

# News Release: American Library Association

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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The 1976 Distinguished Library Service Award for School Administrators of the American Association of School Librarians, a division of the American Library Association, will be presented to Dr. Wilmer S. Cody, Superintendent of the Birmingham City School System, Birmingham, Alabama. The annual citation is presented at the AASL Honor Luncheon during the annual conference to a person directly responsible for the administration of a school or group of schools who has made a unique and sustained contribution toward furthering the role of the library and its development in elementary and/or secondary education. The award was announced by Mrs. Judith Letsinger, President of AASL, at the Midwinter Meeting of the American Library Association in Chicago, January 18 - 24.

Dr. Cody assumed the Birmingham superintendency in 1973. Since then the number of professional librarians has been increased from 18 to 83; a Coordinator of Media Resources has been hired to coordinate the work of the school librarians, as well as a Resource Teacher for school libraries who will assist the coordinator; supportive para-professional staff has been added in the school libraries; new library facilities have been built, and thousands of dollars have been expended in renovating existing facilities.

Dr. Cody has been primarily responsible for the successful passage of a five mill property tax which was passed in April 1975. The passage of this tax by Birmingham citizens is making possible the accreditation of the system's 78

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elementary schools and the subsequent upgrading and establishment of elementary school libraries. Dr. Cody spearheaded the organizational framework for voter contact among supporters, volunteers and well-wishers, and caused them to be organized into an effective machine to the extent that every registered voter was contacted.

According to Dr. Cody, "The primary functions of public education cannot be adequately served today without students having access to and being guided in the use of a media center, rich in materials and with a competent staff . . . . In short, the school can be at its greatest effectiveness in achieving its educative goals only if it contains, as an integral part of its program, a well-equipped and well-staffed media center."

Members of the jury which selected Dr. Cody were: Donald C. Adcock, Glen Ellyn, Illinois, Chairperson; Frances Fleming, Towson, Maryland; Joy Terhune, Lexington, Kentucky; Mary Choncoff, Phoenix, Arizona; Edith Briles, Asheboro, North Carolina; Bernice Yesner, Woodbridge, Connecticut; and Anne Marie Falsone, Denver, Colorado.