

**The Wisconsin Library Heritage Center Steering Committee Report
Regarding a Proposal to Establish a Wisconsin Library Heritage Center
As a Program of the Wisconsin Library Association Foundation
March 19, 2008**

Steering Committee Recommendation

The Wisconsin Library Heritage Center Steering Committee recommends that the Wisconsin Library Association Foundation Board proceed with the establishment of the Wisconsin Library Heritage Center as a program of the Foundation.

Wisconsin Library Association Foundation Board Action

With a unanimous vote, the Wisconsin Library Association Foundation Board established the Wisconsin Library Heritage Center as a program of the WLAFF at its meeting on March 19, 2008.

Overview of the WLHC

It is proposed that a Wisconsin Library Heritage Center (WLHC) be established as a program of the Wisconsin Library Association Foundation (WLAFF). The WLHC would be similar in concept to the Wisconsin Center for the Book which is an affiliate of the Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts, and Letters. The primary purpose of the WLHC would be to promote an understanding and appreciation of the history of libraries and librarianship in Wisconsin by the public and the Wisconsin library community. The WLAFF Board would serve as the official governing body of the WLHC. A permanent Steering Committee would be appointed to make recommendations to the Board and to coordinate the activities of the WLHC. Funding for the WLHC would come from designated and undesignated contributions to the WLAFF, grants, and revenue generating projects. A central component of the proposed WLHC would be a website which serves as a portal to Wisconsin library history information and resources. A priority project for the WLHC would be the development of a virtual Wisconsin Library Hall of Fame.

Purposes of the WLHC

- To promote an understanding and appreciation of the history of libraries and librarianship in Wisconsin by the general public and the Wisconsin library community.
- To promote the preservation of artifacts and archives which contribute to an understanding and appreciation of Wisconsin's library heritage.
- To promote research and publishing which contribute to an understanding and appreciation of Wisconsin's library heritage.

Rationale for Locating the WLHC in the WLAFF

- The WLHC and its projects would provide additional visibility to WLAFF.
- Library history is good public relations. WLHC projects would help promote the importance of Wisconsin libraries and would be consistent with the purpose of the Campaign for Wisconsin Libraries.
- The Wisconsin Library Hall of Fame component of the WLHC builds on the awards program currently sponsored by the WLAFF.
- The WLHC would serve as a prototype which could be replicated by other states providing national recognition to Wisconsin.

Advantages to the WLHC of Being Located in the WLAFF

- Would legitimize the informal promotion of Wisconsin's library heritage currently being undertaken by Larry Nix and the Library History Buff Web site.
- Would provide credibility to any future efforts to cooperate or partner with other organizations or institutions that could assist in the promotion of Wisconsin's library heritage.
- Would provide a mechanism for soliciting tax deductible donations to promote Wisconsin's library heritage.
- Would provide a mechanism for acquiring donations of historically significant artifacts for the WLHC.

Organization, Governance, and Steering Committee

- The WLHC would be established as a program of the WLAFF.
- The WLAFF Board would serve as the official governing body of the WLHC.
- A WLHC Steering Committee would be established to make recommendations to the WLAFF Board on projects, priorities, and expenditures for the WLHC.
- The WLHC Steering Committee would coordinate projects for the WLHC.
- The Steering Committee would identify potential funding sources for WLHC projects.
- The WLHC Steering Committee would consist of 5 to 7 members and would operate similarly to the Advisory Committee for the Campaign for Wisconsin Libraries and the WLAFF Scholarship Committee.
- Terms of Committee members would be two years with a maximum of three consecutive terms. Initial terms would be staggered so that the continuity of committee membership would be achieved.
- The terms of the members of the permanent Steering Committee would commence on January 1, 2009. Committee members appointed for an initial one year term would be eligible to serve an additional two full two year terms.

Funding

- A WLHC fund similar to the Campaign for Wisconsin Libraries fund would be established within the WLAFF budget.

- Initial costs associated with the WLHC would come from undesignated contributions to the WLAF.
- Provision would be made for future WLAF contributions to be designated for the WLHC by individual contributors just as they are able to designate contributions to the Scholarship Fund or the Campaign for Wisconsin Libraries.
- As an initial fundraising effort, all members of the Wisconsin Library Association would be provided with an opportunity to become a Founding Contributor to the WLHC. Founding Contributors would be listed on the WLHC website and receive a special certificate. Current WLAF Circle members could become a Founding Contributor with an additional contribution of \$50. Others could become a Founding Contributor with a contribution of \$100.
- Expenditures from the WLHC fund would require WLAF Board approval either through the budget process or individually.
- Some WLHC projects would be revenue producing or would be eligible for grants.
- Any requests for grant funding would have to be approved by the WLAF Board and the official application for a grant would come from the WLAF.
- National sources of funding could be explored based on the Wisconsin Library Heritage Center serving as a national prototype.
- An endowment type fund could also be established in the future.

A WLHC Website

The central and most important initial component of the proposed WLHC will be a website which serves as a portal to Wisconsin library history information and resources. It will also be the location of a virtual Wisconsin Library Hall of Fame. The initial website will evolve from a prototype located on The Library History Buff website at <http://www.libraryhistorybuff.org/library-heritage-center-wi.htm>. It is recommended that the WLHC website become a component of the Campaign for Wisconsin Libraries website located at <http://www.wisconsinlibraries.org>. Making the WLHC part of the [wisconsinlibraries.org](http://www.wisconsinlibraries.org) website will be beneficial to that website by providing additional content of interest to the public and the Wisconsin library community. At the same time this would be more cost effective than creating a separate site with its own domain name. The Outagamie Waupaca Library System which maintains the Campaign for Wisconsin Libraries website has agreed to incorporate the WLHC website component as a sub-domain of [WisconsinLibraries.org](http://www.wisconsinlibraries.org) provided the WLHC is approved by the WLAF Board. The sub-domain name would be Heritage.WisconsinLibraries.org.

A Wisconsin Library Hall of Fame

The creation of a virtual Wisconsin Library Hall of Fame located on the WLHC website will be a priority project for the WLHC. The WLHC Steering Committee will develop the criteria for inclusion in the hall of fame for final approval by the WLAF board. A prototype for the virtual hall of fame exists on the [libraryhistorybuff.org](http://www.libraryhistorybuff.org) website.

Wisconsin Library Heritage Landmarks

Another priority project for the WLHC will be the development of a process for the designation of Wisconsin Library Heritage Landmarks.

Wisconsin Library Memorabilia Exhibits

Larry Nix, the Chair of the Steering Committee, has developed a collection of Wisconsin library memorabilia that he makes available for library exhibits. He is willing to make this activity a project of the WLHC providing additional publicity for the WLHC and the WLAFL.

Other Potential Projects of the WLHC

- The encouragement and support for local libraries to document and promote their library heritage.
- The sponsorship of temporary and/or traveling Wisconsin library history exhibits.
- The development of an oral history program.
- Updating and publication of *The Wisconsin Library Association* by Benton H. Wilcox.
- Promotion of the digitization of historically important documents and resources related to Wisconsin's library heritage
- The publication of a popular history of libraries in Wisconsin.
- The establishment of a Wisconsin library history publication awards program.
- The publication of a comprehensive history of libraries in Wisconsin.
- An inventory of archival collections of importance to Wisconsin library history.
- An inventory of artifacts and collections of artifacts of importance to Wisconsin library history.
- The establishment of a permanent library history exhibit or library history museum.

Potential Partners

After the formal establishment of the WLHC by the WLAFL Board, the WLHC Steering Committee would approach a variety of other library and non-library organizations to partner with the WLAFL in the support of projects which promote Wisconsin's library heritage. The nature and extent of the partnerships would vary depending on individual projects and the resources of potential partners. Some potential partners are:

- The Wisconsin Library Association and its units.
- The Wisconsin Historical Society
- The Wisconsin Division for Libraries, Technology, and Community Learning
- The University of Wisconsin – Madison School of Library and Information Studies

- The University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee School of Information Studies
- The Wisconsin Educational Media and Technology Association
- Other state and regional library associations
- The Wisconsin Humanities Council
- Individual Wisconsin libraries and friends of libraries groups
- Wisconsin library vendors

WLHC Steering Committee Members

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