

THE ARKANSAS  
LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

PO Box 3821  
Little Rock, AR 72203



# PRESIDENTIAL INITIATIVES

2020-2021

PROPOSED BY  
PHILIP SHACKELFORD



# TOWARDS NEW HORIZONS

I believe that the future of the Arkansas Library Association is a bright one. Over the past couple of years we have seen our organization look to the past for lessons and wisdom, move forward towards progress, and chart new waters as we have faced unprecedented challenges but also worked hard to lay a solid foundation for future success. It is my belief that now the time has come for us to build on these valuable efforts and embark towards new horizons, to be ambitious on purpose, and to boldly go where our members – the hardworking librarians of Arkansas and the communities that we serve – need us most.

Below I have taken the opportunity to put on paper a few thoughts that have been on my mind in recent years – ideas and priorities that I feel, as an association, we should emphasize in the months ahead. These initiatives represent important responsibilities that I will actively pursue during my time as your president, but they are certainly beyond the scope of one person's capacity to achieve alone. The future is in all of our hands, and I look forward to traveling on this journey together.

Towards new horizons!

**Philip C. Shackelford,  
President**





# REINVIGORATED MEMBERSHIP

Key to our organizational mission is the responsibility that we have to further the professional development of all library staff, and serve as advocates for libraries and librarians throughout our state and beyond. Our membership is and should be the backbone of our association, and it is our responsibility – indeed the very reason we are here – to ensure that the needs of our member libraries and their personnel are being met. This responsibility should be at the very forefront of our organizational decisions and activities, and everything we do should be measured by its impact on our membership. We are stronger together. In order to reinvigorate and attract an active, engaged membership, we should:

**Identify** and eliminate any and all barriers to active, productive participation in ArLA. If a particular individual or group does not find membership in ArLA valuable, why is that the case? Are there needs that are not being met? What can we do to change or improve the pathways to active and productive engagement?

**Cultivate** diversity in our membership, leadership, and offerings. ArLA will be the most successful when we are successfully striving to meet the needs of all our members and the Arkansas library community.

**Invest** in the future by identifying, encouraging, mentoring, and developing the rising stars among us. The future of our organization and indeed the future of Arkansas libraries will one day be in the hands of a new generation, and we should take every opportunity to invest in them as we hope they will one day invest in our profession and our communities. This should include the opening of pathways into professional service, providing valuable professional development, and actively encouraging the next generation of Arkansas library leaders.

**Establish** strong partnerships and opportunities for collaboration with ALPS, AAIM, ArSL, AAAL, ARKLink, and any other group or organization dedicated to the success of Arkansas library personnel. Again, we are stronger together.

**Promote** the benefits of membership in ArLA and invite the contributions of new and potential members in making our organization stronger.

## ORGANIZATIONAL HEALTH

Over the past couple of years you have seen the Arkansas Library Association take a variety of steps aimed at improving our organizational health and laying a foundation for a more promising future. These efforts have included developing a streamlined structure for the Executive Board, prioritizing our financial health, updating our organizational bylaws and handbook, and emphasizing transparency in our operations. It is crucial that all of these activities continue. In addition, I believe we should:

**Prioritize** effective and transparent standards of operation, from committee work to broader association activities. The updated bylaws and handbook are an excellent start, and now we should take the next step, institute standardized procedures, and put these things into practice.

**Maintain** a careful focus on the financial well-being of our organization. This should include continued transparency, responsible decision-making, and effective communication regarding our financial status and decisions to everyone involved.



**Establish** and maintain regular and open communication between the Executive Board, officers, and membership. Transparency will only happen if we make it a priority, and all Arkansas library personnel should have the opportunity to engage with their association, understand organizational activities and priorities, and have their voices heard.

**Improve** the succession process for officers of the Executive Committee, Board, and committees and communities of interest. Incoming association leaders should be able to benefit from a smooth transition, valuable institutional memory and other information that will help them and their respective groups succeed. This is outlined in the Arkansas Library Association Strategic Plan, Strategy 3C.

**Foster** a positive reputation among our membership and beyond as an honest, responsible, supportive, and creative organization. This will only come by dedicated follow-through on our stated objectives and responsibilities.

# POSITIVE VISIBILITY

Part of our mission is to increase the visibility of libraries among the general public and funding agencies, and to advocate on the behalf of Arkansas libraries and librarians. Currently we do this through our social media efforts and importantly, through the recognition of outstanding Arkansas librarians and their service through our annual awards. But we can and should do more. I believe we should focus on raising popular awareness and visibility of our association and our work by making sure to:

**Share** positive news and updates about our work with Arkansas press outlets, including but not limited to our major television networks, newspapers, magazines, and other important venues. This should include the crucial priority of cultivating strong and positive relationships with key individuals working in these and other outlets.

**Invite** representatives of Arkansas press and publication outlets to attend meetings, conferences, and other events to raise the positive visibility of our association.

**Convey** the compelling value of Arkansas libraries of all types, as well as our responsibility for meeting the needs of Arkansas library personnel.

**Advocate** at local, regional, state, and national levels for support on key issues important to our Arkansas libraries and librarians.

**Build** creative and successful fundraising efforts, including strong relationships with potential donors, so that we have additional sources of revenue that will enhance our capacity to provide valuable services and resources to our members.

**Collaborate** with other library and non-library organizations on projects that align with our mission and key objectives, leveraging these collaborations to both the benefit and increased visibility of our members and the Arkansas Library Association.

# RESPONSIBLE INNOVATION

The annual conference and the *Arkansas Libraries* journal are the two primary ways that we have focused on meeting our responsibility to provide for the professional development of Arkansas librarians. Our current strategic plan, however, invites us to do more. I believe we should broaden both our professional development offerings as well as services to our members that fall beyond the realm of professional development – the recent creation and work of the Pandemic Response Committee is a good example. Specifically, I invite our leaders and membership to consider how we can:

**Identify** professional development needs not currently being met by the annual conference or the journal.

**Explore** other professional development services and opportunities, whether subscriptions or other offerings that could be provided as benefits of membership in ArLA.

**Develop** creative, responsible, and effective solutions to these and other questions facing our association moving forward.





# STRATEGIC FUTURE

2020 marks the conclusion of our latest strategic plan cycle, initially set forward in June 2018. I will ask both the Strategic Planning Committee and the Executive Board to review our progress made as well as organizational priorities for generating a new strategic plan looking forward. Personally, I invite these groups and all other ArLA members to consider how we can best set ourselves up for:

**Growth** focused on our mission and organizational objectives, meeting the needs of our member libraries and their personnel, and the consideration of projects or activities that we have expressed interest in or considered but have been unable to target thus far.

**Sustainability** as a healthy, strong, and professional association, one that will last and remain a valuable resource for future generations of Arkansas librarians.

**Service** as a trusted resource and supportive organization for all Arkansas librarians.

It is my honor and privilege to serve as President of the Arkansas Library Association – your library association. I pledge to do my very best in the pursuit of these responsibilities, to listen to any and all feedback, concerns, ideas, and proposals, and to do my part to successfully move our organization towards new horizons! We are in this together, and I wouldn't have it any other way.

Humbly and sincerely yours,

**PHILIP C. SHACKELFORD**

**"A LIBRARY OUTRANKS ANY  
OTHER ONE THING A COMMUNITY  
CAN DO TO BENEFIT ITS PEOPLE."**

**ANDREW CARNEGIE**

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