



THE
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PRESS RELEASE

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Eva Jane Romaine Coombe Director of the Public Library Announces Retirement



Kimber L. Fender, The Eva Jane Romaine Coombe Director of the Public Library of Cincinnati and Hamilton County, announced her plan to retire today. Fender will officially step down from the position, after 30 years of service to the Library, on June 30, 2018.

“I am looking forward to the next chapter, but it is bittersweet to share this news,” said Fender. “I have dedicated the majority of my life to the Library and it has been an incredible 30 years. I am so proud of our accomplishments as an organization.”

Fender began her library career serving as a reference librarian at the Boone County Public Library. She was also Head of Public Services at Campbell County Public Library and Manager of Information Services at ATE Management and Services Company. She took a job with the Public Library of Cincinnati and Hamilton County in 1988 as a Librarian in the Institutions/Books-by-Mail Department. In 1993 she was appointed to the position of Librarian, Deputy Librarian's

Office—Main Library Services. Fender was promoted to Assistant to the Director in 1995 and was named Head of Information Systems in 1998. She began her term as director on Jan. 1, 1999.

She currently serves on the Board of the YMCA, Success by 6 Regional Leadership Council, the Southwest Ohio Region Workforce Investment Board, the Girl Scouts of Western Ohio Council Board, the Downtown Cincinnati, Inc. Board, the CET Community Advisory Council, the Leadership Cincinnati Steering committee, and the Ohio Library Council Government Relations Committee.

During her tenure, the Library became one of the busiest and best public libraries in the country, adding hundreds of thousands of cardholders and increasing circulation by 50 percent. The Library overcame budget challenges through a successful levy campaign in 2009, followed by a renewal in 2013 and an additional levy earlier this month. Fender also led renovation and construction projects at 15 branch libraries.

“One of my proudest moments was when the Library received the 2013 National Medal for Museum & Library Service from the Institute of Museum and Library Services,” said Fender. “It was also an honor to receive five consecutive Five-Star ratings from *Library Journal*. We are one of only five libraries nationwide in our category to receive this distinction. I am grateful to the community and the staff for their hard work and dedication during my time at the Library. None of these prestigious accomplishments could have happened without their support.”



Fender has been active in community and professional development during her career. She received a 2008 Bridge Builder Award from the Cincinnati-Hamilton County Community Action Agency, the Ohio Library Council's Librarian of the Year Award in 2009, the 2011 Woman of Distinction from the Girl Scouts of Western Ohio, the 2012 Career Woman of Achievement award from the YWCA and the Ohio Library Council's A. Chapman Parsons and Hall of Fame Librarian Awards in 2017.

"I am so proud to have worked for the Public Library of Cincinnati and Hamilton County, and I am looking forward to seeing what the Library does next. This is an exciting time for the Library as the strategic and facilities plans begin to come to life," said Fender. "I want to thank the Board of Trustees, staff and our customers for the opportunity to lead one of the finest libraries in the country. It has been a tremendous privilege to be the Eva Jane Romaine Coombe Director."

"We are grateful to Kim for her many years of service and devotion to the cardholders of Hamilton County," said William J. Moran, President of the Library Board of Trustees. "Although she indicated to me her desire to retire last year, we asked her to see us through the latest levy campaign and she did so with the perseverance and strength that marked her entire career with the Library. Her leadership will be missed and we wish her the best in her future endeavors."

At the next Board of Trustees meeting, scheduled for Thursday, May 31, it is expected the Board will vote to appoint Paula Brehm-Heeger, current Chief Strategy and Technology Officer, as interim Director. A national search will begin soon for Fender's replacement.

About The Public Library of Cincinnati and Hamilton County

The Public Library of Cincinnati and Hamilton County is one of the oldest, largest, and busiest libraries in the United States, serving a population of over 800,000 with a collection of more than 9 million items. In support of its mission of connecting people with the world of ideas and information, the Library also offers a wide variety of services and more than 20,000 free programs each year. For more information, visit CincinnatiLibrary.org.