

# From the President



As my time as Florida Library Association President is coming to an end, I wanted to reflect on this past year. My theme was reset and reconnect and let me tell you, I've had to reset many times this year. My goal was to approach each day with positivity and do my best to navigate through different protocols, challenges and keeping library staff a priority.

Starting as FLA President with the Executive Director resigning was a challenge, but it afforded me the opportunity to learn even more about FLA and get the chance to work more closely with Karen Layton, Communications and Events Manager. Karen is so dedicated to FLA and with her help FLA continued to run smoothly. I am so happy we have Jennifer Pratt as our Interim Executive Director. She jumped right in and planned Library Day and made it seamless. She will be a wonderful guide as we begin the search for an Executive Director. Karen and Jennifer have been such a pleasure to work with along with an amazing Board, I couldn't have done it without them.

During my term in office we started the arduous task of updating the FLA bylaws and reviewing the Public Library Standards and Outcomes. Our board will continue to work on these items going forward.

I loved that FLA continued the theme from Past President, Laura Spears, "Lead Inclusively," with the DEIA task force becoming a committee. I have really enjoyed the diversity discussions put together by the committee. The interaction between those in attendance and reading something that I may not have picked up on my own was refreshing and inspiring.

Engaging with our committees was very important this year with the numerous book challenges across the state. The Intellectual Freedom Committee and Board worked diligently to come out with a Statement on the Freedom to Read. This is a call to all of us to uphold our Library Bill of Rights and promote and protect the Freedom to Read.

Our advocacy committee worked hard to set up an in-person library day in Tallahassee along with a virtual presence throughout the state. We were successful on our platform and continue to strive to get more funding for libraries.

Getting involved with FLA committees is a wonderful way to get to know FLA members from across the state. I enjoyed attending all the committee meetings. Professional Development hosted a Health and Wellness Series that resonated with our reconnecting theme as health and mental care are so important to making us better workers. I am very excited to see the Poster Sessions that will be at conference that this committee vented.

Membership and Communications are all so tied together in how they work throughout the year to enhance our Association. Communications worked on different ways to get the word out to our members and I love that Membership will have a table at conference. Stop by and visit the membership table and share what you love about being an FLA member.

And I can't forget the Conference Committee and the Awards Committee – how exciting to have an in-person conference to reconnect with all our colleagues across the state! Attending the Conference Committee and Awards Committee meetings exemplifies how strong volunteers can be when they work together. The time and dedication will be evident in the conference and all the amazing things they have planned for attendees. And wait until you hear about our award winners this year! You will be inspired!

Thank you for letting me serve as President. I plan to reset after conference and look forward to reconnecting with all of you in my support of FLA as Past President.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Phyllis Gorshe". The ink is dark and the signature is fluid and legible.

Phyllis Gorshe  
2021-2022 President  
Florida Library Association