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## **Department of Libraries Director Announces Retirement**

Susan McVey has announced her retirement from the Oklahoma Department of Libraries (ODL), effective February 1, after 17 years as State Librarian and State Archivist.

McVey has served as the agency's fourth director since ODL was created in 1967 when the State Library merged with the Oklahoma Libraries Commission. Prior to appointment as director in 2001, she served six years as deputy director. She also headed the agency's law and legislative reference division from 1991 to 1995.

A native of Duncan, Oklahoma, McVey received her masters in library science from the University of Texas at Austin, and a masters in public administration from the University of Oklahoma. She was reference librarian and later director at Oklahoma City University's Dulaney-Browne Library before joining ODL as a legislative reference librarian in 1986.

The ODL Board and staff will host a retirement reception for McVey on Friday, January 25th immediately following a special board meeting at 2:00 pm. The reception will be held at the Allen Wright Memorial Library at 200 N.E. 18th in Oklahoma City.

"It has been such an honor and privilege to serve Oklahomans as State Librarian," McVey said. "It's very rewarding to help our state government customers, as well as to help libraries throughout the state serve their communities. And thanks to the ODL team, we've been able to make tremendous progress, even during difficult financial times."

ODL Board Chair Phil Moss particularly praised McVey's leadership during tough state budget years.

"Leading agencies during periods of growing or stable budgets is one thing, but Susan has been an incredibly hard-working and committed leader and advocate for libraries during these lean years," Moss said. "It has required some difficult, but responsible and often creative, decisions concerning the agency's budget and priorities in order to maintain and even advance services."

Under McVey's leadership, the agency has used federal library funds to provide extensive online reference and information resources to all libraries and schools, and to improve information technology infrastructure in public libraries. Oklahoma was one of the first states to report that all public libraries offered wireless internet access for their communities.

She has been committed to helping all public libraries benefit from the federal E-Rate and Oklahoma Universal Services Fund so that they can continue to obtain the technology services that benefit their communities.

Particular policies initiated under her leadership also led to service improvements. New rules and regulations for State Aid payments to public libraries opened the doors to free library service for more than 500,000 previously unserved Oklahomans. Her focus on finding and fostering partnerships to deliver services encouraged staff to bring in dozens of partners over the years to support the Summer Reading program, digitization projects, literacy and citizenship services, continuing education opportunities for librarians, and other agency endeavors.

“Throughout her career, she has shown herself to be a respected and influential individual at both the state and national level,” Moss said.

Honors from the library community are testament to this fact. She is the recipient of the Oklahoma Library Association’s Distinguished Service Award, the highest honor given by the association for exemplary service to the state’s library community. She has also been honored by OLA as an Oklahoma Library Legend.

She is a past president of the Chief Officers of State Library Agencies, and has also been a leader in the Western Council of State Librarians.

As a leader among America’s state librarians, McVey has often been asked by the federal Institute of Museum and Library Services, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, and other organizations to consult on and contribute to national library initiatives. Such initiatives have led to improved broadband services for public libraries, and a national tool that helps public libraries assess their public access technology services and plan improvements to those services.

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The Oklahoma Department of Libraries is the official State Library of Oklahoma. The agency serves the information and records management needs of state government, assists with public library development, coordinates library and information technology projects for the state, and serves the general public through its specialized collections.

The Department is governed by a seven-member board of directors appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the State Senate.