



Start Here. Go Anywhere.

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JACKSONVILLE PUBLIC LIBRARY DIRECTOR BARBARA A. B. GUBBIN TO RETIRE

Will Leave on 'High Note' with Recent National ALA Award

JACKSONVILLE, Fla., May 2, 2017 – After more than a decade of dedicated service with the City of Jacksonville, Jacksonville Public Library Director Barbara Gubbin announced her retirement to become effective June 30, 2017. The announcement comes just a month after Gubbin was chosen by the American Library Association to receive the 2017 Ernest A. DiMattia, Jr. Award for Innovation and Service to Community and Profession, which will be presented in June in Chicago.

In 2005 Gubbin became the sixth director of the Jacksonville Public Library. During her tenure she has overseen the planning and administration of the Jacksonville Public Library system, comprising the Main Library and 20 branch and regional libraries. She oversaw the opening of five new libraries, including the 300,000 square-foot Main Library on Laura Street, and many renovations under the Better Jacksonville Plan. With a library career that spans more than 40 years, she served as the director of the Houston Public Library for 10 years and as the assistant director for eight years, prior to coming to Jacksonville. She also worked at the San Antonio Public Library and the Fawcett Library in London, U.K.

Ronnie King, chair of the Board of Library Trustees, said, "Barbara has been an innovative director and passionate advocate for the Jacksonville Public Library for the past 12 years. She kept the library abreast of changing technology and the explosive growth of our e-library and e-services. She shepherded the library through financially difficult times, and despite tight budgets, continually expanded the library's programming, resources and services through her innovative thinking and resourcefulness, by leading a dedicated and supportive JPL team, and by building strong partnerships throughout the community.

"Barbara is going out on a high note and the major national award she earned for her career accomplishments this year reflects on her outstanding leadership and vision for Jacksonville Public Library. She is a lifelong champion of literacy for all ages. We will miss her; however, she has set the library on a path to continue to grow as a vital cultural and educational institution in Jacksonville."

Gubbin sees retirement as her "next big adventure," but said she will miss working with her colleagues. "It has been an honor and a privilege to lead the Jacksonville Public Library. It is a job I have loved. It's been challenging at times, but I will always appreciate the opportunity to work with and the support I received from such a dedicated and talented JPL team, our Board, Foundation, and Friends, as well as forging relationships with our Mayor, his administration and City Council. I am proud of what we have achieved together and I will miss everyone."

As part of a major new strategic plan, DESTINATION:next—which would later include destination:LEADERSHIP, a leadership program that all staff members completed—in 2006 Gubbin unveiled the library's vision statement and slogan: Start Here. Go Anywhere. Following that mantra, her many accomplishments and "firsts" at Jacksonville Public Library include:

- LEADERSHIP IN EDUCATIONAL SUCCESS

- Duval County Public Schools partnership ensures that nearly 130,000 DCPS students in kindergarten through 12th grade have public library cards for access to books and digital resources. Jacksonville Mayor Lenny Curry said, "Through persistence and infectious passion for the library, she has built the strongest partnership with Duval County Public School System that JPL has had in years."
 - In 2015 – 2016 Gubbin brought Career Online High School to JPL. The program gives adult learners an opportunity to earn an accredited high school diploma. To date, more than 23 graduates have earned diplomas and career certifications, and currently more than 85 students are in the process in its second year. JPL had the first COHS graduate and the first COHS commencement ceremony in the State of Florida.
 - Another first for the library: Gubbin aligned the library's goals with Mayor John Peyton's goal for early childhood literacy. She hired the library's first Early Childhood Specialist in the Youth Services Department to develop an Early Childhood Literacy program for ages from birth to age 5, which has resulted in programming and communitywide partnerships with organizations such as the Early Learning Coalition, UF Health, Nemours (BrightStart!), United Way (Reading Pals) and others, making a positive impact on the children and youth in Northeast Florida.
 - When Learn to Read, an adult literacy program, was forced to close its doors, Gubbin offered space at the Main Library, where it is co-located with the library's Center for Adult Learning. Last year, Learn to Read expanded and now has an additional location in a renovated space at a branch library.
 - The Center for Adult Learning won the Florida State Library's Exemplary Project Award five consecutive years, 2008 – 2012 and the Florida Literacy Coalition's Excellence in Education Award in 2013.
- TECHNOLOGICAL INNOVATION
 - With Gubbin's "high tech, high touch" approach, the library provides a balance between customer access to the latest in trends and technology and excellent personal customer service. JPL supports the customer wherever they are through the Jax Library app, a redesigned website, and an online catalog accessible through mobile devices, growing social media platforms and more.
 - A thriving e-services department offers more than 300 computer and technology classes per quarter throughout the city. Classes range from basic skills to coding, digital photography, 3-D and web design. One-on-one appointments with e-specialists are available for personalized tech support.
 - The 25,000 square-foot Jax Makerspace in the Main Library was launched in 2016 to support educational, economic and technological success by building 21st century workforce skills through STEAM.
 - Gubbin led the library in innovative programming such as the Transparent Language cultural immersion program, which won an Urban Libraries Council Top Innovator Award in 2015.
 - ECONOMIC SUCCESS
 - Through Jax Journey-funded Project LEAP (Library Enhanced Access Program), an outreach program that focuses on early literacy, digital literacy, and adult literacy, the library partners with community organizations to take resources into neighborhoods, to those with the greatest needs. In its first year, Project LEAP programs had more than 6,500 attendees; the program continues into 2017.
 - The 2016 young adult job fair drew more than 1,000 job seekers to the Main Library to meet with more than 25 local companies; another is planned in June 2017.
 - Under Gubbin's leadership, JPL created a Small Business Resource Center at the Main Library, which will be formally launched later this year. She also championed

collaborative partnerships and workshops with CareerSource, which was critical during the economic downturn, the Small Business Administration, and SCORE.

- **LIBRARY ADVOCACY CHAMPION**

- Gubbin worked with the Board of Library Trustees to get the library's message in front of city officials and the administration; she and the board successfully secured \$1 million funding to restore library hours at 11 libraries in the years following the budget cuts.
- When the city's budget was reduced by \$4M in 2012, Gubbin took actions that not only maintained but also fortified valuable library resources. She repositioned the Conference Center at the Main Library from a city-funded operation to a self-sustaining, revenue producing enterprise.
- In 2015 Gubbin achieved a goal she and the Board had been working on since 2011, and with the City Council's approval, the library was given the ability to retain fine revenues in a special fund for capital projects, the first of which includes plans to renovate the children's departments of Highlands and Webb Wesconnett Regional Libraries.

- **FIRST IN COMMUNITY**

- Gubbin is one of the co-founders of Cultural Fusion, a collaboration of many local organizations that has shaped the vision that drives the cultural community to create unique programs, exhibits and experiences through collaborations.
- As an active member of the World Affairs Council of Jacksonville, Gubbin served as vice president of education from 2008 – 2014. She facilitated a special partnership with the council creating extensive reading lists themed around council speakers; the library has been hosting Great Decisions adult programs since 2008.
- A partnership with the Jacksonville Symphony has involved library staff providing pre-concert programs, hosting music programs at libraries for children, and hosting the music director for public programs while the symphony has reciprocated with special discount offerings for library customers.

- **AWARD WINNING LIBRARY**

- JPL has earned five Florida Library Association best-in-the-state awards including Innovation, Libraries Change People's Lives, Exemplary Learning Design, Betty Davis Miller Youth Services, and Outstanding Citizen Awards.
- Won five awards for the Main Library Grand Opening, including the International Association of Business Communications Bronze Quill Award.
- Won the 2017 Ernest A. DiMattia Jr. Award for Innovation and Service to the Community and Profession from the American Library Association.

Gubbin is active in many organizations. She is a member of the Florida Library Association (FLA), and has served on the Board and chaired its Legislative Committee. She has also been a Board member of the Northeast Florida Library Information Network (NEFLIN). Elected to the Public Libraries Committee of the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA), she co-authored the *IFLA Public Library Service Guidelines*, focusing on public library standards of operation and service. During her tenure in Texas, she served as president of the Texas Library Association (TLA), the largest state library association in the U.S and was elected to the Online Computer Library Center (OCLC) board of trustees for a six year term.

About the Jacksonville Public Library

The mission of the Jacksonville Public Library is to enrich lives, build community and foster success by bringing people, information and ideas together. Last year, more than 3.4 million visits were made to Jacksonville Public Libraries, items were checked out more than 5.7 million times, and over 13,000 programs and services were offered to Duval County residents at the Main Library and 20 branch locations. For more information about the Jacksonville Public Library, call 630-BOOK (2665) or visit jaxpubliclibrary.org.

Image of Barbara A. B. Gubbin: [Library Director Barbara A. B. Gubbin.jpg](#)

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