



A History of the Martin County Library System

By
Luann Justak and Nina Taylor

MC MARTIN COUNTY
LS LIBRARY SYSTEM

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A C K N O W L E D G M E N T S

Thank you to the Woman's Club of Stuart for the foresight to recognize the need for a library. These ladies successfully organized, supported and operated the library for more than forty years before turning it over to Martin County government.

This book would have been impossible to compile without the assistance of many people in the community who shared their memories.

We are grateful to all the library Friends' groups, trustees, and the Library Foundation for providing access to notes, meeting minutes and photographs.

Many thanks to librarians and staff, past and present who told us their stories, shared their photographs and opened their scrapbooks.

Christina Mayers contributed valuable editorial advice and recommendations.

George Seaman provided his time and photographic skills to enhance the text.

The Scripps Treasure Coast Newspapers and librarian Marjorie Brill generously allowed access to their archives.

We cannot begin to express our gratitude to historian Sandra Thurlow for her patience in answering many questions and her willingness to share historical photos and information.

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Written by Luann Justak and Nina Taylor

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FOREWORD

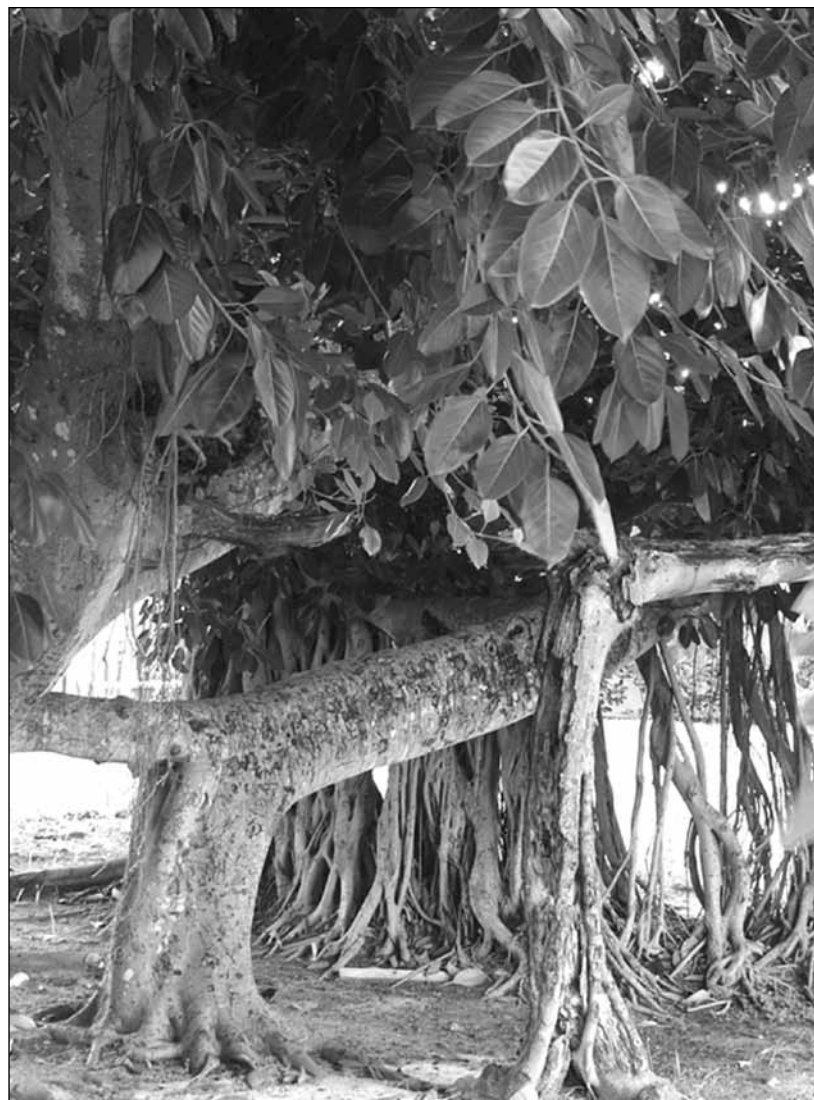
When we were asked to write a brief history of the library to help commemorate its 50th anniversary, we imagined a fairly simple process: read the minutes and reports of the past library boards and friends groups and talk to some local people who might recall the early Stuart Library. Who could have guessed that our “little project” would turn into a real book and take almost two years to complete! The more we learned, the more we felt that compiling those early recollections was especially important. To postpone gathering oral histories, photographs and reminiscences might mean losing them forever. We owe the early settlers our gratitude for having the determination and foresight to launch a library in a town of only 400 citizens.

It became evident to us that the library in Martin County is truly a community institution. It was founded and funded by the citizens as the cultural and educational cornerstone of their new town. It continues to serve that purpose today, not only in Stuart but also county wide. Generous donations, enthusiastic attendance at programs, and the staggering number of items circulated daily give evidence to the continuing support of the people.

We hope the words and photographs will convey the lively determination of the founders of the Martin County Library System. This book is not meant to be an exhaustive study.

There are many people to thank for their time and effort in assisting us with gathering so much information. Librarians past and present, library trustees, members of all the Friends groups, The Library Foundation and Woman’s Club were particularly helpful. Thanks as well to Sandra Thurlow for her invaluable advice and for sharing so many memories and photographs.

Finally, we would like to express our own gratitude and pride in having been able to participate in such a worthy project. Through the work, we have reinforced our belief that a library is much more than a storage place for knowledge and history; it is



This tree still stands on the site of the old public library on East Ocean Boulevard. For many years its tangled branches served as a shady respite, a climbing challenge and a landmark for library visitors.

part of the fabric of history itself. Join us in celebrating the fiftieth year of the Martin County Library System and in thanking the dedicated citizens who have helped the library develop and grow for half a century. Who knows what great things we may accomplish in the next fifty years!

Luann Justak

Nina Taylor

In the late 1800s, the first people to migrate to what is now the Martin County area arrived here from established towns further north. This enterprising and adventurous group was accustomed to a lively social and cultural life. With determination they set out to create the same atmosphere in their new community in South Florida. In 1913 when Stuart had a population of only 400, a group of women met to organize a woman's club. The next year these resolute women saw their club chartered by the State and National Woman's Clubs. The mission stated in the charter of the new Woman's Club of Stuart was to promote and maintain a free public library, help promote and establish a park system and work for the establishment of a public hospital. From 1914 until 1957 The Woman's Club of Stuart supported and maintained the only library open to the community in Martin County.

The members of the Woman's Club sponsored card parties, rummage sales, bake sales and other fundraisers to purchase books for the library, which was located in The Christian Endeavor Hall. This small white frame building on Albany Avenue had been purchased by the members and used for their meetings and the library. During a



The Christian Endeavor Hall purchased by the Woman's Club in 1916 for meetings and the library.



People viewing the damage after the hurricane of 1933 destroyed the Woman's Club and the library collection.



Martin County's second library, located on Albany Avenue, was constructed after the 1933 hurricane with WPA funds.

hurricane in 1933, the upper floor of the nearby Matheson Furniture Store blew off and destroyed the Woman's Club and all the library books. A building for the Woman's Club and library was reconstructed on the same property with federal aid from the Works Progress Administration. Established in 1935 by presidential order, the WPA funded many public buildings. In recent years the "second" woman's club and library was occupied by Hunter Auto Supply.

Several Stuart residents have fond recollections of the first "public library". Mrs. Leona Rue Luckhardt shared her memories (*see box next page*).

In the mid 1950s Mrs. Mary Kanner was appointed by the president of the Woman's Club to chair the library committee. At this time the library was still a project of the Woman's Club, supported by their fundraising efforts and a \$600 contribution from the county and a like amount from the city of Stuart. Enlisting other interested citizens, Mrs. Kanner launched a campaign to build a true public library in Stuart that would be operated and supported by county government for all the citizens of Martin County. To accomplish this, the Martin County Library Association was established by the Stuart Woman's Club.

The earliest minutes of the Library Association on file were recorded at a meeting held in Mrs. Kanner's home on November 29, 1955. Mary Kanner was the first president of this independent organization formed to raise money and build a public library. At this meeting, a board member reported that the city of Stuart would give a 99-year lease on eight city lots on Fourth Street for \$1.00 a year. The next year, in July 1956, the minutes report that Mr. W. M. Kiplinger had also offered property. He proposed donating a block of property on Fourth Street (now SE Ocean Boulevard) between Amerigo and Balboa Streets. After much discussion on the pros and cons of the two proposed locations, Mrs. Evans Crary, Sr., moved to accept Mr. Kiplinger's offer. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Tom Thurlow, Sr. and the gift was unanimously accepted by the board of the Library Association. The Board decided that it was preferable to own the land it was building on rather than lease from the city. The four lots, numbers 9, 10, 11, 12 in the area known as Hildabrad Park, were deeded to the Martin County Library Association.

In November 1955, the minutes acknowledge the special services offered by local residents to the Library Association. The following were recognized: Mr. M. G. Littman, Attorney, for his help with the charter and by-laws; Dr. Ira Williams for his help with the building plans; Donald Armstrong for donating his services as architect; Ted Hearn for printing the pledge cards for the fund drive; the newspapers, The Stuart News, Miami Herald, The Palm Beach Post and Times, the Fort Pierce Tribune, and the radio station WSTU for giving publicity to the library project.

To quote from an article by Mrs. Mary Kanner in the History of Martin County compiled by Janet Hutchinson, "The blood and guts of the new library came, in significant proportion, from the John W. Stokes Foundation, the Mary Lolene Stokes Foundation and L. F. Knowles."

John W. Stokes was a nationally prominent attorney who moved to Stuart in the mid-thirties. One of his great desires was to help young people become good citizens. To achieve this goal, he established a foundation in 1947. The John W. Stokes Foundation contributed to the community through scholarships to graduating high school seniors, the building of the public library, Martin Memorial Hospital and other local charities.

In January 1957 Governor Leroy Collins appointed the first members of the Library Board of Trustees for Martin County. They were: Chairman, Dr. W. Ira Williams; Secretary, Mrs. John W. Stokes; Treasurer, Mr. Frank Wacha; Mrs. F. S. Williamson, Jr.; and Mr. Richard Hupfel.

During the construction period, although under the authority of the Board of Trustees, the library continued to operate from the Woman's Club building on Albany Street with the help of Mrs. Edna Coutant. The daughter of Homer Witham and Kate McPherson, Edna came to Stuart with her parents in 1895. She attended Florida State College for Women and was the teacher in Indiantown's first school in 1911. Mrs. Coutant continued her interest in education by serving as town librarian until a full-time librarian was selected. Robert E. Hamilton was hired to be head librarian and assumed his duties June 1, 1957.

“The small Library was housed in the Woman's Club building located on Albany Avenue in back of the old Stuart News office. The air in this small building, with its wood floors that creaked as you walked in, always had the smell of paste and musty old books. On the right wall as you entered the room was a large picture of Cynthia Haney. Haney Circle is named for her. I believe this was the meeting place for the Woman's Christian Temperance Union of which she was very active. I first went to the Library to get books from the children's section on the right and back of the room. Another section was further toward the back with open shelves for the many other books. The room was always quiet and no one spoke above a whisper. Each Saturday morning my older sister, Leila, and I would first go to Edna Coutant's home for our weekly piano lessons before she left for the Library. She was the only Librarian that I remember. Sometimes she would be there ahead of us and always helped to pick out the books that she thought were appropriate for me. My favorites were "Heidi", "The Bobbsey Twins", "Pinocchio" and "The Wizard of Oz." Later my sister who was older than I, read the book "Seventeen" (a novel by Booth Tarkington) to me as I couldn't read well at that age. I loved that story of the "loves" of the seventeen year old character in the book. I'm sure Mrs. Coutant wouldn't have approved if she had known about this.

I don't remember having a Library card but there was a card in a pocket in the front cover of each book which was marked with the date when the book was due back at the library. I also don't remember ever having to pay to check out the books or being charged a late fee. We never missed our Saturday morning library visit.”

– Mrs. Leona Rue Luckhardt



Mary Lolene Stokes (left), Mary Kanner (center) and Lacy Kickliter point out the site of the future Martin County Library in 1956.

Built and equipped with private donations, the library was given a \$17,000 operating budget by the Board of County Commissioners. The Martin County Library opened to the public on Monday, July 15, 1957. On September 30, 1957, the end of the county fiscal year, more than two months after opening, the library had loaned 11,073 books to 798 library card holders.

On November 15, 1957, a special meeting of the general membership of the Martin County Library Association, Inc. was held at the Stuart Hotel. The meeting was called concerning the transfer of the library from the Association to Martin County. It was reported that the amount raised for the library was \$53,803.20 in cash with “in-kind” donations making a total of more than \$100,000. At the meeting, Mrs. John W. Stokes made the following motion:

“I move that the Martin County Library Association adopt a resolution to transfer to Martin County, the Library land and building, books, furniture and fixtures, equipment and other contents of the Library now owned by the Martin County Library Association; and that the President and the secretary be authorized to execute the deed of conveyance to the Board of County Commissioners; and that a copy of this resolution be included in the minutes, and that a Certified copy of the Resolution be given to the

County Commissioners.”

The motion was seconded by Mr. Robert Twyman and unanimously passed.

The Martin County Public Library was formally dedicated on November 24, 1957.

The celebration included an official transfer of ownership of the library to Martin County and a speech by United States Senator Spessard Holland.

During the library's first year, Miss Verna Histendirk from the State Library of Florida arrived in town to explain to the Board of Trustees and the County Commission their eligibility for a \$20,000 two year federal grant. This grant required the library to provide free service to all residents with particular emphasis on rural areas. This service could be accomplished with a bookmobile. Despite the pleas of the Trustees, the request to apply for the grant was tabled twice by the Commission before any action was taken. According to The Stuart News, one commissioner questioned whether people in the outlying areas really wanted bookmobile service. Finally, with Commission approval, the library applied for and received the federal grant.

The next year the Library Board of Trustees announced the opening of a book station or small satellite library within Stuart Training School, the high school for black students. While intended to serve adults, the book station operated from the school library and was supervised by the school librarian, Mrs. Ora Dell Hamilton Landers. Because the small collection of adult books could be browsed and checked out only during school hours, it was inconvenient for most people who worked. The satellite book station would be closed before 1964.

By the end of its first full year of operation, the Martin County Public Library reported an increase in books borrowed from 11,000 to almost 42,000. The number of registered library users climbed from 798 to 1,883 and 3,500 new volumes had been added to the collection. Enthusiasm for the new library was evident.

1959 was an important year for the library. In April 1959 the bookmobile was put into service. It was funded with a portion of the \$20,000 federal grant which emphasized service to rural areas. Mrs. Ruth Dease was the driver-librarian and Mrs. Gloria Karlow was her assistant. By the end of that year, the librarian would announce that the book mobile was so successful that other counties were preparing to duplicate the operation.

At the end of the fiscal year, September 30, 1959, total circulation was reported in the annual report as 65,001 for 3,850 registered borrowers. The library collection had grown to 15,465 volumes. In 1960, the U. S. Bureau of Census would report 16,554



Edna Coutant, librarian for many years at the Woman's Club.



Mr. John Stokes



Mrs. Lolene Stokes



Members of the Library Association review plans for the new library in 1956.



Mrs. Ora Dell Hamilton Landers, librarian at Stuart Training School and Robert Hamilton, head librarian of the Martin County Library, celebrate the opening of the school's adult book station with trustees, friends and school officials.

residents in Martin County, and nearly one third were registered library users. By the following year, the library had approximately 4,000 more books than the building was designed to hold. Additional book stacks or shelves were purchased and the Library Board of Trustees began discussing the need for expansion.

From the beginning, the Martin County Library Association (Friends of the Library) not only raised the money to build the library but also funded programming for children, teens and adults. Their generous support continues today.

On October 11, 1962, a groundbreaking ceremony was held for the expansion of the library, increasing space to 6,500 sq. ft. The Martin County Library Association funded this expansion as it had the original construction project.

Robert E. Hamilton resigned as head librarian on September 30, 1962. He returned to Martin County around 1978 or 1979 and pursued a second career as a Martin County deputy. Mr. Hamilton passed away in May 2006. In the first five years under his leadership, the library had more than doubled its number of books, increasing from 11,073 to 26,284. Registered borrowers had increased from less than a thousand to almost 8,000.

Ms. Jean Roos served as acting librarian from October 1, 1962 until March 1963. Ms. Roos had been a lecturer on young people's literature at the School of Library Science at Western Reserve, and she was also head of youth services at the Cleveland, Ohio Public Library. Mr. Sanford S. Neal, Jr. began his short tenure in March 1963, resigning as librarian on November 22, 1963, the day President Kennedy was assassinated. Ms. Elizabeth Thalman became head librarian April 1, 1964.

Much to the delight of the staff and patrons, The Martin County Library Association gave the money to air-condition the library in August 1964. The first six summers the library was cooled by fans. In fact, the 1958 annual report thanks Mrs. Isobel Waldo and Mrs. Mary A. Broome for lending fans for the summer. Every year it was necessary to discard books which were damaged by the high humidity in the summer. The air-conditioning not only protected the library materials but also added to the comfort of the patrons and staff.

In the 1963-1964 annual report, there were no branch libraries or book stations

listed. Evidently the station at the Stuart Training School had been closed. Martin County Free Public Library Station located at the Banner Lake Club in Hobe Sound opened in 1965. It was designed to serve high school, junior college and adult students who lived in the area. The station contained reference materials and study aids. The building had been rewired, suitable lighting installed, and study tables and chairs provided. Mr. M. L. Hurst, a local teacher, was hired to supervise and assist the students. According to Mr. Hurst, it was well used for the purpose it was established. Mr. Hurst added many books and materials donated by Hobe Sound winter residents to enrich the resources available.

In 1965 Dr. Ira Williams, one of the original trustees, continued serving on the library board. Other members were Mrs. R. L. Bohner (Trudy), Mr. William Crary (Rick), Mr. Timer Powers, and Miss Jean Roos. The population of Martin County was estimated at 22,400. The library had 25,526 books with a circulation of 98,623. The county was growing, and the library was growing with it.

Also in 1965, The Florida Federation of Woman's Clubs was chosen to be the organization to promote the aims and welfare of libraries throughout the State of Florida. Locally, the Woman's Club of Stuart through its years of participation and leadership provided the base for library operations as well as donations of books. The Woman's Club of Stuart, from its inception in 1913 until the (public) library was dedicated in 1957, provided "the only source of information available to those requiring books and factual data." (From a press release by the Woman's Club of Stuart April 25, 1965)

Ms. Elizabeth Thalman, the head librarian, resigned effective December 15, 1965, citing conflict with Dr. Ira Williams, chairman of the library board, as the reason. From Stuart Ms. Thalman went to the Tampa library system and remained there until she retired.

A former page, who became a library clerk under Ms. Thalman, remembers some of the wonderful volunteers who served at least one afternoon a week: Dorothy Fanning, Florence Auerbach, Lela Oughterson, Mrs. Pittman, Mrs. Lehman, Mrs. Willoughby, and Dorothy Greenlees.

Ms. Noel Ross became head librarian on April 1, 1966. She would remain in the



This plaque recognizes contributors to the first public library.

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Florence Auerbach has her corsage pinned on by a friend, Mary Burrell, after Auerbach is recognized for 40 years of volunteer services with Martin County libraries.

position until resigning in August 1968 to become head librarian for the Florida Council for the Blind.

The population of Martin County was estimated to be 22,900 in 1966. The library had 27,276 books which circulated almost 97,000 times and had 122 magazine subscriptions. There were four library sites: Main library, bookmobile, deposit station at Warfield School in Indiantown and a deposit station at Banner Lake in the Hobe Sound area.

Governor Haydon Burns appointed Mr. James A Garvey to the Library Board of Trustees in July 1966 to replace Trudy Bohner, who resigned for personal reasons. Members of the library board now included Rick Crary who was president of the board, Dr. Ira Williams, Timer Powers, Miss Jean Roos and James Garvey.

In 1966, a Friends of the Library chapter was formed in Indiantown under the auspices of the Martin County Library Association. Mrs. Gail Beach was elected president. The Friends of the Library was established to encourage expanded library services for Indiantown. It would be twenty-five years before a full service library would be opened in Indiantown.

On January 19, 1967, The Stuart News reported that the Board of County Commissioners recommended to Governor Claude Kirk that Mr. James Garvey be reappointed to the Library Board of Trustees and that Mrs. Pickett Warren (Esther) be appointed to the seat held by Mr. William F. Crary. Dr. Ira Williams, one of the original trustees, resigned and his unexpired term was filled by Mrs. James Littman.

In April 1967 Dr. Ira W. Williams was honored for his work as chairman of the building committee for the original library. In 1956 this committee had been incorporated as the Martin County Library Association to receive from Mr. Willard Kiplinger the gift of land on which the original library was built. The Association extended its thanks and appreciation for his untiring efforts and success in bringing to reality the nucleus of an idea: the Martin County Public Library.

Nineteen sixty eight was a year of change for the library system. Mr. Leroy Hennings was hired as the new head librarian and began work in September of that year. At that time he was the only professional with a master's degree in library science

on staff. He would remain in that position until February 1991. It was during his tenure that the first reference librarian was hired, and the reference collection was professionally organized.

The library was now open 45.5 hours each week with two full-time and two part-time staff members. On September 30, 1968, the annual report showed a circulation of 77,098 with 29,467 volumes and 9, 579 registered library users. The bookmobile was discontinued as of September 30, 1968, although the library maintained the deposit stations in Indiantown and Banner Lake. On August 25, 1969, a mobile unit began serving Indiantown and Hobe Sound on alternate weeks. This unit would replace the deposit stations in Warfield School in Indiantown and at Banner Lake community in Hobe Sound.

With the popularity of the library and population of the county growing so rapidly, it became apparent that the community had outgrown its library. By 1972 the population of Martin County had exceeded 30,000, and for the first time library circulation broke the 100,000 number.

Peter Jefferson, a local architect, drew up plans for a new addition and for remodeling the existing public library. The Board of County Commissioners accepted a bid from Kirchman Construction on November 25, 1975. The new addition would increase the size of the library to 18,270 sq. ft. and for the first time, incorporate a public meeting room and a conference room. The county provided the \$250,000 for the construction but no money for furnishings and equipment. Once again, The Martin County Library Association rose to the occasion and contributed additional funds, raising \$70,000 to furnish the facility. The new section opened June 28, 1976, and a dedication and open house were held on October 24, 1976.



WORKING IN THE LIBRARY WAS ANYTHING BUT DULL!

Members of the library staff, past and present, have interesting tales to tell. Shirley Grubbs, retired librarian, remembers: “A wacky thing that would be considered unsavory was a man who relieved himself in the far corner of the fiction section. A woman patron in the area was duly horrified and came to the desk, reported it and said that the offender was a man in a blue shirt. There were at least four men in blue shirts in the library that day so the ‘criminal’ got away. We had to discard and replace quite a number of books, among them all by Pearl Buck.”

Another incident that Shirley recalls was on a Sunday morning when “Mr. Hennings and I were in the new addition (on East Ocean) and watched the hairy arm fish around in the indoor book drop until the day’s Miami Herald was located. Unlocked book drops were universally a problem because of all the things (snakes, half-filled soft drink cans, e.g.) that pranksters might put in, but here was someone taking something out. He was a youngish man and just shrugged when accosted. He DID hand over the newspaper.”

Mr. Leroy Hennings, former library director, remembers sitting in his office and watching as a patron opened the front door, and it came off in his hand. The patron was left standing there holding the door.

In the late 1980s and ‘90s, several homeless men spent their days in the library. One man would take his sports bag into the men’s room every morning, and according to reports, he bathed and occasionally changed clothes. One morning a staff member looked out and the man had spread his washed undershorts on the white fence near the front entry to dry. Needless to say he was requested to do his laundry somewhere else.

Donna Tunsoy, current library director, recalls the lonely elderly patrons who came in every other day just to have someone to talk to; homebound elderly citizens who called in every day with a question they made up just to hear a human voice; the hypochondriac wanting a telephone diagnosis of a new ailment each week. These were the normal “people being people” types of activities. An unusual incident was a female

patron screaming one afternoon because she found a man standing next to her with a mirror taped on top of his shoe, positioning it, so he could look up her dress. As the male ran from the library, a staff member called the police who arrived within a couple of minutes. An officer proceeded to take Ms. Tunsoy on a hair-raising ride around the neighborhood looking for the culprit who was never found.

Ms. Tunsoy also remembers that as the decade was winding down and the library system was on the verge of its most ambitious transformation, the building in Stuart was growing tired. Several incidents, humorous, but still a little sad, highlighted the growing need for a new library building. One day while Ms. Tunsoy was working at her desk, an excited staff member came running into her office (a shared room converted from a bowling alley-width boardroom) shouting, "We have bees attacking our patrons!" Ms. Tunsoy rushed to the front door, naturally thinking there was a bees' nest located somewhere near the entrance. The staff member exclaimed "No, not there! It's right in the middle of the library where the reading chairs are!" Ms. Tunsoy followed and sure enough bees were flying all around the area. It didn't take long to discover that they were coming through the knot holes in the wooden ceiling. Patrons were evacuated, the library doors were closed, and over the weekend a bee expert came to smoke the space between the ceiling and the roof. Evidently bees had been building a huge nest for quite some time, but until that day had not discovered the small opening in the ceiling. With the bees attacking from above, it really was amusing (in a pathetic sort of way) to come to work one morning and have the director's office and the Library Foundation's office next door invaded with flying termites. This time they were coming in from the lower walls and floor. The County's General Services department couldn't get anyone to help with the problem for several days, so in order to continue working, the staff were given spray bottles of water with instruction to spray the insects down as they came out of the cracks. It seems termites can't fly around with wet wings.

Instead of swarms of insects, the library is normally full of delightfully eccentric individuals. One regular patron at the old library did the crossword puzzle in ink in all the newspapers first thing every morning. After other readers complained, the library



Donna Tunsoy



Located in the Blake Library, Bonnie's Books sells donated books to raise funds for the library.

began to run off copies of the puzzles and placed the copies on a counter for those who wanted to work them. He still insisted on doing the puzzles directly in the newspapers with ink. This same gentleman was hearing impaired, yet two or three times a year he would write a letter to the editor complaining about the noise in the library.



FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY

Established by the Woman's Club of Stuart in 1955, the Library Association was the forerunner of today's Friends of the Library. The Martin County Library System and the library trustees encourage the formation of Friends groups. Friends of the Library are citizens who are interested in and supportive of a local branch library. The Friends focus public attention on the services, resources and needs of their community library. In general, the activities of the local Friends of the Library include providing volunteers to help with library tasks, raising funds through book sales or other activities to help customize its branch. The Friends provide a connection between the community and the library system.

Traditionally, book sales have been a major fundraiser for the Martin County Library Association. The proceeds were always used to enhance the library. Around 1965 Floretta Bartlett took over the semi-annual book sales. Her organizational skills were impressive, and the book sales were successful and continued to grow. On opening day, people would be lined up outside the library as early as six o'clock in the morning. One year Floretta made Indian brave headbands with feathers for her helpers; she was the chief! It was an amusing and effective way to distinguish the volunteer workers from the customers. After Floretta Bartlett resigned, Sybil North and Dottie Thompson co-chaired the book sales. This energetic duo and their many co-workers made the book

sales a most successful source of funds for the Martin County Library Association. For many years, each Friends group had annual or semi-annual books sales in their community to raise funds for the local library branch. Today the Book Depot at B&A Flea Market is an ongoing cooperative book sale benefiting all branch libraries.

At the annual Florida Library Association conference in 1992, the Martin County Library Association received the “Library Enhancement Award” for its outstanding contributions to the Martin County Library System. It was a well deserved honor.

One early volunteer was Mrs. Richard Peter, whom everyone knew as Bonnie. She arrived in Stuart in 1965 after her husband retired from the military. Starting out as a helper at the annual book sales, she stayed involved on the Board of Directors of the Library Association for 25 years. Bonnie served as the Board’s president in 1976 and was also a member and chair of several committees. She was a tireless worker and behind-the-scenes fundraiser, not only for the library, but also other community organizations. Her no-nonsense approach was softened by the whimsical pins she wore on her lapel and the jaunty straw hat perched on her head. Known for her forthright manner and wry sense of humor, Bonnie later became a full-time volunteer in the technical services department. Staff members recall Bonnie’s diligence in replacing worn out, dirty or obsolete copies of books with fresh titles. She enjoyed combing through the book donations daily to root out gems to add to the collection. Bonnie was equally enthusiastic about discarding anything that didn’t pass the “moldy smell” test. When she died in 1999, it was decided to name the Friends’ second-hand bookstore inside the Blake Library “Bonnie’s Books” in her honor.

Throughout the life of the library, the Friends have been the “movers and shakers”, playing active roles in the establishment of the branches and programs such as Chautauqua South. The Friends continue today to encourage public participation in support of developing library services, facilities, and resources.

In addition to the Friends, other community partnerships have enriched the Martin County Library System. In 1992 library trustee Barbara Hendry became involved in a wonderful project that involved both the library and the Garden Club of Stuart. The Garden Club created a design for “Learning Gardens” bordering the library along



Bonnie Peter with Kyle Mandy, the grandson of library staff member Vicky Roma.



Early technology at the library on East Ocean Boulevard.

Osceola Street. The xeriscape gardens demonstrated salt tolerant, native, palm, cold hardy, flowering and edible plants. Barbara spearheaded fundraising and enlisted community members who donated time and materials to build the gardens. For this project the Garden Club of Stuart was awarded the Kellogg Medal for Civic Achievement, the most prestigious award given to local clubs by the National Federation of Garden Clubs, Inc. Barbara Hendry was chosen to be the recipient of the Stuart Garden Club's Community Service award in April 1993.



A NEW ERA

Martin County government was reorganized during 1982. In the reorganization, the library director for the first time became directly accountable to the county administrator for the operation of the library system. The library trustees had been serving as an operating board reporting directly to the Commission. The trustees now became an advisory board. This was a major step that made future growth and change manageable.

As an advisory board, the Library Board of Trustees develops library policy with the advice and counsel of the library director. The trustees continually study the needs of the library and submit recommendations for sound and feasible budget financing. They may also submit recommendations regarding the appointment of a library director.

In the early 1980s, a computerized system for checking out books was added. This move was a groundbreaking step in library service because the Martin County Library was the smallest library in the United States to install a Gaylord Circulation System. Luann Barton Justak was hired to coordinate the transition from a manual to a computerized system. After the switch, the library continued to maintain the card catalog for

many years allowing patrons and staff time to adjust. Project coordinator Luann Justak recalls, “To create a unique barcode for each library book, we had to match thousands of our catalog cards to book titles listed on microfiche sent from Gaylord Systems. The match had to be exact. I hired three students, including my future husband, from the Florida Institute of Technology in Jensen Beach to help with the work. They spent months hunched over the microfiche readers and later stuck thousands of barcodes into library books.”

Book thefts had, unfortunately, become a problem affecting the budget. The library was losing between 1,000 and 1,500 books each year, so security gates were installed at the door to curb the loss of inventory.

The late 1980s and early 1990s were an exciting time for the library system. The population of Martin County was growing by leaps and bounds and so were the demands for library services and space. The new residents requested and expected services that they had received in their former communities. The Martin County Public Library was striving to meet this demand. Many community members supported the library in their county budget requests and donated money through the Friends and later the Foundation for enhancing the library.



Security gates at the Hobe Sound Public Library.



The self checkout system at the Blake Library expedites service.



PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

The library has not grown haphazardly but always with a plan to enhance and expand the services to the people of Martin County. Over the years, library consultants were hired to help library trustees and administration plan a course for the future.

In 1968 library consultant Joseph Wheeler was hired to study the library's facilities and services, surveying staff and citizens. He made the following comment about the purpose of the public library: "In 1957, Sputnik fueled American urgency to be educated and well informed...the library is no longer mostly for children or adult light fiction reading." Mr. Wheeler noted that while the Stuart library had grown significantly since its opening, the book budget and square footage were still below standards suggested by the American Library Association. He recommended both should be increased. The consultant also discovered that "the majority of students prefer to and do use their public library for school study materials." Following this study, trustees agreed to enhance both the children's and reference book collections and to expand the children's area of the library. Another of Wheeler's observations on research information services, however, did not stand the test of time: "Much is being spent nationally on electronic retrieval of information—but there is an increasing realization that this idea may prove to be only the Great Illusion." Thousands of people who currently access the library's electronic and online services would beg to differ!

In 1981 Dr. Jean E. Lowrie presented her "Report on Martin County Public Library System." As a librarian, educator and former Director of the School of Librarianship at Western Michigan University, she appreciated the library's role in educating and informing the public. Dr. Lowrie noted that planning for the future required understanding the unique Martin County community and defining the library's service role. Conducting a survey of more than 300 library users, interviewing staff and administration, observing library programs and meetings, and studying Martin County census figures and financial

reports, she analyzed the strengths and weaknesses of the library system. The survey found that the most common usage of the library was “reading for leisure” followed by gathering “information for personal interest”. Analyzing all the data, Dr. Lowrie recommended streamlining circulation by adding an automated (computerized) system for checking out materials and developing more programs and services for students, minorities, and senior citizens. Adding professional staff, increasing library hours, and improving the bookmobile service or developing permanent branches in outlying communities like Indiantown and Hobe Sound were also advised. The recipient of several national awards for distinguished service to the profession of librarianship, Dr. Lowrie has continued to provide expert advice over the years. She was the president of the Friends of the Hoke Library and remains an active library volunteer.

Following Dr. Lowrie’s report, volunteer Robert Wallace was asked by trustee chairman Dr. L. F. Knowles to conduct a cost and feasibility study on automating the library’s circulation system. Mr. Wallace had considerable management and planning experience with the U.S. Army. In 1981 there were about 50,000 items in the library collection and more than 70,000 registered borrowers. Staff members were spending hours processing date due cards and overdue fines, time that could be better spent directly helping library patrons. Mr. Wallace’s findings substantiated Dr. Lowrie’s data. Adding a computerized circulation control system would streamline things and prove cost effective in the long run. After comparing options, the director decided to contract with Gaylord Systems to create a new way of managing the library’s collection and keep track of borrowers.

During the next few years, the library continued to evolve and improve its service to the people of Martin County. Experiencing a period of rapid growth, Martin County population exceeded the 100,000 mark by 1990. The influx of new residents was expecting a level of library services, cultural and educational opportunities not currently available. Gretchen Hammerstein, who became director of the library system in May 1991, introduced staff, patrons, and county government to a broader vision of what the library could be. Her energy and enthusiasm for change and growth were contagious.

Gretchen felt the citizens should expect more from their library and that the library was obligated to respond with a broad range of materials and services. In order to provide coordinated services and resources to all county residents, the library began to operate officially as the Martin County Library System in October 1991.

The new director was hired for her strong experience in library building projects. She had worked with noted library building designer Nolan Lushington who wrote the book *Libraries Designed for Users*. Recognizing that Martin County fell below the Florida Library Association's recommendation of 0.6 sq. ft. per person, Ms. Hammerstein presented the County with a plan. This "pointSIX Plan" called for expanding library system space from a total of 42,770 sq. ft. in 1995 to a total of 85,012 by 2001.

pointSIX Plan		
LIBRARY	1995	BY YEAR 2001
Hobe Sound	3,800 sq. ft.	10,000 sq. ft.
Indiantown	5,000 sq. ft.	10,000 sq. ft.
Jensen Beach	4,700 sq. ft.	10,000 sq. ft.
Law Library	1,000 sq. ft.	1,000 sq. ft.
Mid-County/Salerno		15,000 sq. ft.
Stuart	18,270 sq. ft.	36,000 sq. ft.

There was some discussion whether the citizens would be better served by a library system composed of an administrative center supplemented by community branches or one large library serving the entire county. The January 1993 minutes of the trustees' meeting report that a suggestion was made to sell the property on East Ocean Boulevard and build next to the County Administration building on Monterey Road. Although the need for a new, larger library was recognized, this was the first time the Monterey

Road location had been discussed by the trustees. On May 27, 1994, the minutes quote trustee Charles Scott: "Given that a decentralized library system is viable and provides flexibility to adapt to the county growth patterns, I move to endorse the recommendation of the Library Building Committee to build the main library on the Monterey Road site." This motion carried unanimously. Reversing an earlier decision (February 1994) to build a centralized main library on Salerno Road, the County Commission agreed to focus on developing a branch-oriented library system. In May 1995 the Martin County Commission decided to build an administrative library on the county-owned land on Monterey Road next to the Martin County Administrative Center. The process of reviewing bids and proposals from architectural firms and construction companies and determining the budget could now begin.

Sources of funding were Florida State Library construction grants, impact fees, the sale of the old library, and donations from the public through The Library Foundation of Martin County and Friends groups. To supplement this funding, the County Commission agreed to a sales tax referendum. In addition to legally committing expenditures for library facilities, the one year one-cent sales tax also was designated for the beginning development of a regional multi-purpose recreation complex and major improvements to fire/rescue equipment. The income from the sales tax would provide about half the funding for the projected library expansion plan put forth in the "pointSIX PLAN".

In January 1996 an action group led by Bill Hamilton was formed by some members of the Martin County Library Association and other supporters of the sales tax referendum which had been titled "1% 1 YEAR". They worked diligently to educate the public on the advantages of the one year sales tax. Martin County narrowly passed the referendum. An issue was raised after the referendum with regard to the timing of the legal advertisements. The county requested a court validation hearing. On July 11, 1996, a judge ruled that the referendum would stand.



*Past Presidents of The Library Foundation at the 2002 Ball:
(left to right) Jim Sopko, Mike Ciferri, Bob Cline,
Gloria Wolfe and Paul Hundt.*



THE LIBRARY FOUNDATION OF MARTIN COUNTY

In the fall of 1991 members of the Library Association (Stuart Friends) and community leaders met to discuss the possibility of establishing a foundation to raise funds for the entire library system. The library system was beginning to evolve, and a formalized structure with financial safeguards was needed to give confidence to potential donors. The Library Association offered to underwrite the establishment of a foundation with a gift of \$50,000. Nina Taylor was the organizing executive director and remained at the helm for ten years.

The Library Foundation of Martin County, Inc. was incorporated in February 1992 and received its 501 (c)(3) tax authorization letter in August. Steve Shaw was the organizing president and Milt Christie took over to serve as the first president. Jim Sopko served two terms as president followed by Michael Ciferri, Jr., Robert A. Cline, Gloria Wolfe, Paula Hundt, Helen Blake, Wilford B. Brown, and current president Patricia D. Downing.

In 1992, through the Library Foundation of Martin County, the Carl & Lily Pforzheimer Foundation (New York) endowed a humanities reference librarian position with funding for enhancing the humanities collection for the library system.

The following year The Library Foundation of Martin County embarked on a capital fund drive to raise \$1.2 million in three years to supplement and enhance the proposed system expansion. Plans were finalized for the new branch in Palm City which was named the Julie and Peter Cummings Library in recognition of their gift to the campaign. The community room was dedicated in honor of donor Alice Donahue. This public meeting room proved so popular that the idea was incorporated into the plans for the other branches.

That year the Foundation also began raising funds for the popular Chautauqua South programs. The first fundraising ball, called the “Well Read” Gala, was held in February 1994 at the Monarch Country Club. Dressed as characters from children’s literature, friends and staff circulated among party goers. Mr. and Mrs. Carl H. Pforzheimer, Jr.



Past President Helen Blake



Past President Will Brown



President Patty Downing



*Executive Director
Suzanne Horstman*

were honorary chairs; Barbara Hendry and Keddie Powers were co-chairs. The annual black tie event continues to the present day, and it is an important source of funds and new supporters for Foundation projects.

In 1995 the Foundation directors voted to embark on a ten-year capital campaign to raise the standard of the library system above the basic level of service prescribed by the Florida Library Association. These standards recommend a minimum square footage and volumes per capita for public libraries. The campaign would provide a community contribution for all the capital library projects as well as set up a general endowment for the Library Foundation. The first branch planned was the one in Hobe Sound. Site selection was not complete for the facility on the Indian River Community College campus in Port Salerno or the main branch in Stuart.

The Foundation committed to raise \$460,000 for the Hobe Sound Library.

A generous gift of a “right-of-way” in 1997 from Davis and Irell Rohl advanced the construction of this branch, providing access from both A1A and US Highway 1. In the spring, Margaret Lord announced the Hobe Sound Campaign had gone “over the top” and that the branch would be named The Hobe Sound Public Library at the request of



Nina Taylor (right) thanks folks as they leave during a reception in her honor at the Blake Library after she announced her retirement after ten years as executive director of The Library Foundation of Martin County.

the major donor.

The Foundation commitment to Martin County for the Stuart branch (The Blake Library) totaled \$800,000. The commitment for the Mid-County branch was \$400,000 which Frances (Fran) and F. Andrew (Andy) Morgade pledged in memory of their son, Robert F. Morgade.

In the summer of 1999, the directors authorized a special program for children that became a model for branches throughout the library system. The Hobe Sound After-School Program, which evolved into the popular Homework Helpers project, was funded with a three-year donation totaling \$75,000. Today Homework Helpers can be found at four of the branches, funded exclusively with private donations totaling over \$60,000 annually.

To encourage Florida authors and stories, the Foundation inaugurated the Chautauqua South Fiction Award. Funded with a three-year grant from David and Liz Gulick, the award honored authors from Florida or authors who wrote fiction about Florida. A state-wide committee submitted recommendations, and a local committee chose the winner. Winning authors read and spoke about their work and received a cash award at a celebration in their honor. The award was granted for five years and ended in 2004. Following Nina Taylor's retirement, Suzanne Horstman, FAHP became executive director. The Foundation has grown and become an essential part of the library and the community. During the period from 1991 to the end of 2006, The Library Foundation has received more than 8.27 million dollars in gifts from the people of Martin County. From this fund it has contributed or designated for specific current library projects a total of 6.7 million dollars. In each library, donors are recognized on the Wall of Honor. The Wall of Honor at each branch celebrates and pays tribute in their home library to donors who have made gifts of \$1,000 or more.

As well as attractive and adequate buildings, library users benefit from many programs and resources funded through The Foundation with the generous gifts of Martin County citizens.



THE BLAKE LIBRARY

ADMINISTRATIVE LIBRARY AND STUART BRANCH

With funding available, planning for the administrative library on Monterey Road began. This library construction would be the first under the “pointSIX PLAN”. The architects chosen to design the administrative library in Stuart were Fletcher, Harkness, Cohen, Moneyhun of Boston, MA. In June 1997 James B. Pirtle Construction, Inc. was awarded the contract to build the library on Monterey Road. The county’s Internet site featured a photo diary of the construction.

Following Gretchen Hammerstein’s retirement in 1998, Donna Tunsoy was appointed Director. She had significant and varied library experience. Originally employed as reference librarian and to develop the core collection for the new Hobe Sound Public Library, she progressed to managing the Jensen Beach branch and later served as Ms. Hammerstein’s “second in command”. Ms. Tunsoy was familiar with the needs of the community and was able to meet the challenge of ongoing construction and developing library services.

In January 1999 the new administrative library was opened. In recognition of a major gift, the building was named for Helen and S. Prestley Blake. The Blakes had moved to Stuart in 1980 and immediately became involved with community activities. Helen was serving on the Library Foundation Board of Directors in 1998 during the campaign to raise \$800,000 for construction of the new library. She was actively presenting dedication opportunities to her friends in search of a naming gift when she and Pres decided to make a large gift personally. Prestley Blake, who with his brother Curtis began the Friendly Ice Cream Company, was inspired by the philanthropy of DeWitt Wallace and Andrew Carnegie and has contributed generously in his local communities.

The Blake Library is the hub of the Martin County Library System. It is the administrative library and houses the offices of the director and her assistants. Collections, programming (adult and children’s) and reference services are developed and coordinated through staff at the Blake. The Library Foundation and the Friends of the Blake Library have offices on site.



Helen and S. Prestley Blake for whom the Blake Library is named.



The busy Reference Desk located in the Blake Library.



Rita Armstrong stands at the entrance to the wing named for her husband, Jack.

While reference and information services are available throughout the library system, the Blake Library houses the core staff of trained research professionals. They assist library customers of all ages with locating information and also provide support and resources for the community branch libraries. The reference staff answers thousands of questions each year in person, on the telephone, through the library website or e-mail. Blake Library contains the bulk of the library system's book and periodical (magazine) collection, microfilms, genealogy research materials, public access computers and specialized directories and databases. Ongoing classes for the public on the use of computers, the Internet and various information services are held in the library's modern computer lab.

Today, the reference staff continually monitors the information needs of the community while keeping up with the latest technology available to streamline the research process. Technology provides the tools for locating vast amounts of information. Reference professionals provide the expertise to determine validity of the information.

Along with reference and administration, the Blake Library serves as the center for planning and producing system-wide programming. The John F. (Jack) Armstrong Wing at the Blake Library includes a large auditorium. Comfortably seating 270, it has a large stage with professional quality sound, lighting and multi-media capability. In 2006, Ms. Elisabeth Lahti presented the library with a baby grand piano for use in the auditorium.

At the dedication of the wing, Rita Armstrong recounted how her late husband Jack valued what libraries bring to a community: "Libraries are social and educational institutions that know no cultural, political or economic barriers. They are a paradise of knowledge for everyone and are a gift to each other, ourselves and to future generations. This is our cultural legacy..." Jack Armstrong was a frequent user of the library and understood the importance of establishing and preserving a legacy of knowledge accessible to all.

The children's area was enhanced by the gifts of many donors. Called Children's World, the room was given by Barbara Trimble and dedicated in honor of her grandchildren. Book collections referred to as the World of Knowledge and Imagination

and the World of Picture Books were donated by Charles and Elizabeth Lahti. The Exploration Lab was given by Bob and Connie Harris in honor of their children and grandchild.

Children's World was carefully planned to encourage and support an interest in reading and discovery. The colorful children's area would include low shelving, a comfortable reading area, computers, study tables and a child friendly bathroom. The creation of a room designated as the "Exploration Lab" would provide space for story time and hands-on activities. The department was to be located on the second floor, a rarity in Martin County. The enthusiasm of children enjoying their library area would not disturb adult patrons.



THE LIBRARY COLLECTION

A HUMBLE BEGINNING

Opening its doors in 1957 with about 8,000 novels and children's books donated by the Woman's Club, the Martin County Library System collection today contains more than 400,000 items. Besides books, the collection includes music, movies, audio books, maps, genealogy resources and access to research databases and the Internet. Few citizens in 1957 could have imagined that their library's modest holdings would develop into such a diverse collection.

Within the first year of opening, the library had purchased new reference books, such as almanacs, specialized directories and dictionaries and added over 700 titles chosen specifically for teenagers. Almost half of the acquisitions during the second year came directly from county residents' donations of books and money. The optimistic vision of the library's founders had sparked pride in the Martin County citizens, who gave generously to their homegrown library.

GIFTS THAT KEEP ON GIVING

In its early years, with little funding and plenty of empty shelf space, the library cheerfully accepted almost any donated book in passable condition. An unofficial policy for accepting these gifts gradually evolved. For instance, duplicate titles were “re-gifted” to other local agencies such as the jail or hospital. Magazines deemed “too racy” for children’s eyes were discarded or stored out of sight. The head librarian was sole decision maker. It was not until 1990 that library trustees approved an official written policy outlining guidelines for accepting donations. Today these revised guidelines are an important part of the library’s collection development policy. All donated items become the property of the library system and are either used or sold to benefit the library. One way or another book donations help the library to grow.

Aside from the initial Woman’s Club contribution, one of the first significant gifts made to the library was from Dr. Selim McArthur in 1959. His unique collection of books on sailing and sailing vessels was considered one of the most complete in the country, outside of the University of Maryland. It was recognized in professional library collection catalogs and was sought for purchase by The Library of Congress. Deciding it should stay in Stuart, The Library Association purchased a locked glass display cabinet for storing the valuable books. Another important collection was given to the library by Dr. Edwin A. Menninger, a local horticulturist with an international reputation as a scientist and author. More than 200 of his personal books and journals related to rare trees and flowers of the world are still owned by the library. Currently, both the Menninger and McArthur collections are in storage while being assessed for value and condition.

As county budgets have ebbed and flowed over the years, the generosity of library supporters has remained constant. Memorial donations and gifts of books in honor of a loved one have always been appreciated by the library. Hundreds of individuals, non-profit groups, private clubs and foundations have made important contributions to the library’s collection. In 1988 a \$2,000 grant from the MacArthur Foundation allowed the library to purchase its first core collection of 100 documentary video tapes. In the

mid-1990s, the Carl and Lily Pforzheimer Foundation presented The Library Foundation with a sizeable grant for the purchase of material related to the humanities. This endowment continues to mature and has allowed the library to acquire thousands of classic titles in literature, history, philosophy, the arts and religion, as well as classical and opera music CDs.

CHECK IT OUT—WE'RE MORE THAN BOOKS

While the location, size and number of library branches in Martin County have changed dramatically since 1957, the library's mission to provide the wide range of material requested by its users has remained steadfast. The library system is a key source for fulfilling the education, information and recreation needs of Martin County.

In our library's early years when the collection of books was small, borrowing privileges were limited. Adults could check out five books, teachers six, and children were allowed four books at a time. Items could be kept for two weeks after which 5 cents per day was charged. During the 1960s, the library would charge tardy borrowers 75 cents to send a messenger to retrieve overdue items from their homes or businesses. Today's library users may have 30 items on loan at any one time—and nobody will show up at the door to collect overdue books!

Over the years, as space and finances allowed, the library gradually added new items and services. In the 1970s and '80s, record albums and magazines were loaned out. In 1986 large print books were added to the collection for the benefit of visually impaired readers. With the popularity of home video players skyrocketing in the '80s, the library purchased about 100 VHS tapes in 1988. Limited to documentary-style films, the tapes were quite expensive, often costing close to \$100 and needing cases, labels and cataloging done by the library. Feature films and children's movies were added years later. Framed art prints were loaned for \$5 per month beginning in 1992, but the cost of purchasing and space for storing them became too cumbersome to continue. Many of those original art prints can still be seen "hanging around" various library halls and offices.



Staff in the technical services department process items for distributing to all branches of the library system.

Currently, music CDs and DVD films are borrowed by the thousands each month. Books and music may be downloaded through the MCLS website. In fiscal year 2005/2006, more than 3,000 audio books and electronic books were downloaded. Multimedia makes up a significant part of the library's annual circulation. In fact, items other than books accounted for half of all material checked out by library users in 2006.

A LIBRARY WITHOUT BORDERS

Library service to Martin County citizens has always been free, and in 1973 borrowing privileges were also extended to students of the now closed Jensen Beach campus of the Florida Institute of Technology. Recently, residents of St. Lucie and Martin Counties began enjoying the benefit of reciprocal borrowing at no charge. Most library programs for adults and children are also free of charge to anyone, regardless of where they live.

The 1990s ushered in the technology revolution and the buzzwords "high tech" and "information superhighway." In 1989 the library had jumped on the bandwagon with the addition of an InfoTrac information retrieval system purchased by the Library Association. This collection of a dozen compact discs provided access to thousands of magazine articles with the use of special equipment housed at the main library. Business directories, stock prices, encyclopedias and almanacs, medical dictionaries and drug information were all easily accessed on CDs. For the first time, users could find full text information from magazine articles, newspapers and reference books via computer without searching through stacks of paper copies.

Within a year, students at South Fork and Martin County High Schools were provided with dial-up access to the Martin County Library System's catalog. In 1993 the library system was able to provide public access to the Internet at the library and began offering free computer classes. A grant from the Gates Foundation spurred the creation of a state-of-the-art computer training lab.

In the summer of 1997 Internet services were expanded to let the public view the library catalog from any computer, not just from library terminals. Registered borrow-

ers could see their personal account and renew checked out items via the Internet from home if they wished. Today, direct and wireless (Wi-Fi) Internet access is available at all the branch libraries. At the Elisabeth Lahti Library in Indiantown, computer users have been known to sit under a shady tree in the park next door and access the wireless network.

A wide range of online and automated databases allow virtually unlimited access to information, as well as the capability for downloading, e-mailing or printing search results. The modern library collection has expanded far beyond the boundaries of bricks and mortar.

In 1991 the Martin County Library System began operating the law library housed in the Martin County Courthouse. Staffed and maintained by a professional library legal assistant, the law library collection provides an added value and service to Martin County citizens. In 1992 the county law library became an official branch of the library system by local ordinance and state legislative action. The collection remains equally available to private citizens and legal professionals.

The State Library of Florida has always played an important role in supporting the many public libraries across the state. During its formative years, the Stuart Library borrowed heavily from the State Library. This interlibrary loan (ILL) service was only for books, and mail delivery was slow, but it gave citizens access to things their own library didn't own. Yet, despite its relatively small size, the Stuart Library served its patrons well. In 1960, librarian Robert Hamilton reported that "the library is quite proud in that 92% of all requests for materials can be filled from the library's own collection". Modern interlibrary loan service accesses not only books in Florida library collections, but also a range of materials from libraries around the world. The turnaround time normally takes only days. If something is not available in the local system, the librarians know where to look for it!

WHERE DOES IT ALL COME FROM?

inevitably, people want to know how and where the library buys all its materials. How did the collection grow so big? Who chooses what and how much to buy? What does the library spend on books each year and how does it decide what to keep or get rid of? All of these questions are addressed by the library system's official written Collection Development policy approved by the Library Board of Trustees and County Commission. This policy is made available to the public upon request.

For many years, the library's policy for adding and discarding books was largely unwritten and quite basic. Popular novels, classic titles for adults and children, basic reference and self-help books were purchased as funds allowed. Individual requests were honored when the library's budget and shelf space allowed it. During tight fiscal years, the library was dependent upon donations of books. The head librarian selected and purchased books from many different sources, including local bookstores. Traveling salesmen would frequently turn up with samples of books and magazines. The policy was to repair and rebind books until repair became impossible, or books became obsolete. Today with thousands of new items passing through the library system each month, repairs are done primarily on books of unique use or value to the collection.

In 1957 the head librarian might simply have made sure there were enough copies of the popular novel *By Love Possessed*, an assortment of newspapers and "ladies" magazines, children's story books and a good set of encyclopedias on hand. Most of the collection was donated and the book budget was small. As the community grew, so did the library, and the process for adding books became more complex.

One creative way the library kept pace with the increased demand for material was to start a book leasing program in the early 1990s. Rather than the library buying many extra copies of bestsellers, multiple copies were leased by the library from large book vendors. This method made the waiting list shorter for borrowers, and didn't waste funds buying lots of extra books that would eventually be discarded. Extra copies were returned to the suppliers, and a new batch of books received. Book vendors eventually phased out the program. In the later '90s, the library started its own book rental service, allowing eager readers, or those with limited time, to skip the waiting list entirely.

Borrowers could choose a popular book “on-the-spot” from a display table and pay \$1 per week to get a copy of the latest bestseller. Funds were used to purchase more books. Those patrons who chose could still get on the traditional waiting list for the latest bestseller at no cost.

Currently the MCLS collection coordinator selects and purchases library materials for seven branches. Funding comes from state and local sources, grants, fundraising and donations made through The Library Foundation and Friends of the Library groups. The library’s collection coordinator works with other librarians throughout the system to select materials for the library. Most items are purchased from vendors who cater to libraries and bookstores. Ordering is done primarily online, often months in advance of an item being released. Multiple copies of popular items are bought, depending upon the number of patron requests received. Reviews, bestseller lists, professional library resources and library user requests are all considered when making selections. Book donations are accepted and carefully inspected for possible use. Everything added to the library system must fall within the guidelines set out by the official collection development policy.

If the value of a public library is based upon its use by the community it serves, the Martin County Library System is truly a treasure. The first annual report of the new Martin County Public Library for the year ending September 30, 1957, announced 11,073 items borrowed. This figure has increased to over 1.5 million items circulated during fiscal year 2005/2006. The collection has evolved to reflect the needs of a changing community and remains relevant and diverse, even during difficult times.



CHILDREN AND YOUTH SERVICES



From the beginning, the library system promoted early reading simply by making sure plenty of children's books were available. Although much of the first collection in 1957 was used or donated, it was one of the first areas of the library to be improved when funding got better. Many longtime Stuart residents have fond memories of visiting the quiet library and choosing their own books to bring home.

As the years went by, librarians took a more organized approach to developing the children's section. Picture books were separated from titles for older children, for example, and with the expansion of the library, a designated area with child-sized furniture and shelving was created. The first program for children was a weekly story time.

In 1969, Betty Wilkens was hired as the first children's librarian. Lively story hours, free movies and themed summer reading programs were all developed by Betty and her volunteer assistants. Most memorable, perhaps, was her co-founding of the Marco Puppeteers with master puppeteer Vicki Johnson. Hundreds of children enjoyed the professional-quality puppet shows held at the library and throughout the community. Mrs. Wilkens' deliciously wicked "pretend voices" added quite a bit of drama to the performances. Library visitors of all ages benefited from Betty's artistic flair during her 18 years of service.

Helen Valente was hired as the children's librarian when Betty Wilkens retired in 1986. Helen was a creative, energetic librarian from the New York public school system. She held holiday plays and pajama parties in the children's room, organized craft projects and encouraged children ages 9-12 to volunteer at the library. Helen coordinated library displays and programs with local school teachers and regularly showcased student art work at the library. Helen avidly promoted using computers in the library to encourage reading and learning. She and her husband, Jim van Voorheis, also started the privately run Little Mac Schoolhouse to teach computer skills to students and adults. Parents often ventured into the children's area of the library to ask Helen

a computer question and lingered to enjoy the lively atmosphere and colorful displays. Helen eventually left the public library system to work as a media specialist at Stuart Middle School.

The hiring of library director Gretchen Hammerstein in 1991 generated an expanded vision for children's library services. June Saine Level was hired to coordinate youth services for the library system. Ms. Level quickly initiated and developed plans for expansion of the children and young adult collections, coordinated projects with school media centers and organized programming at all the library branches. One staff member at each branch was assigned specifically to help children and teens. During the next ten years, achievements and improvements in children and youth services were many.

Preschools were invited to come to the library for story time, but most had no transportation for students. June Level revived and restocked the small bookmobile in storage and began circulating books to schools and childcare centers on a rotating basis. A grant from Jim and Madge York allowed the bookmobile to be refurbished, and it became The Story Express. Ann Schreffler organized and managed the collection, and Rich Watt volunteered as driver. More than 400 children in 22 daycare centers were served on a weekly basis. A new library van (with working air conditioning) was soon purchased, and Emma Castle took over managing The Story Express.

Library programs were always fun and well attended. Ms. Level recalls early one holiday season when local children helped decorate an elaborate frosting-covered castle with candies. The sides of that castle not visible from the librarian's desk were mysteriously stripped of candy within days! Many well known authors and illustrators visited the library. Events were often coordinated with schools and the county recreation department, as well as the Childrens' Services Council. Library staff members made a point of going out into the community to sign up children and families for library cards. They even enlisted nurses at the hospital to provide children's books to new mothers.

Gretchen Hammerstein's enthusiasm for upgrading youth services was unflagging. The budget for staff and materials was generously supplemented by funding from The Library Foundation and Friends of the Library. It was an exciting time for children and youth services when the 1% 1 YEAR sales tax for building new libraries was passed.



A mother reads to her children at the Cummings Library in Palm City.

Now serious planning for a modern children's area could begin. The department would be located on the second floor, a rarity in Martin County schools and public buildings. It would allow the creation of an Exploration Lab centered around hands-on learning, where games, puzzles, educational toys and books could be explored freely. In this bright, comfortable space, the activities and excitement of children would not disturb adult library users.

Director Donna Tunsoy encouraged June Level to continue expanding youth service activities and to develop an exciting collection of books and other materials. The main library and new branches would all open with children's computers, comfy child-friendly furniture and a designated youth services assistant. New activities for teens and children were coordinated with the library's adult programs planned by Judi Snyder and Phil Kavanaugh. Musicians, jugglers, professional storytellers and artists all made appearances at the library to the delight of thousands of children and their families over the years. The after school Explore Program for elementary age children was created to highlight a special performer or guest speaker at least once a month.

Other notable projects included the creation of Homework Helpers, an after-school program held throughout the system to assist students with schoolwork. The award-winning Paws to Read project teamed reluctant readers with certified therapy dogs and their handlers. Coordinated with The Humane Society of the Treasure Coast, this unique program was presented by library staff member June Cook Overholt and funded by the Friends of the Library. Many people were surprised to see a dog in the library with its head in the lap of a child reading a book out loud.

In 2001 Ms. Level retired, and Indiantown branch manager Lora Shelton Fegley was appointed as Youth Services Coordinator. Mrs. Fegley had worked with children and families in Indiantown since 1990 and had a strong commitment to involving the whole family in reading and learning. Continuing and strengthening projects like the Lap Babies program and Parent/Child Workshops, she focused on promoting the joy of reading at every level. Story times for babies proved so successful they were expanded to include every branch. In 2002 the Readers Rule project was started with a grant from the state to tutor third graders in FCAT reading skills. The program continues today with

support from The Library Foundation. The informational Parenting 101 series began in 2003 and drew a new group of people to the library system. BookBlast! an event to celebrate Children's Book Week, has hosted nationally known authors and storytellers and dovetails perfectly with its adult counterpart, BookMania!.

Encouraging young adults or teens to come into the library and stay for more than homework assistance proved challenging. Mrs. Fegley and her staff created a welcoming haven in the Teen Zone, a modern-looking, semi-private area within the library, where interaction and creativity are encouraged. Programs such as web site design, knitting instruction, teen book clubs and poetry "slams" have attracted a lively new group of library enthusiasts. In a cooperative venture with Martin County Parks & Recreation, the library started Loud@your Library, providing teen garage bands the space and encouragement to perform their music for an appreciative audience.

All of the efforts of Children and Youth Services continue to be directed at encouraging young people to use and enjoy their library. It is hoped a lifelong love of learning and reading will be the result.



MORE THAN BRICKS AND MORTAR

Early programming at the library consisted of traditional book reviews, travelogues, and displays. The Martin County Library on East Ocean Boulevard was noted for its wonderful exhibits. Betty Misure of the Volunteer Exhibit Committee, selected, scheduled and arranged the varied displays. For ten years she educated and delighted us, showcasing the hobbies and interests of our Martin County neighbors. In 1991 the people of Martin County were privileged to see a display of the art of Serge Nekrassof. The Russian born artist was noted world wide for his beautiful wildlife scenes painted on plates and metal work. Other popular exhibits were a classical music theme display by Derna Depamphilis a retired opera singer; Joe Smith, a retired U.S. Army colonel, showcased his handcrafted miniature circus. The public was constantly amazed at the variety of the displays, such as handmade quilts, cranberry glass and Sherlock Holmes memorabilia.

In an effort to familiarize the community with its growing resources, the library determined to establish a structured series of programs to complement and highlight the collection. Judi Snyder, currently Associate Director of Public Services, had started working at the library in 1979. She was always looking for new ways to bring people into the library. If they came to watch a film or hear a speaker, Ms. Snyder hoped that they might check out a book or join the Friends of the Library group. She and library trustee Nina Taylor organized a committee of volunteers including Edie Donohue, Luann Justak and Beverly Bevis Jones. One of the committee's first decisions was to agree upon a name for the program series. The term "Chautauqua" seemed appropriate. It is derived from the name of a village in southwestern New York State which became known as a summer educational center. In the early 1900s traveling Chautauqua groups toured rural America bringing speakers, musical groups, and other cultural activities to Small Town, U.S.A. Committee member Beverly Bevis Jones suggested that "south" be added to Chautauqua to emphasize the southern connection. The Chautauqua South

Series was born the fall of 1991 and would have its first season beginning in February 1992. The slogan “Arts and Education Programs Celebrating the Harvest of the Mind, Body and Spirit” was chosen to describe the purpose of Chautauqua South. Artist Julia Kelly was commissioned to create a painting representing the essence of Chautauqua South. It was raffled to generate interest and funds. Pat Austin, the winner, graciously presented the painting to Beverly Jones in recognition of her enthusiasm and participation in establishing the series.

In the last fifteen years the Martin County Library System, through Chautauqua South, has echoed the original spirit of Chautauqua’s summer programs to enrich people’s lives. All programs offered by the library system are an important part of the lifelong learning service provided to the community. Under the umbrella of Chautauqua South, the very first program was a ticketed event held at the Lyric Theatre on February 2, 1992. Scholar and author Dr. Lawrence H. Schiffman spoke on “The Significance of the Dead Sea Scrolls to Judaism and Christianity” to an appreciative audience.

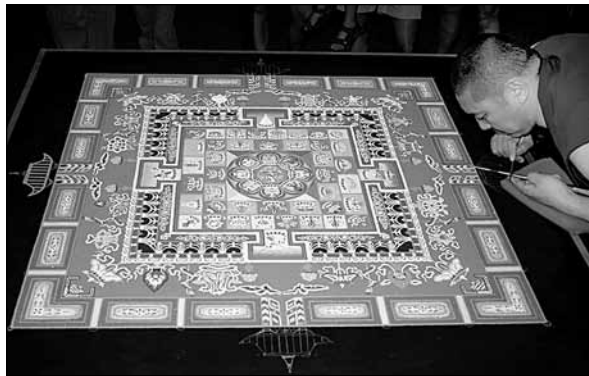
From January through April, the Martin County Library System is host to an eclectic array of artists, authors, storytellers and entertainers. Each one highlights the original theme of Chautauqua: to enlighten, educate and entertain the audience. While Judi Snyder has planned and organized the series since its inception, library specialist Phil Kavanaugh has provided much of the creative energy needed for such an ambitious project. Recognized throughout South Florida as a professional clown and juggler in his own right, Phil has performed as “Mr. Funnybones” at hundreds of community and library events. His network of talented guests, including poets and chefs, mystery writers and musicians, scholars and clowns, have captivated audiences through the years.

The Martin County Library System has become known throughout the state and beyond the borders of Florida for this wonderful free programming. All programs offered by the library system are an important part of the lifelong learning service provided to the community. A variety of books and other materials related to these programs are always available throughout the library system for those interested in learning more. Chautauqua South is made possible through the enthusiastic support and gener-



© Diane Dultmeier Photography

Phil Kavanaugh (Mr. Funnybones) creates and edits “The Library Connection” calendar and newsletter and brings to the library system many fascinating programs.



Tibetan monk creating a sand mandala at 2006 Chautauqua South program.

ous funding by Friends of the Library at each branch. The Library Foundation supports additional programs and events held throughout the year. A dedicated group of staff and volunteers spend considerable time and energy developing and promoting all of the free programming offered throughout the library system.

The Chautauqua season begins each year with BookMania!, a celebration of books and the people who write them. Authors read from their works, join in on panel discussions, talk about their craft and sign copies of their books. The event was first held at the Lyric Theatre in downtown Stuart because the original library lacked an adequate stage and sound system. However, with the opening of the Blake Library's John F. Armstrong Wing, the library finally had the space and amenities to house the increasingly popular BookMania!.

Each year The Library Foundation underwrites BookMania! and sponsors a kick off party titled "Creative Minds, Creative Cocktails" to introduce authors to the community. Tickets to this lively fundraiser sell out quickly because it is always new and exciting. Guests have the chance to chat informally with celebrated authors while enjoying unique food and signature cocktails in an exotic atmosphere. Over the years, several authors have commented that BookMania! is one of their favorite events to attend because of the relaxed, welcoming attitude of the library staff, foundation members and audience.



Clayton Timmons (far left), author Susan Carol McCarthy and Luann Justak at presentation of 2003 Chautauqua South Fiction Award.



BRANCHING OUT

The pointSIX Plan and “1%1 YEAR” sales tax funded not only the Blake Library but also the development or expansion of the branch libraries throughout the county. Historically Martin County has been a collection of communities, each having a distinct personality. Building community libraries has allowed for each branch to retain its local color while benefiting from resources shared system wide. Prior to the referendum, Hobe Sound, Jensen Beach and Indiantown had persuaded the County Commissioners that their community had a real need for a branch library and that the residents of their area were willing to work for and contribute to a library.



HOBE SOUND PUBLIC LIBRARY

In the early 1980s Hobe Sound and Indiantown were provided library services in a portable trailer which was parked in each community for two weeks of the month. Nancy Brown had volunteered for the library in the towns where she and her husband Will had lived prior to coming to Hobe Sound. She began volunteering at the trailer when it was in town every two weeks. Recognizing that the library needs of Hobe Sound were not being met, the Browns began talking to friends about how inadequate the trailer was and the difficulty of the twenty mile trip to Stuart for a lot of the residents. At that time the only library in the county was in Stuart on East Ocean Boulevard. This group of Hobe Sound residents approached Commissioner Sherri King and asked what steps had to be taken to get a branch library in Hobe Sound. She informed them that there had



The trailer served as a mobile library for Hobe Sound and Indiantown in the early 1980s.



This sign identified the original branch library in Hobe Sound.

to be enough interest shown by the people of the area to support a branch. With the help of the Chamber of Commerce and volunteers, library supporters gathered signatures that showed a strong interest in having a branch library facility in the area. The group obtained an agreement from the Commissioners that if a suitable building could be found, furnished and equipped, the County would accept it as part of the Martin County Public Library and operate it.

The informal group that was lobbying for a branch library began to call itself the Hobe Sound Library Committee. The original committee was made up of Fred Brown, Irell Rohl, Nancy Brown, Shirley Buetens, Mary Jane Inman and John Mulliken. After incorporation, the committee became the nucleus of the Friends of the Hobe Sound Library.

Hoping to convince the Board of Directors of the Community Chest to donate the empty Medical Building on the corner of Bridge Road and Lares Avenue, the Friends gathered more than one thousand signatures of local residents supporting a library branch. The Hobe Sound Community Chest rented the medical building to the County for a nominal fee. The newly formed Friends group began working on the building one night a week and some weekends to transform the space into a library. It was truly a hands-on community project. The people of Hobe Sound wanted a library so badly that they were willing to invest both financial and sweat equity.

The excitement and determination of the Hobe Sound Friends of the Library is hard to describe. They had their eyes on a goal and they never backed off or veered from their course. This enthusiasm would soon spread throughout Hobe Sound including Jupiter Island and the Banner Lake area.

Some of the activities that generated interest and funds were firsts for Hobe Sound. The Friends sponsored the first parade in Hobe Sound with Betty Brown as the chairman. The theme was "Books on Parade". A golf tournament was held at the Jupiter Island Club organized by Harold White and the men from Banner Lake. An art contest was held at Hobe Sound Elementary with the theme "Libraries Need Friends Too". Bake sales, book sales, cocktail parties and a myriad of activities kept the enthusiasm high and the donations kept coming in. Included in the donations were two classic cars. The

family of golfer Walter Hagan gave a Bentley, and Mr. Dexter Coffin donated a Ferrari. Both cars were raffled off, the proceeds making a major contribution to the Friend's treasury. The Martin County Library Association generously gave Hobe Sound \$10,000 toward the renovations of the medical building.

The medical building, completely remodeled, opened as the Hobe Sound Branch Library on January 29, 1984. A long-time library staff member, Diane Anderson, was selected to be the first branch manager and would remain in that position until November 2004.

Each library has a tale to tell. Hobe Sound Branch is the only library to be threatened with armed robbery. A young man came in one day, walked up, placing a gun on the circulation desk demanded money. The plucky elderly volunteer who was working at the desk reportedly said, "Young man, we do not allow guns in the library." Upon being reprimanded, he picked up the gun, stuck it in the waist band of his pants and left. Shortly afterwards a patron realized that her purse was missing. It is thought that he may have been a diversion for the "purse snatcher".

In 1991 the Hobe Sound Friends voted to donate \$40,000 toward the purchase of land on which a new Hobe Sound branch library would be built. It would be seven years before the groundbreaking in January 1998. The 10,000 sq. ft. branch, named the Hobe Sound Public Library, opened in September of 1999.

Fred and Betty Brown, Will Brown constructing shelving for the first branch library in Hobe Sound.



Mary Jane and Jeff Inman, Nancy Brown celebrate successful fundraising.





The opening of the first branch library in Jensen Beach which was located in the old post office building on Ricou Terrace.



A mother and child enjoying a book in the Hoke Library children's room.



HOKE LIBRARY

Spurred on by the success of Hobe Sound in establishing a branch library, other communities in Martin County began considering similar projects. Jensen Beach held its first Friends meeting in October 1986. Cathie Hoke Teal and Cheryl Miller were co-chairs of the first meeting which was held at the Jensen Beach Chamber of Commerce office. The Jensen Beach Friends gathered petitions to convince the Board of County Commission of the need. The Commissioners agreed to support the library if the Friends raised \$100,000 and found a suitable rental site. As a kick-off gift, Gene Hoke made the first donation, \$10,000, toward a branch library in Jensen Beach. Both the Hobe Sound Friends and the Martin County Library Association were generous with their advice and encouragement, and each gave monetary gifts.

The Jensen Beach Friends decided to ask the community to donate books for a book sale to help raise money. On March 28, 1987 the first book sale which was held at Fire Station #2 on Savannah Road brought in \$130.35. In November 2005 the book sale made more than \$3,000.

Fundraisers were organized by the community and by the Friends. A bluegrass music festival and triathlon were sponsored by Shuckers Too restaurant, Village Corner restaurant and the Hutchinson Island Jaycees. The proceeds from the \$5.00 entry fee went to the Jensen Beach Friends for the library. For another fundraiser, the Knights of Columbus Hall was rented and entertainment was organized by the Friends. Tickets were \$15.00 each and a popular comedian and the famous Ink Spots played to a full house. More modest efforts included collecting pennies from the fountain in front of Jordan Marsh department store in the Treasure Coast Square mall. A babysitting service was provided to mall shoppers for a nominal fee. In November 1988 a book sale was held at the Pineapple Festival, and Fantastic Sam's Hairstyling gave haircuts with the proceeds going to the Friends for the library.

Commissioner Frank Wacha, Sr. was influential in getting the County Commission

to lease the former post office, located on Ricou Terrace, for the Jensen Beach branch library. The County provided the building, the books and the staff. Everything else was provided by the Friends: shelving, furniture, public computer, copier, etc. With justifiable pride, Jensen Beach Friends dedicated their first branch on June 22, 1989. Donna Tunsoy, now Director of the Martin County Library System, was the opening manager.

Some years later when the Library Foundation of Martin County agreed to assist in the expansion plan to build five libraries in five years, Cathie Teal, a member of the Hoke family, was serving on the Board of Directors. As previously mentioned, Barbara Hoke Hendry had served as a library trustee and been active in creating the Learning Gardens at the library on East Ocean Boulevard. Members of the Hoke family have been generous with their time and their gifts. The family gave a substantial donation to the community library planned for Jensen Beach Boulevard and was honored for its philanthropy in 2002 when the new branch was named the Hoke library.



ELISABETH LAHTI LIBRARY

In 1989 as part of a plan to improve library service to all citizens, Martin County decided to open a branch in Indiantown. There was not an available building to lease in the small community. The Indiantown Branch would become the first new library building in Martin County since 1957. The other branches (Hobe Sound and Jensen Beach) were in rented facilities. With a grant from the state, the county would build on land leased for a nominal fee from Mr. Robert Post, Jr., staff the library and supply a basic collection of materials. All furnishings and equipment would have to come from community donations. The County estimated that \$65, 000 would be needed—a lot of



The ribbon cutting ceremony at the Hoke Library in Jensen beach.



Busy fingers at the Hoke Library.



Detail of capital from derelict Indiantown train station that was incorporated into the new library.



Dr. William "Doc" Myers, state representative (center), breaks ground for the Indiantown library as dignitaries look on.

money for rural Indiantown.

A committee of local library enthusiasts organized a "Friends of the Library". There was a strong basis for beginning a Friends group because many people in the community used the small mobile unit which served the town. With prompting from the local County Commissioner John Holt and interested citizens, the fundraising began.

A business man from Jupiter, Mr. Jon Oswald, donated \$20,000 designated for books in memory of his grandfather Mr. W.L. Stephenson. When Mr. Oswald was a boy, his grandfather had owned property in the area, and Mr. Oswald had fond memories of time spent in the woods near Indiantown. To stimulate donations, he offered a challenge gift. Mr. Oswald would donate an additional \$25,000 if the Friends would match it, but no one person or business could give more than \$100.00. The Friends had exactly a year to raise the money. Each week The Indiantown News listed the donors with no amounts provided; both small and large gifts received equal publicity. People were encouraged to give anything from a penny to \$100.00. Children from Warfield Elementary School saved pennies to donate. T&M Ranchers (a facility for mentally and physically challenged adults) donated their soda money. The Guatemalan community gave as a group. At the very end of the allotted time, young people and adults went door to door with coffee cans collecting change. It took a full year, but the Indiantown community met the challenge. There were other gifts beside the challenge grant including a \$10,000 gift from the Chastain Foundation in honor of Robert Chastain.

Local residents Dr. and Mrs. J. S. Matthews had designated \$25,000 from the Ruth Oliver Matthews Foundation to be held in trust by the Martin County Library Association for an Indiantown library. Mr. Bill Larned, president of the Martin County Library Association, presented the check to Pete Marovich, president of the Indiantown Friends, in June 1989.

The groundbreaking ceremony for the Indiantown Library was held on November 27, 1990, on the chosen site at the corner of Warfield Boulevard and Adams Avenue. Local architect John Foster designed the library, and Martin County contractors Britt & Britt Constructors, Inc. would build the facility.

During the period that the library branch was in the design stage, the CSX Railroad was demolishing the old Indiantown train station. Indiantown resident Aleph Davies recruited family and a friend who owned a front end loader to rescue the capitals of the decorative columns from the station. The station was built in the 1920s when the Seaboard Railroad first came through Indiantown. During construction the capitals of these columns were incorporated into the library structure. This design inclusion was an opportunity to save a little of the past while building for the future.

To celebrate having a library, the Friends with the help of the Jaycees put on a festival called “Come Home to Indiantown”. A grant from the Florida Endowment for the Humanities was obtained to fund storytellers representing the various ethnic groups in the community: Seminoles, Florida Crackers, African Americans, Mexican, Guatemalan, and Haitian. Some of these groups set up booths, so people could purchase and taste the typical foods of the different cultures. Chief James Billy, then President of the Seminole Tribes of Florida, was the main entertainment, sharing native songs and tales. Festival organizers had originally planned for 200 visitors; the Florida Highway Patrol estimated that 10,000 people attended!

The Indiantown Library had the distinction of having the only library cat in the county. Dewey was just a little kitten when he followed a day care class to the library for morning story time. After receiving permission to keep him, the staff settled him in. A kind patron told her vet about him, and Dewey received his shots and “fixing” for free. The library patrons and staff had lots of adventures with him. He had to be rescued from a tree one time. Often he startled patrons who surprised him napping on the shelves or students who opened their book bags and found him inside. He became quite social and quite stout. He seemed to know when it was time for the children to come in after school and would sit by the door meowing a welcome. One day he went out for a walk and never came back.

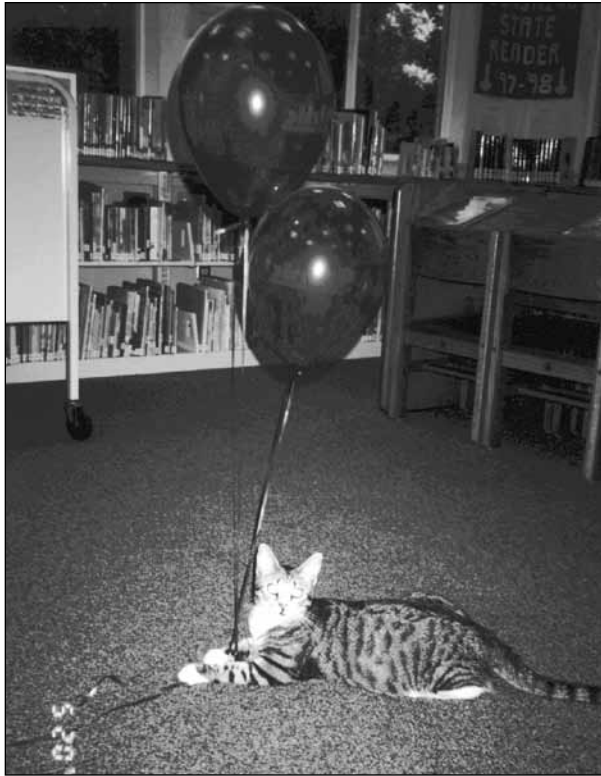
While Mitchell Bobrick was manager of the Indiantown library, he began a Christmas custom that continued under the next manager Lora Shelton Fegley who was there until 2001. It was called the Wassail, a warm, fuzzy event. All year long the staff kept their eyes out for talented people who were willing to participate. Art



Capitals rescued from the old train station are featured prominently on the new library's front columns.



*Elisabeth Lahti
Long-time Martin County libraries supporter for whom the
Indiantown branch is named.*



Dewey, the Indiantown library cat.

Matson, an Indianwood local, always sang, and people would read their favorite holiday story or poem, play instruments, sing or dance. All beliefs were represented: Christian, Jew, Muslim, and Jehovah Witness. Most years the Middle School's chorus sang, and the Adult Learning Center students who were just learning English would read a story. One year Lora Fegley read "The Polar Express", and tears flowed from the reader and the listeners. They always ended with a short sing along, and the last song was "Here We Come a-Wassailing".

The Wassail has evolved and continues as an Indiantown tradition. Each year since 2003 a theme is chosen, and local performers build their act around the theme and audition for a place on the program. In 2003 the theme was "A Dickens Feast". The theme in 2006 was "Hometown Holiday".

Mrs. Elisabeth (Betty) Lahti, a Palm City resident and longtime library system supporter developed an interest in the Indiantown community. A child of Methodist missionaries, she spent her young years in China. Through her parents' influence, she developed a dedication to philanthropy. The Library Foundation of Martin County provided the framework for Mrs. Lahti's donations to support her interest in encouraging a love of reading and music throughout the library system. Betty Lahti feels education is the key to success in life. According to her, all children may benefit from the variety of programs and resources a library has to offer.

Mrs. Lahti currently underwrites two Homework Helper programs (Palm City and Indiantown), and she underwrites two music programs annually: "Music for a Sunday Afternoon" in Palm City and "Classics @ the Blake" in Stuart. She donated baby grand pianos for both the Cummings Library and Blake Library. In Indiantown, she has donated guitars and paid for an instructor to give free lessons at the library.

Because of her continuing financial support, in 2006 the 10,000 square feet Indiantown Library was renamed the Elisabeth Lahti Library, in appreciation of this philanthropist's generosity.



PETER AND JULIE CUMMINGS LIBRARY

In 1989 the Friends of the Palm City Library was organized to support a proposed library in Palm City. After incorporation on October 2, 1989, the first meeting of the Board of Directors was held two weeks later at the First Congregational Church in Palm City. Present were Directors Marge Daily; Bob Hauck, elected Treasurer; Renee Higgins (Wentz) elected Secretary; Becky Irwin, elected President; Sue Kropornicki; Ray Supanic; Joan Weade; Clare Wolf; and Legal Counsel Greg Keane. According to the meeting minutes, the goals were two-fold: to increase public awareness and support and to raise funds for enhancements for the new Palm City Branch Library.

More than 500 members joined The Friends by the summer of 1990 after mailings and publicity generated a high level of community enthusiasm, interest and support. The early days were difficult because no site plan was definitely established and public funding was not complete. The Friends, however, continued to generate interest and add members by holding such events as "Publix Days," when volunteers recruited members and support outside of the supermarket. The Publicity Committee adopted the slogan "Open a Book, Open Your Mind." Several golf and tennis events were also used as fundraisers, and community support continued to grow.

By June 1991, The Friends had joined the Palm City Chamber of Commerce and garnered fundraising support from Kiwanis and Barnett Bank. Large County budget cuts in 1992 made for a glum outlook for the new library. However, in February 1992, a new Library Foundation was formed to accept capital donations for the construction project while The Friends of the Palm City Library would continue to solicit money for enhancements. On June 15, 1993, a construction grant for the Palm City Library was approved by the State, but wetlands found on the site at the corner of Matheson and Martin Downs Boulevard required reorientation of the planned building. In 1994 the Palm City Chamber of Commerce sponsored "Palm Fest," with half of the proceeds going to the Library Foundation for the Palm City Library.



Ms. Elisabeth Lahti (center), donor of the piano, Gretchen Hammerstein (right), Director of the Martin County Library System and guest pianist, Julie Menninger.



Peter and Julie Cummings (center) with Commissioner Charlene Hoag and other dignitaries at the ribbon cutting for the new branch.

Originally proposed in 1990 for a 1992 library opening, the groundbreaking ceremony was held at noon on February 16, 1994. The Peter and Julie Cummings Library opened to the public on June 5, 1995. The original design was for a 5000 sq. ft. branch facility with an “Old Florida” vernacular-style exterior. After community input, it was expanded to 10,300 sq. ft. which included a public meeting room, study rooms and a large children’s area. The meeting room was endowed by and named for Mrs. Alice Donahue, a longtime resident and library enthusiast.

Beginning in 1995, the library system experimented with self service check out at the Cummings library. It would prove to be a popular enhancement which was later added at the Blake, Morgade and Hoke Libraries. This new system provides library users with the opportunity to by-pass the circulation desk and check out their own materials.

In 1996 the children of Will and Dorothy Roberts decided to honor their father on his eightieth birthday by dedicating the young children’s section in his local library, the Cummings library in Palm City. Between 1944 and 1948 while running a children’s book publishing company, Will Roberts wrote nine books under the pseudonym Jeffrey Victor. One of his books, *The Train Book*, is well remembered by children who grew up in the World War II era. Through the Library Foundation, the family is still contributing to the Cummings children’s area in their father’s memory.

Palm City had eagerly awaited a library. From the very beginning, The Peter and Julie Cummings Library had a major cultural impact on the community, and many people supported its programs. Mrs. Elisabeth Lahti gave a baby grand piano for the Alice Donahue Room where the very popular “Second Sunday Series” afternoon concerts were held under the auspices of Ernest Berlin. The Alice Donahue Room is used as an art gallery for displays by the Palm City Art Associates and other local artists. This branch continues to be recognized for its faithful patrons who enjoy the library’s resources and cultural programs.



ROBERT MORGADE LIBRARY

It took nearly a decade to bring the Robert Morgade Library to reality. The genesis of its Friends group began in 1992 at a meeting of interested citizens. In 1995 they organized as an official not-for-profit corporation under the name Friends of the Mid-County Library, Inc. At the time the mid-county area was the leading contender for the main library for Martin County. Although this plan did not come to fruition, the Friends were able to support and lobby for building a branch library on Salerno Road.

Concurrent to promoting the building of the new library, the Friends acted on their own to create a small children's outreach facility in the Old Port Salerno Elementary School. Funded by the Friends and staffed by local volunteers, this library operated until the Robert Morgade Library opened in June 2001.

Recognizing that a location adjoining Indian River Community College and Martin Memorial Hospital South had the potential to serve both students and the community, a plan was formed to share resources for the new library. After considerable negotiations between Martin County and Indian River Community College, a joint agreement was reached: Martin County would build and operate the library on a five acre parcel of land leased to the County by IRCC. Groundbreaking for the 15,500 sq. ft. library was in February, 2000.

In 2000 Andy and Frances Morgade pledged a much needed gift in honor of their son Robert Morgade, who passed away suddenly in 1980 at the age of 21 from pneumonia. When the Morgades learned about the planned library on Salerno Road, they approached The Library Foundation to discuss a way to memorialize their son. In recognition of the generous donation by Andy and Fran Morgade, the library was named the Robert Morgade Library and a portrait of their son hangs in the lobby. The facility opened in June 2001.

When the Robert Morgade Library was being built, Commissioner Elmira Gainey hoped to see a major contribution from a minority family within the community. After



Mobiles soar above the opening of the Robert Morgade Library.

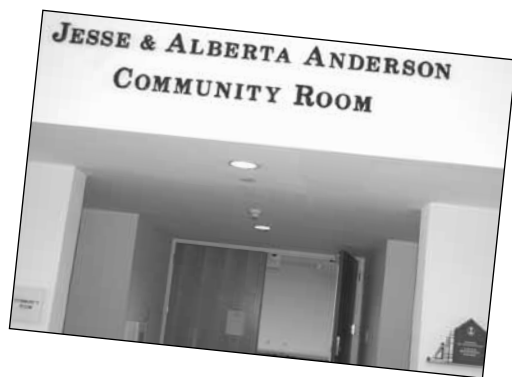


Frances and Andy Morgade



Children enjoy the picture books at the Morgade Library.

The meeting room at the Morgade Library honors community leaders Reverend and Mrs. Anderson.



placing calls to several families, she received a response from Anthony W. Anderson who at that time was her appointee to the Local Planning Agency. Mrs. Gainey explained her mission and that she felt a positive response from his family would be an excellent example of working minority families giving back to the community. Conferring with Commissioner Gainey and the Executive Director of The Library Foundation, Mr. Anderson decided that this would be an opportunity to honor his parents who had such a positive influence in their children's lives.

After meeting with his brothers and sisters, Anthony informed the Library Foundation of the family's sizeable commitment to the mid-county library. As a result, the meeting room within the Robert Morgade Library bears the name the Anderson Room in honor of their parents. This room seats 150 and is used for a variety of programs and meetings.

The Reverend Jesse H. Anderson, Sr. was very active within the political and civic arenas in Martin County during the 1960's. The example he set of being involved within the community is still reflected in the lives of the Anderson siblings. All have been productive, active participants within the political, education, religious life of our community. The children of the Reverend Jesse H. Anderson are Jesse H. Anderson, Jr., David L. Anderson, James R. Anderson, Charles L. Anderson, Anthony W. Anderson, Daisy A. Smith, Marie Kendell, Agnes Duncombe, Margaret Patton, Ruth A Stubbs and JoAnn Blount.

Another major gift came from The Horace and Amy Hagedorn Foundation which committed \$50,000 through the Friends of the Morgade Library to launch a Family Place project. Family Place library sites are nationally recognized and are designed to integrate library and community services to support local efforts to build strong families. This free program invites experts in child development into the library to give advice, demonstrate learning techniques and answer questions from concerned caregivers of children and toddlers. The Robert Morgade Library was the first site in Florida to be selected for The Family Place, now offered at all Martin County Library System branches.



Painting by A.E. "Bean" Backus donated by Mr. and Mrs. Willard Kiplinger in 1958.



ART IN THE LIBRARY

Since 1997, the library system has benefited from the public art program established by the county which includes funding for new artworks in public facilities. The Martin County volunteer Public Art Advisory Board recommends annually to the Board of County Commissioners two to five new artworks to be purchased for county buildings and regional parks. The amount of money for public art is equal to 1% of the construction cost of a project.

The Elisabeth Lahti Library in Indiantown, the Robert Morgade Library on Salerno Road, Hobe Sound Public Library, and the Hoke Library in Jensen Beach have all received artworks under the public art program. Many of the libraries have other donated



pieces that enrich the lives of Martin County library users.

The visual art in the libraries is varied and includes sculptures, paintings, murals, quilts and needlepoint. All the art may be seen during regular library hours.

BLAKE LIBRARY

Even though the Blake Library was built prior to the “Art in Public Buildings” ordinance, the administrative library has wonderful art. The varied art works at the Blake Library include a Rose Wunderbaum Traines metal sculpture of fanciful “found” objects, A Novel Reader. Hanging on the lobby wall is a large painting by Marcelle Zanetti titled Croton X.

Members of the Sailfish Stitchers created and donated to the Blake Library the six-panel needlepoint collage titled “Postcards from Stuart”. The Sailfish Stitchers are the Stuart Chapter of the American Needlepoint Guild. The beautiful work of needlepoint art depicts familiar scenes, such as the Courthouse, Lyric

“Postcards from Stuart” created by the Sailfish Stitchers and donated to the Blake Library.



Painting of Bathtub Beach by Aida Fry.

Theatre, a beach sunrise, and the House of Refuge. The total design area of stitching is 3,700 square inches, and 50 different stitches were used. The actual hand-stitching began in January 1998. More than 4,000 hours of stitching went into the eighteen months of work. "Postcards from Stuart" hangs in the hall way of the John F. (Jack) Armstrong wing of the Blake Library.

Two large oil paintings hang in the Blake Library, one by Aida Frye and the other by A. E. "Bean" Backus. The painting by local artist Aida Frye originally hung in Monarch Country Club and was donated to the library system. It is a wonderfully nostalgic picture of mothers and children at Bathtub Beach and evokes special memories for many Martin County residents. The painting records a bit of local history depicting a scene that predates the ban on walking on the reef. The other painting is a Florida nature scene painted in 1957 by Fort Pierce native A. E. "Bean" Backus. Given in 1958 to the library by Mr. and Mrs. Willard Kiplinger, the painting hung for many years opposite the front door in the original library. Later, after the 1976 remodeling, it was moved to the Stokes room. The painting now hangs high above the reference desk in the Blake Library.

The Friends of the Blake Library commissioned Anica V'in to paint a mural on the wall leading up the stairs to Children's World. Climbing the stairs, carrying their "library books", are animals and insects common to Florida. This "Follow Us to Children's World" mural is a whimsical painting that fascinates children and adults alike.

HOBE SOUND PUBLIC LIBRARY

The public art selection for the Hobe Sound Public Library is the Shell Game sculpture by Charlotte Lees. The Pearl Diver sculpture by V. Shaffer was donated jointly by the Friends of the Hobe Sound Library and the Historical Society of Martin County to commemorate the opening of our new Hobe Sound Library. This bronze sculpture depicting a young boy diving with a sea turtle was originally commissioned by Sewall's Point resident Jean Neese for her gardens in the 1980s. Affectionately nicknamed Turtle Boy, the sculpture was subsequently donated to the Historical Society in 1987. Then in 1999 the sculpture was restored and mounted by the Friends of the Hobe Sound Library. Its current location is near the front door for all to enjoy. The mural in the children's department of the Hobe Sound Library was painted by Martin County artist Jayne Swartzwelder. Working mostly in the evenings when the library was closed, Jayne used the pictures and ideas submitted by the library staff to create a Florida nature tableau featuring native plants, animals and birds. There are many hidden details, such as a baby raccoon sleeping in a palm frond, dragonflies with glitter wings and a pelican reading *Where the Wild Things Are*. Completed April 27, 2006, this mural, funded by The Library Foundation of Martin County, grabs the patrons' attention as they enter the library and adds color and a touch of whimsy to the children's department.

HOKE LIBRARY

At the Hoke Library in Jensen Beach, a sculpture by Dam de Nogaes entitled *The Poet* was selected by the public art committee. It stands outside, facing Jensen Beach Boulevard and may be viewed by library patrons and travelers alike.

A numbered print of a watercolor by local artist Harry McVay was given in honor of retiring library manager Sandra Hawken in 2005. The painting is titled *Eden Grove Inn & Store @ Eden, FL*. Also in the library are three illustrations by Mr. McVay: *Indian River Lagoon*, *Pelican Island National Wildlife Refuge*, and *Shoreline Stabilization Project*.

Other works of art are a print by Karinluse Calasant called *Eagle Marsh* and an Ed



*The "Turtle Boy"
welcomes visitors to the
Hobe Sound Public Library.*



The tropical theme mural in the children's room at the Hobe Sound Public Library.

Fisher painting that was moved from the first Jensen Beach Branch Library to the Hoke Library and hangs in the lobby. Local artist and resident Jayne Swartzwelder has used her remarkable talent to enhance the library walls with vibrant murals.

ELISABETH LAHTI LIBRARY

In 2003 when the library in Indiantown was expanded and remodeled, the Elisabeth Lahti Library received a stained glass window through the public art program. Designed by artist Chris Dutch the window is the center piece of the Children's Room.

Four signed prints by James Hutchinson hang in the Chason conference room. These prints are from paintings depicting four great chiefs of the Seminole Indian tribe.

The original paintings and many others traveled the state in the 70s and some now can be viewed at the Historical Museum of South Florida.

A photo by renowned photographer Clyde Butcher also hangs in the library. This photo entitled The Loxahatchee River has great appeal for the Indiantown library users. The photo, which was originally a gift from Indiantown resident Timer Powers to Bill Owens, was donated by the Owens family.

Another art project dear to the hearts of the people of Indiantown is located in the homework room. The fresco mural School Days in Indiantown was created by an art class at Warfield Elementary under the direction of Aida Fry, artist-in-residence and Helena Morse, art teacher.

PETER AND JULIE CUMMINGS LIBRARY

The Peter and Julie Cummings Library was the recipient of two murals created by artist-in-residence Aida Fry and art students from Hidden Oaks Middle School. The fresco murals in the Children's area portray flora and fauna native to Florida. Also in this area are Alphabet Quilt Squares sewn by the Harbor Ridge Quilters.

A painting titled Lady Reading hangs on permanent display in the O'Malley room. In the main reading area the patrons enjoy a floral watercolor given in memory of local artist Ed Elkner by his wife. Two photographs by noted photographer Sullivan Jones are also exhibited. There are monthly art exhibits in the Donahue room for the pleasure and edification of the public.

ROBERT MORGADE LIBRARY

Avian Muse, a mobile by Harry McDaniel, was chosen by the public art committee for the Robert Morgade Library. In the lobby of the library, the beautiful mobile soars above the heads of the patrons representing the graceful swoops and gliding arcs of birds in flight.

The Martin County Art Advisory Board selected quilting artist Stephanie Kumura to create a quilt commemorating the community of New Monrovia and the inspiration and leadership of Costella Williams. This fabric artwork hangs in the Robert Morgade



These stained glass windows add colorful light to the children's room in Indiantown.

Library as well.

Through the wise planning of Martin County government and the participation of the library director and her staff, each library is able to showcase original art work. Library resources supplement the study and appreciation of the arts.



A WORD FROM THE DIRECTOR OF THE MARTIN COUNTY LIBRARY SYSTEM

The formal dedication of the Martin County Public Library was on November 24, 1957, and in the fifty years that followed this community has seen, and been a part of, the tremendous growth and variety in library services. As exciting as this is though, we must not forget that the Women’s Club of Stuart, decades before, started it all. Their major goal was to procure a small building and an assortment of used children and adult books to be made available to any member in the community. It was through their continued commitment and effort that a library operated and maintained by the county came to be.

Libraries don’t just happen. They begin with a committed group of citizens with the conviction that having a public library established in their community will bring a value that is immeasurable. The value is so great that they will give their time, energy and dollars to ensure it happens. In the beginning, it was about the book, and while it’s still about books, it’s now about so much more. The library is a resource for books, music and movies in multiple formats; programming for education, culture and entertainment; computers for research, information and social networking; and classes for learning just about anything the community asks for. The library is a gathering place and for many a sanctuary from a hectic world. For others these same services can be provided without the boundaries of walls: Their library comes to them through their home community via the Internet. The Martin County Library System has become the center for life-long learning.

In the last decade, technology has dramatically changed the way libraries do business, and it wasn’t always easy. When the card catalog disappeared, replaced by a computer with catalog records and patron information regulated to a database format, both library staff and the public were thrown for a loop! What an education process we all went through! We did, however, go through it together and, after time, realized what a real sense of accomplishment we felt. As we have all discovered though, the

changes taking place in the technological world continue to evolve at a pace that at times seems impossible to keep up with, but as past experience has proved, we will adjust to it together. Technology assists libraries in delivering services to a broader group of users and allows those users a greater opportunity to be involved in creating and evaluating new services. How wonderful is it that your library is literally available at your fingertips!

This year the Martin County Library System is celebrating 50 years of library service to our community, and we look forward to making it an especially memorable one. During 2007, we will take time to review the highlights that have marked our progression, and we will also center attention on the latest in services and technologies, even those still in the planning stages. We will celebrate all that we have accomplished, and by the end of the year, realize that this anniversary is simply another beginning. The next 50 years is only limited by our imagination...

Donna Tunsoy
Director

PRESIDENTS OF THE MARTIN COUNTY LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

AKA. FRIENDS OF THE BLAKE LIBRARY IN STUART, INC.

1956-1957	Mary Kanner
1958-1960	Mrs. Hugh L. Willoughby, Jr.
1961	Mrs. Richard G. Hupfel
1962-1963	Esther Ross Warren
1964	Mrs. Walter Hupfel
1965	Dorothy E. Woolley
1966	F. Lee Heist
1967-1968	Frank Foster
1969-1970	Robert Gibbs
1971	????
1972	Allan Rudderow
1973-1974	Frederic Schroeder
1975-1976	Bonnie Peter
1977-1978	John Spencer
1979-1980	Charles W. Adair, Jr
1981-1982	Beverly F. Nairn
1983-1984	Robert Wallace
1985-1986	Ann Lartaud
1987-1988	Ed Wurtz
1989	William Larned
1990	William Steltz
1991-1993	Beverly F. Nairn
1994-1995	Milt Christie
1996-1997	Ira Harris
1998	William Hamilton
1999-2000	Milt Christie
2001-2002	Edie Donohue
2003-2004	Pamela Carrozza
2005	Phyllis Sippel
2006-2007	Connie Bass

PRESIDENTS OF THE HOKE LIBRARY FRIENDS (JENSEN BEACH FRIENDS)

1989	Cathie Teal
1990	June Graves
1991- 1992	Don Weitz
1993-1994	June Graves
1995-1997	Lillian Newham
1998 – 2004	Jean Lowrie
2005-2007	Suzanne Dowd

PRESIDENTS OF THE FRIENDS OF THE HOBE SOUND PUBLIC LIBRARY

1982-1983	Nancy Brown
1984	Rubin Wilkerson
1985-1986	Mary Jane Inman
1987	Irell Rohl
1988	Will Brown
1989	Steve Day
1990-1991	Norma Browning
1992	Jacque Arrowsmith
1993-1994	Steve Addison
1995	Amy Noznesky
1996-1997	Mary Jane Inman
1998	Tom Prestegard
1999	Will Brown
2000	Tom Prestegard
2001	Janet Brown
2002	Carol Mueller
2003-2004	Angela Lotufo
2005-2006	B.J. Meyer
2007	Mary Robinson

FRIENDS OF THE CUMMINGS LIBRARY (PALM CITY FRIENDS)

1989-1992	Rebecca Irwin
1992-1995	Renee Higgins Wentz
1996-1997	Janet Jergens
1998-1999	Kathy Boucher
2000-2003	Jean Rappaport
2004-2005	Mary Hunter
2006-2007	Bill Deacon

FRIENDS OF THE ROBERT MORGAGE LIBRARY (SALERNO/MID-COUNTY LIBRARY FRIENDS)

1992 -2002	Eric Buetens
2003	John Watson
2004	Eric Buetens
2005	Diane Anderson
2006-2007	Eric Buetens

FRIENDS OF THE ELISABETH LAHTI LIBRARY (INDIANTOWN LIBRARY FRIENDS)

1989-1991	Pete Marovich
1991-1992	Paula Howe
1992-1993	Joe Rabener
1993-1994	Marilyn Martin
1994-1996	Aleph Davies
1996-1997	Dolores Summers
1997-1999	Aleph Davies
1999-2001	Art Matson
2001-2003	Dorothy Adami
2003-2005	Alishia Parenteau
2005- 2007	Gail Magowan

PRESIDENTS OF THE LIBRARY
FOUNDATION OF MARTIN COUNTY

1992 Stephen R. Shaw
1992 Milton Christie
1993-1994 James Sopko
1995-1997 Michael F. Ciferri, Sr.
1998-1999 Robert A. Cline, Jr.
2000 - 2001 Gloria Wolfe
2002 Paula Hundt
2003 Helen D. Blake
2004 -2005 Wilford B. Brown
2005 -2006 Patty D. Downing

DIRECTORS OF THE LIBRARY

June 1957 – September 1962
Robert E. Hamilton
October 1962 – March 1963
Ms. Jean Roos, Acting Librarian
March 1963 – November 1963
Sanford S. Neal, Jr.
April 1964 – December 1965
Elizabeth Thalman
April 1965 – August 1968
Ms. Noel Ross
September 1968 – February 1991
Leroy Hennings
May 1991 – 1998
Gretchen Hammerstein Cuffe
1998 - present
Donna Tunsoy

BRANCH LIBRARY MANAGERS

INDIANTOWN LIBRARY

Kathy Dykstra
Mitchell Bobrick
Shirley Grubbs
Margaret Barrett
Kathryn N. Connolly
Lora Shelton Fegley
Renita Presler

ELISABETH LAHTI LIBRARY IN INDIANTOWN

Renita Presler

CUMMINGS LIBRARY

Shirley Grubbs
Kathryn N. Connolly
Charlotte A. Jackson
Emma-Jane Castle

JENSEN BEACH BRANCH

Donna M. Tunsoy
Pam McMahan
Betsey Rogolino
Sandra Hawken

HOKE LIBRARY IN JENSEN BEACH

Sandra Hawken
Jennifer Salas
Christina Mayers

ROBERT MORGADE LIBRARY IN SALERNO

Richard S. Tarbox
Ann M. Schreffler

HOBE SOUND BRANCH

Effie D. Anderson

HOBE SOUND PUBLIC LIBRARY

Effie D. Anderson
Nina Taylor (Interim)
Lynn Warner

BLAKE LIBRARY IN STUART

Judith A. Snyder



Written to commemorate the golden anniversary of the Martin County Library System, this book highlights the determination of local citizens dedicated to providing a public library for their community. The library had its beginning in a simple wooden building shared with the Woman's Club. It has evolved into a modern system with a main library and six branches. Through the personal efforts of a group of remarkable county residents, a tax supported community institution was launched. The story of the library reflects the story of Martin County itself. Out of the wilderness grew a community proud of its heritage and determined to support the cultural and educational cornerstone a library provided. Fifty years ago on November 24, 1957, the public library was dedicated and transferred to Martin County government. We celebrate this significant achievement and acknowledge the efforts of a group of early pioneers who founded the library and those citizens who enabled it to grow and prosper.

