

ST-9

Oklahoma MPLA Board Report

October 3, 2005

by Wayne Hanway, Oklahoma Library Association Representative

Controversial Children's Books to be Shelved Separately

After months of deliberation and in a crowded, highly publicized meeting, the Metropolitan Library Commission, which is the governing board of Oklahoma City's country library system, voted August 25th to limit access to children's books dealing with "controversial topics" by placing them in a "parenting collection" within the children's section of the library. The action came as a result of complaints about the book *King and King*, which escalated when local television stations got involved and an effort was made by state legislators from Oklahoma City to withhold funds for the state library and state aid to public libraries.

The decision on which books are moved will be made by the library system's selection staff, but the motion as approved reads: "subjects where good judgment would indicate that Oklahoma County community standards are not served by the material would dictate inclusion in the collection. The focus of the complaints was several books considered to have homosexual themes.

The state legislator who led last spring's actions said in a press release that the action did not go far enough and that she "is developing a non-profit organization for library accountability that will involve parents statewide." One focus of the organization would be books in school libraries.

New OLA Board Busy Planning

2005-2006 OLA President Jeanie Johnson has chosen "Just So You Know" as the theme for the 99th annual conference, which will be March 29 – 31, 2006 at the Crowne Plaza in Tulsa. Major emphasis will be placed on advocacy, dealing with attempted censorship, and the impact of new technology on libraries.

Choctaw Book Makes a Hit

The second year of Oklahoma Reads Oklahoma author tours is underway, and the personal appearances by Tim Tingle, author of *Walking the Choctaw Road*, have been a big success at libraries around the state. The book has the distinction of being the only book selected for a one book/one state program by two states (Oklahoma and Alaska.) The author tours have been funded by a mix of state funds and private sector donations. Oklahoma Reads Oklahoma is one of the most visible programs preparing for the state's 2007 centennial celebration.

7th Annual First Amendment Congress

“Assault on the First Amendment” is the theme for the professional day of the seventh annual First Amendment Congress, on Thursday, November 10, at the University of Oklahoma. The congress is sponsored by Freedom of Information Oklahoma and co-sponsored by the Oklahoma Library Association, Oklahoma Department of Libraries, Oklahoma Press Association, and a dozen other organizations. The opening session speaker will be Gene Policinski, executive Director of the First Amendment Center. For more information go to:
<http://www.foioklahoma.org/>