmingly successful in the election.

During this time, she was also pursuing her Master of Library and Information Science at the University of North Carolina-Greensboro and working at the Des Plaines Public Library.

Keane's selfless dedication to maintaining the viability of the Niles-Maine District Library to the community is remarkable. Her support for the staff and outreach to the community has been applauded by her peers.

The ILA Trustee of the Year Award will be presented at an awards ceremony during the 2023 Illinois Library Association Annual Conference. The conference will take place October 24-26 in Springfield, Illinois.

For more information, contact the Illinois Library Association.

For Immediate Release