

**Año 3 Número 73 mayo 2018**

Contenidos de este número

1. 2018 AIA/ALA Library Building Awards Announced

By Christina Vercelletto

The [American Institute of Architects](https://www.aia.org/resources/187311-2018-aiaala-library-building-awards) (AIA) partners each year with the [American Library Association (ALA)/Library Leadership and Management Association](https://www.aia.org/awards/7241-aiaala-library-building-award)(LLAMA) to recognize the best in library architecture and design. The [2018 AIA/ALA Library Building Awards](https://www.aia.org/resources/187311-2018-aiaala-library-building-awards), announced on April 6, included public libraries from Cape Cod to California.

“World-class libraries can be of any size and design, but the element of transformation, where you leave the world behind and fully engage in learning, is still one of the most important outcomes of outstanding design,” said juror Lisa Lintner Valenzuela, library director, Johnson County Public Library in Franklin, IN.

This year’s winners all fill that bill. “When [the libraries] are approached and entered, patrons have a sense of awe wash over them,” said Lintner Valenzuela.

“The most successful designs include different kinds of spaces—areas for group collaboration, others for intensive individual work,” juror Sara A. Bushong, dean of University Libraries at Bowling Green State University, OH, told *Library Journal*. “In addition, users enjoy spaces that have natural light [and] overlook something interesting, whether an urban area, a lush landscape, or a body of water. All of the winners embrace these characteristics.”

Despite the variety in the winning libraries when it comes to architecture and geography, Bushong noted that “they all expressed a sincere desire to connect to their user bases.” Lintner Valenzuela agreed. “In each case, the user and the community [were] carefully studied, and the design of the exteriors and interiors reflect the community’s motivations for learning.”

Fit is also key for a 21st-century library, added juror Terri Luke, senior manager of library facilities for Wake County, NC. “How the architect and the library staff brought together the best physical layout and appointments to fit the community [the library] serves was the basis on which I judged the libraries,” said Luke. “All of the entries have at least one outstanding element and possibly more, but the stellar examples were those that integrated excellence in design with functionality for the library customer.”

Those six stellar examples are as follows:

[Austin Central Library](http://library.austintexas.gov/), Austin, TX
*Lake|Flato Architects and Shepley Bulfinch*

Situated in west downtown Austin, this $120 million library/community center features a bright, airy six-story atrium and a rooftop reading porch with views of Shoal Creek and Lady Bird Lake. A Maker space, cookbook-themed coffee shop, kitchen, and 350-seat special events center round out the offerings at “Austin’s Library of the Future,” as John Gillum, manager of the library’s facilities services department, calls it. Hiking and biking trails are adjacent to the library. The building, expected to soon be LEED (Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design) Platinum certified, utilizes a 373,000 gallon cistern that funnels rainwater into the restroom and irrigation systems. This is an important consideration in frequently drought-stricken Austin.

[Eastham Public Library](https://www.easthamlibrary.org/), Eastham, MA
*Oudens Ello Architecture*

“I somehow knew the library would win this award,” said Eastham director Debra DeJonker-Berry. “I think because of the way it makes me feel every time I come to work, and the way it makes people feel when they are here. The natural light, beauty of the pond, sunsets, and the fresh Cape air continually coming in thanks to the new HVAC design.”

The original single room that was the entire Eastham Public Library when it opened in 1898 is on the National Register of Historic Places, so the design team had to get creative in keeping that piece intact while reimagining a library to meet the needs of a community that increases sixfold during the summer months. Most of the new structure was placed to the rear of the property, overlooking one of Cape Cod’s many glacial kettle ponds. From the road the library doesn’t look much larger, and still blends into the residential area. Weathered cedar shingles and bluestone flooring underscore the coastal location. That location brings special considerations, which were effectively addressed in the form of a stormwater retention system and vegetated bioswales (attractive landscaping fixtures) to manage storm surges.

“A major highway bifurcates the town, so it does not have a traditional downtown. For many, the new library now provides a town center,” said DeJonker-Berry.

[Hastings Public Library](http://hastingslibrary.us/), Hastings, NE
*The Clark Enersen Partners*

This major renovation turned a drab, worn Kennedy-administration era building into a modern educational hub that’s brought a buzz of energy to downtown Hastings. The design team had their work cut out for them, confronting safety and accessibility issues, including asbestos. Those were made no less challenging by the constraints of the location, which allowed virtually no room for expansion. The library was gutted and completely reimagined. “Clark Enersen took a very closed-off building and made it open and adaptable. This space is flexible, bright, inviting, and welcoming to all, exactly what a library should be now and always,” said library director Amy Hafer.

The new facade gives the library a fresh identity, and the improvements inside are just as impressive. These include an entire floor dedicated to young readers, outfitted with age-appropriate tech, and a formerly underused basement transformed into a Maker space and archives. “Our lower level is very special to us. Before it was just storage, and now it’s a place for the community to learn upcoming technology and create their own content,” Morgan Karel, public relations coordinator for Hastings, told *LJ*.

[Laurel Branch Library](https://www.pgcmls.info/branch/location/Laurel), Largo, MD
*Grimm + Parker Architects*

Replacing one of the most heavily-used libraries in Prince George’s County, this building sits in a special location: directly adjacent to Emancipation Park, a historic site with deep roots in the African-American community of the area. The new, larger library had to expand into an acre of the park in order to have sufficient parking. In exchange, developers added enhancements to the rest of the park, such as interpretative signs and poles and an amphitheater used for Emancipation Day celebrations.

Inside are the works of local artists, plenty of new spaces for community meetings–and a dinosaur dig site for kids. Michael B. Gannon, chief operating officer for support services for Prince George’s County Memorial Library System, thinks Discovery Island is the most unique aspect of the library. “It has a replica dinosaur skeleton under a glass floor, an ‘erupting’ volcano, color-changing dinosaur footprints in the floor, and a study area inside a Brontosaurus rib cage,” he explained. “I love how the children interact with the features.” The layout is intuitive, so patrons don’t need to rely on signs. Sweeps of hardy native plants and oak trees add beauty to the library grounds. Flowering cherry trees recall Washington, DC, only 30 minutes to the west.

“The lobby, restrooms, meeting rooms, and computer lab can get power, heating, cooling, and Wi-Fi from a generator. This area can be opened to the community in the event of a major power outage or catastrophic weather event,” added Gannon.

(For more coverage of Laurel Branch Library, see *Library Journal*, May 1, 2018, p. 26ff.)

[Pico Branch Library](https://smpl.org/PicoBranch.aspx), Santa Monica, CA
*Koning Eizenberg Architecture, Inc.*

Designed in line with the community’s expressed desire for a social gathering spot that maximized green space, this nearly 9,000 square foot building is the first new library built in Santa Monica in 60 years. On Saturdays, its front door opens onto the local farmers market, a fact that has inspired multiple library programs on nutrition. A new community room and amphitheater host programs for seniors, teens, and job seekers. An automatic book sorter has allowed staff more time to directly assist patrons. Best of all, families who previously hadn’t used the library have started showing up. In the first six months after opening its doors, the library added 1,200 new members.

[Tulsa City–County Central Library](https://www.tulsalibrary.org/central), Tulsa, OK
*MSR Design*

This library stands ready to help revitalize the urban core of Oklahoma. The entrance was made easier to access, and an 88,000 square foot parking garage with an inside link to the library was built. The exterior was set with new cast-stone panels, public art surrounding the building was refurbished, and the entire circa-1965 building was thoroughly cleaned. The civic plaza surrounding the library, previously harsh and uninviting, has been repaved, landscaped, and equipped with seating for hundreds of people near a new outdoor garden. Perhaps the most eye-catching piece of Central, this area serves as a meeting space when the library is closed. “Here, customers can enjoy outdoor story times, movie nights on the jumbo screen, and numerous programs that offer the beauty of nature in an urban setting,” Central Library CEO Kimberly Johnson told *Library Journal*.

Glass study cubes entice passersby with a peek inside. The Maker space has a recording studio and labs outfitted with laser engravers, flight simulators, and 3-D printers. “Customer- focused models and engaging staff provide connection and relationship, while self-directed service technology provides customer convenience parallel with modern day experiences,” said Johnson. “Central Library and the entire Tulsa City–County Library system is dedicated to growing with our communities, adapting to their needs and meeting them where they are…in the 21st century.”

https://lj.libraryjournal.com/2018/05/buildings/2018-aiaala-library-building-awards-announced/

1. IMLS Announces Recipients of 2018 National Medal for Museum and Library Service

Filed by [Gary Price](https://www.infodocket.com/author/gprice/) on May 1, 2018

From the [Institute of Museum and Library Services:](https://www.imls.gov/news-events/news-releases/imls-selects-top-10-museums-libraries-national-medal-museum-and-library)

The Institute of Museum and Library Services today announced the 10 recipients of the [2018 National Medal for Museum and Library Service](https://www.imls.gov/issues/national-initiatives/national-medal-museum-and-library-service), the nation’s highest honor given to libraries and museums that make significant and exceptional contributions to their communities. Over the past 24 years, the award has celebrated 182 institutions that are making a difference for individuals, families, and communities. The award will be presented at an event at the U.S. Institute of Peace in Washington, D.C., on May 24.

Selected from 29 national finalists, the 2018 National Medal for Museum and Library Service winners represent institutions that provide dynamic programming and services that exceed expected levels of service. Through their community outreach, these institutions bring about change that touches the lives of individuals and helps communities thrive.

The 2018 National Medal recipients are:

* Children’s Museum of Denver at Marsico Campus (Denver, CO)
* The Detroit Historical Society (Detroit, MI)
* El Paso Museum of Art (El Paso, TX)
* Georgetown Public Library (Georgetown, TX)
* History Museum at the Castle (Appleton, WI)
* Orange County Library System (Orlando, FL)
* Pueblo City-County Library District (Pueblo, CO)
* Reading Public Library (Reading, PA)
* Rochester Public Library (Rochester, MN)
* University of Oregon’s Museum of Natural and Cultural History (Eugene, OR)

“It is a pleasure to recognize the 10 distinctive recipients of the National Medal of Museum and Library Service,” said IMLS Director Dr. Kathryn K. Matthew. “Through their programs, services, and partnerships, these institutions exemplify the many ways that libraries and museums are positively transforming communities across the nation.”

Following the ceremony, [StoryCorps](http://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?f=001jTO4ejfW_pH3UHiORh0dsGw8xYC6i1HnB2OfxzQAVOsZ3_DVzn5PJwP-JcvGbS-UP5DzhqZf4N07EyUCjWROTMZMB5vG8GKn7QnnBiJVMWhXbsGi7zuCzBImsybetPBGCz-KppN3buj4OT8RBmNF5TknyVH0IJcqCATGfEvExQQuxL9Fv2ldGc-8zwQtKymqHD9pXXlT0amzYkVqRs7jrhcPsZwF7Nb_1nB7vGWgqZw=&c=QVUgP2pWqak6yzrNmjEUxARTcXTFG1pmGZnNOk7VLwcE-NamUsk88w==&ch=JraQyFyOi_hiBP1mcyMH8B35xb7q_bwP05qDPnTK6jEq-TWMfkcuVA==" \t "_blank)—a national nonprofit dedicated to recording, preserving, and sharing the stories of Americans—will visit each recipient and provide an opportunity for community members to share stories of how the institution has affected their lives. These stories are preserved at the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress.

Direct to [Complete Announcement](https://www.imls.gov/news-events/news-releases/imls-selects-top-10-museums-libraries-national-medal-museum-and-library)

See Also: [IMLS Names 29 Finalists for National Medal for Museum and Library Service (March 5, 2018)](https://www.infodocket.com/2018/03/05/imls-names-finalists-for-national-medal-for-museum-and-library-service/)

See Also: List of Winners
[2017](https://www.infodocket.com/2017/05/15/the-10-recipients-of-2017-national-medal-for-museum-and-library-service-announced/) ||| [2016](https://www.imls.gov/news-events/news-releases/ten-winners-nations-highest-museum-and-library-honor-announced) ||| [2015](https://www.imls.gov/publications/imls-videos/2015-medals) ||| [2014](https://www.imls.gov/2014-medal-winners)

https://www.infodocket.com/2018/05/01/imls-announces-recipients-of-2018-national-medal-for-museum-and-library-service/

1. Florida State University Announces Plan to Cancel “Big Deal” Contract with Elsevier

Filed by [Gary Price](https://www.infodocket.com/author/gprice/)

From an [Post/Statement by Julie Zimmerman, Dean of Florida State University Libraries:](https://www.lib.fsu.edu/elsevier-changes)

The Florida State University Libraries, after long deliberation, are planning to cancel FSU’s comprehensive “big deal” subscription to Elsevier journals. Instead, the Libraries will subscribe to a subset of most-needed journals, as identified by faculty and usage statistics. This change will take place in January 2019.

[Clip]

The exceptionally high and ever-increasing cost of the Elsevier “big deal” has made it unsustainable. Florida State University currently pays just under $2 million a year, and the cost increases by at least 4% annually.

FSU is being charged too much — all because of a poorly thought-out 20-year-old contract between Elsevier and the State University System. Through this contract, UCF pays less than $1M for the exact same product. FIU pays just over a million. USF pays about $1.5 million.

[Clip]

Over the last 8 years, FSU’s provosts and I have tried every possible way to negotiate a reduction to FSU’s disproportionately high cost, without success. A partial cancellation is our only remaining option.

Much of the demand for articles will be met seamlessly through individually subscribed titles. For unsubscribed content, access will be available by (1) interlibrary loan delivery to the desktop guaranteed within 24 hours (no cost); or (2) expedited delivery within minutes ($30, subsidized by the library.)

Read the [Complete Announcement](https://www.lib.fsu.edu/elsevier-changes)

See Also: [Report from Lindsey McKenzie at Inside HigherEd](https://www.insidehighered.com/quicktakes/2018/04/26/florida-state-cancels-bundled-journal-deal-elsevier)

Thanks to [*Krista C. for Tip*](http://twitter.com/arlpolicy)

https://www.infodocket.com/2018/04/26/florida-state-university-announces-plan-to-cancel-big-deal-contract-with-elsevier/

1. New Zealand: University of Auckland Students to Rally Against Library Closures

Filed by [Gary Price](https://www.infodocket.com/author/gprice/)

UPDATED: [Video Report from TVNZ](https://www.tvnz.co.nz/one-news/new-zealand/watch-students-protest-closing-auckland-university-s-fine-arts-library)

From [The New Zealand Herald:](https://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/news/article.cfm?c_id=1&objectid=12041357)

Almost 1000 students will rally against the closure of libraries at the University of Auckland next week.

[Clip]

Consultation is still ongoing on a proposal to close branch libraries in the music, fine arts and architecture schools and at the Tamaki and Epsom campuses, relocating the books to the General Library or putting them into storage.

[Clip]

“Students’ response to this proposal shows how angry and concerned we are,” said Auckland University Students’ Association (AUSA) education vice-president, Jessica Palairet.

“Libraries are at the heart of our university. They provide spaces for students to study, specialists to help with research and essay writing, and access to some of the best collections in the Southern Hemisphere.”

A University spokeswoman said the proposal was not doing away with any of these things, and that the resources from the other libraries would be moved to the General Library.

Read the [Complete Article](https://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/news/article.cfm?c_id=1&objectid=12041357)

See Also: 5. [New Zealand: University of Auckland Plan Rally to Protest the Closing of Five Libraries](http://www.scoop.co.nz/stories/ED1804/S00063/student-protest-against-library-closures.htm)

https://www.infodocket.com/2018/04/28/new-zealand-university-of-auckland-students-to-rally-against-library-closures/

1. Talleres y Conferencias: Congreso Internacional de Metadatos, La Revolución de los Datos

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Estimado Colega,

En unos días dará inicio el Congreso Internacional de Metadatos, en donde se reunirán trabajos, talleres y ponencias de primer nivel tratando los siguientes temas:

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| --- | --- | --- |
| CONFERENCIAS MAGISTGRALES | MESAS REDONDAS | ESTUDIO DE CASO EN PROCESO |
| Gobernanza e interoperabilidad de sistemas de información.Retrospectiva de la investigación bibliotecológica sobre metadatos.Los metadatos y la preservación digital. | Web Semántica. Datos enlazados e interoperabilidad. Gobierno abierto y Ciudadanía digital. Datos científicos: Políticas de ciencia abierta. Perfiles y equipos de trabajo actuales y futuros.  | De los Metadatos para la Organización de la Información a la Tecnología Middleware para los Servicios de las Bibliotecas: La Revolución de FRBR-RDA y Big Data.El papel de los metadatos en la construcción de datos enlazados para bibliotecas.Las ontologías terminológicas en la organización temática de recursos de información.  |

 Talleres a elegir:

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Fecha | Nombre Taller | Ponente | Sede |
| 28 Mayo  09:00 – 13:00 | Una introducción a la Informática con el Software Libre | Marco Brandão  | Salón cómputo IIBI |
| 28 Mayo  09:00 – 13:00 | Management of Scientific Data | Dr. Angela P. Murillo | Seminario 2 |
| 28 Mayo14:00 – 18:00 | Gestión de la información científica con Zotero | Dr. Andrés Fernández Ramos  | Salón cómputo IIBI |
|   |   |   |   |
| 29 Mayo09:00 – 13:00 | Gestión de la información científica con Mendeley | Dr. Andrés Fernández Ramos  | Salón cómputo IIBI |
| 29 Mayo10:00-14:00 | Taxonomías digitales para la organización de la información | Mtra. Adriana Suárez Sánchez; Lic. Martha ArlÍn López Hernández | Aula 1 |
| 29 mayo 10:00 – 14:00 | Administración de Metadatos para Catalogadores: Herramientas y Consejos para los Principiantes | Dra. Lisa Furubotten | Seminario 2 |
| 29 Mayo15:00 – 17:00 | Metadatos para la documentación, recuperación y difusión de eventos en tiempo real | Francisco Esquivel del Reyo  | Aula 1 |

Construya su agenda seleccionando los talleres de su preferencia, llene el formato de registro adjunto, envíelo a inscripec@iibi.unam.mx y realice su inscripción.

Será un placer saludarle en el congreso.

Lic. Jorge Castañeda

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1. Alt-Right Activist Disturbs Law Library, Banned From UVA

By [Lisa Peet](https://lj.libraryjournal.com/author/lpeet/) on May 3, 2018 [3 Comments](https://lj.libraryjournal.com/2018/05/academic-libraries/alt-right-activist-disturbs-law-library-banned-from-uva/#comments)



Students react to Jason Kessler at UVA Law Library
Photo courtesy of C-VILLE Weekly

Jason Kessler, the alt-right activist who was a primary organizer of the August 2017 Unite the Right rally that [ignited violence in Charlottesville, VA](https://lj.libraryjournal.com/2017/08/public-services/charlottesville-libraries-weather-violent-protests-offer-unity/), has been banned from the University of Virginia (UVA) campus in Charlottesville after visiting the UVA Law Library on April 18 and again on April 25. Kessler, a 2009 UVA graduate, stated that he was there to conduct legal research. Instead he verbally antagonized library users and was ultimately escorted off the premises by campus police.

After his second visit, the university announced that it would change its access policy to restrict use of the library—which had been open to the public during business hours—to only those with current university IDs for UVA’s exam period, which runs through May 11.

On April 26, the university announced that Kessler was banned from campus after several students alleged that they were threatened by him.

AN ANNIVERSARY PERMIT DENIED

This is far from the first time Kessler’s presence has disrupted the UVA campus, and its libraries. The Unite the Right rally he helped organize brought hundreds of marchers, many of them white nationalists, to Charlottesville on the weekend of August 11 and 12, 2017, to oppose the removal of a status of Robert E. Lee from the city’s Emancipation Park.

The confrontation between right wing activists and counterprotesters turned violent, spreading across the city and onto the UVA campus; by Sunday three people were dead and 34 injured. [The march on UVA grounds](https://lj.libraryjournal.com/2017/08/academic-libraries/uva-libraries-regroup-after-weekend-of-violence/) on the Friday before the rally drew a crowd of white supremacists who clashed with students, faculty, and staff—including [a library employee](http://www.slate.com/articles/news_and_politics/dispatches/2017/08/tyler_magill_stood_up_to_jason_kessler_and_had_a_stroke_after_being_attacked.html), Tyler Magill, who suffered a stroke as a result of a blow he received. Magill, along with ten other plaintiffs, filed a lawsuit on October 12, 2017, against Kessler and a number of other rally participants alleging that their actions that weekend violated the Enforcement Act of 1871 (also known as the Ku Klux Klan Act) and other statutes, and resulted in physical, mental, and emotional distress.

In November 2017, Kessler applied for a permit to hold a Unite the Right anniversary rally in August of this year. The city of Charlottesville denied the permit the following month, on the grounds that the city did not have the police resources to identify opposing groups or keep them separated, “and no reasonable allocation of city funds or resources can guarantee that event participants will be free of any ‘threat of violence,’ ” according to a letter written by city manager Maurice Jones.

Kessler filed a federal lawsuit of his own on March 6 against the city of Charlottesville and Jones, alleging that they violated his First Amendment right to free speech and his Fourteenth Amendment right to equal protection under the law. He was conducting research for this lawsuit, he claimed, when he visited the UVA Law Library in April.

DISTURBANCES AT THE LAW LIBRARY

Kessler was recognized immediately when he entered the Law Library on Wednesday, April 18, and sat down to use a computer. Word spread among students and faculty and a small crowd gathered. Students used library printers to create signs with messages such as “Blood on your hands” and “Murderer,” and held them up in silent protest as others shot video. The crowd ranged from five to 15 students over the course of an hour and a half.

He was told to leave by at least one faculty member, Lewis F. Powell, Jr. Professor of Law Anne Coughlin. Ben Doherty, head of library instruction and research librarian—who is a member of the community organizing network Showing Up for Racial Justice, and who has been a target of Kessler’s tweets in the past—excused himself from the library. Two campus police officers arrived and stood by.

Kessler eventually stood up and walked through the library making loud racist and sexist statements, finally calling a friend to come pick him up. He left without further incident.

At a town hall convened the next day, many students spoke out emotionally about how his presence brought back the traumatic feelings they had experienced during last August’s clash on campus and the violence that occurred throughout the city. Some had been present when a man drove his car into a crowd of counterprotesters, injuring 19 and killing Heather D. Heyer.

Kessler returned on April 25, working in a librarian’s office on the second floor while getting assistance on a research question. Again, a small crowd gathered outside the room.

Solidarity Cville, a social media platform that “generates local, accessible, and community-centered media that amplify the marginalized voices of Charlottesville,” tweeted that Kessler was again in the library. One protestor, Eric Martin—a Charlottesville resident but not a UVA student—entered the room where Kessler was working. Martin was asked to leave by a school administrator and given a warning; when he refused, he was arrested for trespassing.

Kessler approached the reference desk, where Doherty was on duty. He asked Kessler to leave and the two began arguing. A group of students stepped up to record the exchange on their phones, and campus police were once again called. They escorted Kessler out of the building, but he was not yet issued a trespass warning.

NO TRESPASS ORDER

In an email sent to students after Kessler’s second visit to the library, Law School dean Risa Goluboff ordered access to the library to be limited to students, faculty, and staff only, “to ensure the physical safety and security of our community.” Although no one is required to present an ID to enter the library, if a patron is believed to be from outside of the Law School community, students or staff can notify the circulation desk and the visitor will be asked to provide ID.

Security at the Law Library and University Police Department (UPD) patrols were increased as well. Access will revert to the previous model once exam period is over; UVA’s main library system is administered separately from the Law Library, and access there remains unchanged.

The university is also considering a change, proposed by Goluboff, to its free speech policy, which would restrict speeches, rallies, and passing out pamphlets by people unaffiliated with the university to certain parts of campus at certain times of day.

The UPD issued a no-trespassing warning to Kessler on Thursday, April 26, prohibiting him from entering university grounds or facilities. A statement issued by UVA read, in part, “The warning was issued due to multiple reports from students that Mr. Kessler threatened them, targeted them through cyber-bullying and cyber-harassment, and targeted them based on protected characteristics.” Kessler is banned from the grounds for four years, with an exception granted for emergency care at the University Medical Center.

University policy states that UPD may issue a Trespass Warning to a person who has engaged in “conduct that threatens the health, safety, or property of a member of the University.” Kessler may appeal the warning to UVA’s executive vice president and chief operating officer.

Kessler posted a video of the Law Library incident on his Twitter feed on Friday, claiming that he was being harassed by students and staff, referring to them as a “lynch mob.” He indicated that his attorneys would handle the matter.

UVA Law Library representatives did not choose to comment for this article.

About Lisa Peet

Lisa Peet is Associate Editor, News for *Library Journal*.

https://lj.libraryjournal.com/2018/05/academic-libraries/alt-right-activist-disturbs-law-library-banned-from-uva/

1. Aurora Public Library Removes Controversial Poem from Display

By [Lisa Peet](https://lj.libraryjournal.com/author/lpeet/) on May 7, 2018 [1 Comment](https://lj.libraryjournal.com/2018/05/censorship/aurora-public-library-removes-controversial-poem-display/#comments)



Aurora Public Library’s Santori Library
Photo courtesy Aurora Public Library

The Aurora Public Library (APL), IL, took down a controversial poem displayed at its Santori Public Library that appeared to express anti-Muslim sentiment and violence against Muslim women. Titled “Hijab Means Jihad,” the poem began, “Every kid should be like my kid and snatch a hijab” and was superimposed over an image of the Confederate flag. The poem went on to say, “Hijab to me means jihad / So keep that shit out of / The country I love,” and described how the “kid” in question “whooped and danced around / Like an Indian with a scalp.”

The poem’s author, George Miller, professor and chair of the philosophy department at Lewis University, Romeoville, IL, stated that it was written as satire and not intended to be anti-Muslim.

The exhibit, “Placeholders: Photo-Poems,” consisted of about 50 poems superimposed on photographs, all created by Miller. It was installed in the library’s first-floor atrium and slated to be a stop on the April 21 Fox River Arts Ramble—a collection of art and cultural exhibits located in public spaces throughout Aurora and neighboring communities. However, a number of people complained, both in person and on social media. Patrons took to Facebook and Twitter to denounce the library’s decision to display the poem, claiming that it encouraged violence against women and Muslims. Many demanded that it be taken down, and the library did so on Saturday evening, April 21.

[The piece can be viewed at the bottom of this article, for those who wish to scroll down and read it.]

SATIRE OR HATE SPEECH?

Miller had contacted the library in 2017 after attending a First Friday event there. (Businesses in downtown Aurora are open to the public for various arts-related activities on the first Friday of each month). He suggested a display of his poetry and photographs, and the collection passed the library’s approval process—which at the time consisted of a single staff member. Board president John Savage told the *Chicago Tribune* that even after the exhibit was mounted in the library’s atrium, “neither he nor other library officials had focused on the content.”

The selection of poems was installed on April 2, but criticisms didn’t begin to appear until April 20, the day before the Fox River Arts Ramble. When they did, however, many referred to the poem as “hate speech,” calling it Islamophobic and saying that it promoted violence against women who wear hijabs or other head covering.

APL’s first response to the public’s remarks, posted on its Facebook page on Friday, April 20, was, “Some have commented on the satirical nature of the poem…. Others view it as ‘hate speech.’ We are pleased that people are talking.”

The volume of angry comments grew, however. One Facebook poster wrote, “That poem on the Confederate flag doesn’t look or feel like satire. It looks and reads just like a zillion racist graphics posted with heartfelt agreement that I’ve blocked right here on Facebook. Art should comfort the disturbed and disturb the comfortable; this does the reverse.”

One Muslim woman commented, “These are the kinds of things that put me in danger. Real danger, every time I leave the house. There is ALWAYS a risk that someone is going to pull off my scarf and hurt me. The library, of all places, shouldn’t present the harm of headcovering women as worthy of celebration.”

The Chicago office of the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR-Chicago), the nation’s largest Muslim civil rights and advocacy organization, sent a letter to APL requesting that the poem be taken down and called on library leadership to investigate how the poem was included in the first place.

A TAKEDOWN, AN APOLOGY

Library administration decided to remove the offending poem on April 21. Miller was contacted and chose to remove the rest of his display that evening as well.

That night APL posted a statement on Facebook that read, in part, “We want everyone to feel safe and welcome at Aurora Public Library, and we will remove the panel before we open for business tomorrow. Thank you for sharing your concerns with us and for the thoughtful discussion that has taken place.”

Commenters, still unhappy with the library’s stance, noted that the statement had not contained an apology. Director Daisy Porter-Reynolds responded, writing, “I offer my heartfelt apology to our community, but I know that is not enough to heal the pain this has caused. I want all of our customers to feel safe and welcome at the library, and I am taking measures to make certain this never happens again.”

In a second statement, Savage wrote that the library would conduct an internal review to discover how the poem was allowed to be displayed.

A letter from Lewis University president David J. Livingston on the university’s website described Miller as “a person who has fought for social justice his entire career.” The letter went on to state, “I am grateful to the community members who shared an open and respectful dialogue with us. We have heard expressions of pain, disappointment, disbelief, anger, and embarrassment. Their input has been instructive to our overall understanding and perspective.” A university community forum to continue the discussion was scheduled for Friday, April 27.

A poster on Facebook wrote, “Taking down this piece after your exhibit was already over doesn’t solve anything. The real discussion begins now on why this piece was even allowed up. So if you are true to your word about the importance of a discussion—let’s have a discussion with community leaders like myself and many others who have posted here and the board and your leaders at the Aurora Public Library.”

SETTING A PRECEDENT

Although many were satisfied with the library’s decision, others felt that its quick takedown sent a message antithetical to library values.

“It speaks well of the Aurora community that they take inclusiveness so seriously,” James LaRue, director of the American Library Association Office for Intellectual Freedom, told *LJ*, “but I believe the process they followed sets a bad precedent. Art, and especially satirical art, is constitutionally protected speech. Being offended by it doesn’t justify its summary removal…. Too, the consideration should be a thoughtful review, considering the selection process and the library mission. When we respond too quickly to those who are offended, we give them the power to silence others.”

Amy Roth, former communications manager at APL, resigned her position after Savage’s statement was posted on social media and the library’s website. In addition to not showing support for potentially differing opinions of library staff, the message was “going out on my email with my name on it,” Roth told the *Aurora* *Beacon-News*. “I did not want to be associated with it…and I knew the consequences of that, I told them I needed to resign.”

However, the library’s [Exhibit/Display Policy](http://www.aurorapubliclibrary.org/wp-content/uploads/Exhibit-Policy-2017.pdf) explicitly prohibits “Material that threatens violence or intimidation of an individual or group,” Porter-Reynolds pointed out.

“There is obviously a balance to be drawn between freedom of speech and what can be displayed at the library,” she told *LJ*. “Our policy also says that we reserve the right to remove any display that interferes with library business or service, which this certainly has. My main goal as the director is for everyone to feel safe and welcome at the library and taking down the sign was an effort in that direction.”

CAIR-Chicago’s Rehab urged the library to consult with and include the voices of any groups of people under discussion, such as Muslims, Native Americans, or blacks. “If you wish to talk about someone or even for someone, first talk to them,” he said in a statement. “We are all here and part of every community and willing to sit at any table.”

REBUILDING TRUST

Approval for exhibits will now be handled by a team that includes Porter-Reynolds, at least one board member, and a several frontline staffers to be decided.

The exhibit marking the launch of the season’s First Friday series, which went up on May 4, was scheduled before the controversy: an exhibit of clothing, photographs, and personal housewares from community activist Marie Wilkinson, a local civil rights leader and educator who founded food pantries and museums and was known as “the Mother of Aurora.”

Going forward, CAIR-Chicago has pledged to work with the library to “initiate healing, bring understanding, and rebuild trust.” The organization will conduct inclusion and diversity training for APL’s 160 staff members; the first session, for managers and interested board members, is scheduled for May 7. The library also plans to work with local faith leaders on more inclusive programming.

“The local Muslim community has been extremely gracious,” said Porter-Reynolds. “They have really appreciated our taking [the poem] down and our apologies, and they’re working closely with us…. I believe they understand that there was no bad intention.” She added, “There are positives to come out of this.”



“Hijab Means Jihad” by George Miller

About Lisa Peet

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https://lj.libraryjournal.com/2018/05/censorship/aurora-public-library-removes-controversial-poem-display/