

# Meredith E. Wickham

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## EXPERIENCE

### Director

2021 - present

*Southwest Public Libraries*

*Grove City, Ohio*

- Serve as Chief Executive Officer for the second-largest library system in territory and population size in Franklin County (Columbus), Ohio with libraries serving 4 Townships with variable operating budget, currently \$7.8M, 150k service population in 119 mi<sup>2</sup> of urban, suburban, and rural communities.
- Report to a Board of Trustees appointed by local School Board and maintain excellent relationships with elected officials and community.
- Lead a team of up to 90 employees with 10 direct reports including IT, Branch Administration, Communications, Facilities, Technical Services, and Human Resources.
- Prioritize conservative fiscal management to bring emergency savings up to a 180-day target, permit us to complete large infrastructure projects and initiate new services, begin to save for a bookmobile, prepare for foreseeable expenses, and weather reductions in State funding down to the lowest level in 25 years, while maintaining a robust level of service.
- Achieved record visits and participation in Summer Reading 2025; patron visits averaging ~1,000 per day and circulation at 1M+ by 2024.
- Encouraged the establishment of new services including the launch in 2022 of regular programs and classes for adults, a public-private partnership with the Ohio State University for social work intern field placements at the Westland Area Library, a Seed Library, Culture Passes, the American Girl Doll lending program teaching local history, and more.

### Director

2018 - 21

*First Regional Library*

*Hernando, Mississippi*

- Served as Chief Executive Officer for 14 libraries serving 5 Counties with \$5.7M operating budget, 300k service population living in 2,650 mi<sup>2</sup> of urban, suburban, rural and University town communities.
- Reported to a Board of Trustees appointed by local elected officials; maintained excellent relationships with elected officials and community.
- Led a team of 125 employees with 12 direct reports including the IT Systems Administrators, Law Librarian, and Administrative Team who oversee Branch Services, in-house Professional Development, Branding and Communications, regional Youth Services support, Business Office functions such as payroll and purchasing, Facilities Management, Collection Development, Technical Services, and Human Resources.
- Prioritized budgetary efficiency and effectiveness to bring operations costs within the limits of available revenue, add positions by restructuring departments, permit us to complete large infrastructure projects and initiate new services, create a vehicle sinking fund for our fleet, prepare for foreseeable expenses, and stay strong for the future.
- Established and funded a new Professional Development and Advancement plan including every non-exempt employee in the system. Added Employee Assistance Program.
- Created an original Summer Reading program in alignment with research about how children become lifelong readers, and then adapted it again for a pandemic environment.

**System Director**

2015 - 18

*Kemper-Newton Regional Library System**Union, Mississippi*

- Served as Chief Executive Officer for 5 libraries serving 2 Counties with \$1.5M operating budget, 30k service population living across 1,184 mi<sup>2</sup> of rural communities.
- Established relationships with community stakeholders that led to a 39% increase in local funding and increases from all 7 local funding authorities within the first 2 fiscal years.
- Wrote and administered 50+K in grants (exclusive of PIGP, E-rate, and other regular federal and state funding).
- Introduced innovative programming leading to an 89% increase in program attendance.
- Improved collection maintenance, marketing, and training procedures, resulting in a 25% increase in circulation.
- Renovated three branch libraries and automated one of the system's libraries.
- Created the plan that enabled the library system to become first in the State to eliminate all overdue fines.

**Young Adult Librarian**

2013 - 15

*Starkville-Oktibbeha County Public Library**Starkville, Mississippi*

- Planned and implemented cultural and educational programming for young adults ages 12-17.
- Wrote and won grants, sought and received donations, and managed departmental budget to develop Young Adult materials collection and programs for the main library and two branches.
- Initiated regular YA outreach in the area and maintained vibrant Web 2.0 presence.

**Branch Manager**

2012 - 13

*Oconee County Public Library, Salem Branch**Salem, South Carolina*

- Emphasized improved customer service to achieve dramatic growth in circulation (35%) and visits (32%).
- Increased participation in Summer Reading by over 2,000% among adults.
- Performed Mother Goose on the Loose weekly for an audience of babies, toddlers, and caregivers.

**Circulation Assistant**

2011 - 12

*Oconee County Public Library, Seneca Branch**Seneca, South Carolina*

- Assisted patrons with inquiries, requests, complaints, job searches, device setup, e-books, calendars, and troubleshooting.
- Cataloged periodicals on the fly, created programs/displays, and performed reader's advisory.

**EDUCATION**

Master of Library and Information Studies, 2016

University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa, Alabama

Bachelor of Arts in French, magna cum laude, 1995

Berry College, Rome, Georgia

Bachelor of Arts in German, magna cum laude, 1995

Berry College, Rome, Georgia

Diplôme d'études universitaires générales, 1993  
(Equivalent to American Associate's Degree)

Université de Bourgogne, Dijon, France

## **PUBLICATIONS & PRESENTATIONS**

“Intellectual Freedom Q & A,” Panelist at Ohio Library Council’s 2025 Convention and Expo.

“Navigating Stakeholder Needs and Requirements.” Panelist representing Public Library leadership at ILEAD Ohio 2025.

“Inspired Stories: Faith-based Fiction.” Moderator, Author Panel at Columbus Metropolitan Library’s Book Festival (2024).

“Through Other Eyes: Stories with Multiple Points of View.” Moderator, Author Panel at Columbus Metropolitan Library’s Inaugural Book Festival (2023).

*Pivoting during the Pandemic: Ideas for Serving Your Community Anytime, Anywhere.* Featured in a book chapter on innovative cultural programming during the shutdown, created in partnership with Associate Professor/History Research Librarian DeeDee Baldwin at Mississippi State University (2021).

“Equity Begins with us: EDI in Mississippi Public Libraries.” Panelist at Mississippi Library Association Annual Conference (2020).

“Keynote of Cassandra Campbell.” Interviewer of Keynote Speaker for the Association for Rural & Small Libraries National Conference (2020).

“How to Conduct a Professional Audit of your Youth Services Collection for Diversity and Inclusion, Step by Step.” Co-presenter, with Children’s Librarian Hanna Lee, at Faye B. Kaigler Children’s Book Festival at the University of Southern Mississippi (2019).

“Are We Still Transmitting Whiteness? A Case Study of a Southern, Rural Library’s Youth Collections.” *Library Trends*, vol. 67 no. 1, with co-author Dr. Miriam Sweeney (2018).

“Off the Shelf.” Column about local libraries published monthly in the *Newton County Appeal* from 2015-18.

“How Diverse is Your Youth Collection?” Presentation at 2017 national conference of Association for Rural and Small Libraries in St. George, Utah.

“Auditing Your Youth Collection for Diversity of Authorship and Content.” Invited Guest Lecture for University of Alabama LIS582 Race, Gender and Sexuality in Library and Information Studies Course, Fall 2017.

“Who is APALA? Strategically Communicating Our Organizational Value.” Poster presentation sponsored by the Asian Pacific American Librarians Association at American Library Association 2016 annual conference in Atlanta, Georgia.

## **SERVICE**

**Treasurer of the Board, Ohio Public Library Information Network (OPLIN) (2025 - present)**

Board Trustee, Ohio Public Library Information Network (Appointed 2023; term expires June 2026)

Member, Westland Area Business Association Executive Board (Appointed 2025)

Member, Noon Lions Club of Grove City (2025 – present)

Member, Rotary Club of Grove City, Ohio (2022 – present)

Member, Westland Area Business Association (2021 – present)

## **SERVICE** (continued)

Chair, Intellectual Freedom Committee of the Ohio Library Council (OLC) (2024)

Member, OLC Government Relations Committee (2022 - 24)

Member, Ohio Library Council (2021 – present)

Member, Rotary Club of Hernando, Mississippi (2018 – 21)

Chair, Scholarship Committee of Rotary Club of Hernando, Mississippi (2019 - 21)

**Chapter Councilor, American Library Association Council** (Elected 2019; term expired 2021)

Member, Mississippi Library Association Board (2014 - 2021)

Chair, Legislative Committee, Mississippi Library Association (2018, 2019, 2020)

Grant Reviewer (invited), Institute of Museum and Library Services (2019-20)

**Member, Board of Directors, Association for Rural & Small Libraries** (Elected 2016; term expired 2019)

Member, Public and Cultural Programs Advisory Committee, Small and Rural Libraries Subcommittee, American Library Association Public Programs Office (2019)

**State Coordinator for National Library Legislative Day** (2018, 2019)

Chair, Membership & Marketing Committee, Association for Rural & Small Libraries (2017-18; Co-Chair 2016-17)

Member, Best Fiction for Young Adults Committee, Young Adult Library Services Association (2016-17)

Invited Participant in Measures that Matter, a library data analysis project undertaken by cooperative agreement between the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) and the Chief Officers of State Library Agencies (COSLA), Baltimore MD 2017

**Invited Participant in inaugural National Library Legislative Fly-In (2016)**

## **HONORS**

Peggy May Award (*for excellence in library development, statewide award*), 2017

American Library Association Emerging Leader, 2016

Presidential Scholar, Berry College 1991-95