Table of Contents

Table of Contents 2
Message from the Chair 3
About FAFLIG 4
    Our Mission 4
    Our History 4
    Contact Us 4
FAFLIG’s Leadership 5
    Executive Committee, 2023-2024 5
    Committees, 2023-2024 5
        Communications Committee 5
        Programming Committee 5
    FAFLIG Chairs, 2020-Present 5
FAFLIG Highlights from 2023-2024 6
FAFLIG Awards 7
    Federal Achievement Award 7
    Federal Rising Stars Award 1
Message from the Chair

Five years ago, I attended a panel at the ALA’s 2019 annual conference in Washington. It was called “How to Get a Federal Library Job,” and it was hosted by an organization that used to be an ALA round table called FAFLRT (FAFF-lurt) and soon would be a RUSA interest group called FAFLIG (FAFF-lig). In the interim, it was part of the (almost unpronounceable) ASGCLA.

This was the summer between my first and second years in the University of Maryland's MLIS program. I was midway through my career “pivot” to librarianship after more than a decade as a reporter. I already knew that I wanted to work for the government – D.C. is my hometown, after all. But when I walked out of that room, I felt prepared to actually make it happen.

(I also ordered a copy of Kathryn Troutman’s Federal Resume Guidebook, because Lee Lipscomb said to read it. As I would learn, Lee is always right.)

I ended up getting a federal library job, just as the panel’s title had promised. I got lucky again when I had the opportunity to get involved with FAFLIG. It’s been my pleasure and privilege to be part of this group, which has emerged from the COVID-19 pandemic as an increasingly active forum and professional network for our community: the people who work in federal and armed forces libraries across the United States and around the world.

Our FAFLIG Speaker Series webinars connect us with interesting colleagues doing interesting things. Our awards recognize colleagues at both ends of the federal career path, as rising stars and for a lifetime of achievement. We connect students and job-seekers with helpful information and people. And yes, we’re still doing “How to Get a Federal Library Job,” now as a webinar.

To everyone who devotes lunch breaks, evenings, and weekends to making all this happen: Thank you. I’m proud to have had this chance to help.

Ben Leubsdorf
FAFLIG Chair, 2023-2024
Senior Research Librarian, Congressional Research Service, Washington, D.C.¹

¹ The author is writing in his personal capacity and the views expressed here are not represented as being those of the Congressional Research Service or the Library of Congress.
About FAFLIG

The Federal and Armed Forces Libraries Interest Group (FAFLIG) is an interest group of the Reference and User Services Association (RUSA), which is a division of the American Library Association (ALA). Membership in FAFLIG is open to any interested member of RUSA.

Our Mission

The mission of FAFLIG is to promote the library and information service profession in the federal and armed forces communities, providing a common forum and professional network for library staff supporting their current needs and preparing them for the future.

Our History

FAFLIG can trace its history to World War II, when the ALA's Division of Public Libraries established a Service Librarians Section.

That section became known as the Armed Forces Librarians Section until 1990, when it was reorganized as the Armed Forces Libraries Round Table. Meanwhile, in 1972, the ALA formed a Federal Librarians Round Table.

The two groups merged in 2001 to form the Federal and Armed Forces Libraries Round Table (FAFLRT). While we are no longer an independent round table within the ALA, FAFLIG serves the same community of federal and military library personnel as did FAFLRT.

FAFLRT merged in 2018 with the Association of Specialized Government and Cooperative Library Agencies (ASGCLA). Two separate interest groups, the Federal Libraries Interest Group and the Armed Forces Libraries Interest Group, merged in 2020 to form FAFLIG.

When ASGCLA dissolved later that year, FAFLIG moved to RUSA as an interest group. Since November 2020, FAFLIG has been governed by the FAFLIG Manual and led by an Executive Committee.

Contact Us

FAFLIG's Executive Committee can be reached by email at faflig.ala@gmail.com.
FAFLIG’s Leadership

Executive Committee, 2023-2024

Ben Leubsdorf, Chair
Adria Olmi, Chair-Elect
Ashley Evans, Immediate Past Chair
Christina Dominique-Pierre, Secretary
Ebony McDonald, Armed Forces Representative and Communications Committee Chair
Heather Goyette, Federal Representative
Gabby Amorelli, Programming Committee Chair (non-voting)

Committees, 2023-2024

Communications Committee
Ebony McDonald, Chair

Programming Committee
Gabby Amorelli, Chair
Jackie Evans
Stephen Vernon

FAFLIG Chairs, 2020-Present

- 2020: Lee Lipscomb
- 2020-2021: Michael Steinmacher
- 2021-2022: Joan Blaylock
- 2022-2023: Ashley Evans
- 2023-2024: Ben Leubsdorf
FAFLIG Highlights from 2023-2024

**June 21, 2023:** FAFLIG holds its annual business meeting on Zoom. Adria Olmi is elected Chair-Elect.

**June 25, 2023:** FAFLIG hosts an in-person social at the ALA Annual Conference in Chicago.

**July 1, 2023:** New FAFLIG officer terms begin. Ben Lebsdorf becomes Chair. Ashley Evans becomes Immediate Past Chair. Adria Olmi becomes Chair-Elect.

**July 19, 2023:** FAFLIG's Executive Committee meets. Ebony McDonald is elected Armed Forces Representative. Christina Dominique-Pierre is elected Secretary. Gabby Amorelli is appointed Chair of the Programming Committee.

**October 18, 2023:** FAFLIG's Executive Committee meets.

**November 1, 2023:** Lucy Maziar, Library Director at the U.S. Coast Guard Academy, speaks at a FAFLIG Speaker Series webinar.

**January 10, 2024:** Élan Marae Birkeland, Library Program Director at Headquarters Marine Corps, speaks at a FAFLIG Speaker Series webinar.

**January 17, 2024:** FAFLIG's Executive Committee meets.

**March 19, 2024:** FAFLIG hosts the “How to Get a Federal Library Job” webinar for RUSA, with 50 people in attendance and strong audience engagement. Five librarians are on the panel: Dianne Babski (National Library of Medicine), Lee Lipscomb Sergent (Federal Judicial Center), Sundeep Mahendra (Library of Congress), Ebony McDonald (Incirlik Air Base), and Dr. Stephanie Rollins (Air University Library).

**March 28, 2024:** RUSA announces the winners of its 2024 achievement awards. The Federal Achievement Award is awarded to Paula Laurita and D. Lynne Rickard. The Federal Rising Stars Award is awarded to Elán Marae Birkeland, Max Gonzalez Burdick, and Lori Ann Mullooly. This represents a resurgence for the (recently renamed) Federal Rising Stars Award, which had only been awarded once in the previous six years. It is also the first time that both awards had winners in the same year since 2014.

**April 10, 2024:** Dennis Wilson, Library Director of the Navy Department Library, Naval History and Heritage Command, speaks at a FAFLIG Speaker Series webinar.

**April 17, 2024:** FAFLIG’s Executive Committee meets.
FAFLIG Awards

The Federal Achievement Award and the Federal Rising Stars Award are intended to honor those who work in federal and armed forces libraries. RUSA has administered both as division-level achievement awards since 2021.

**Federal Achievement Award**

*The award recognizes an individual for achievement in the promotion of library and information service and the information profession in the federal community.*

Two longtime librarians were recognized in 2024 with the Federal Achievement Award: **Paula Laurita**, Command Librarian at the U.S. Army Materiel Command Headquarters in Alabama; and **D. Lynne Rickard**, Records Specialist at the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation (PBGC) in Washington, D.C.

Both women are veterans who worked in other library settings before continuing their careers in federal organizations, where they have helped advance information services.

Laurita served in the U.S. Army and earned her MLIS from the University of Alabama. She worked in school and public libraries, including nearly a decade as executive director of the Athens-Limestone Public Library, before becoming director of the NASA Marshall Space Flight Center Technical Library. Since 2022, she has been command librarian at Army Materiel Command. She is Alabama's representative on the ALA Council.

In nomination letters, she was praised for her "exceptional leadership skills as well as her fierce dedication and passion to advocate for libraries and library personnel," and described as "widely respected as an expert in her field and mentor to others."

Rickard served in the U.S. Navy and earned her MLIS from the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. She worked in academic and public libraries before joining the Pentagon Library in 2011. She became a Library Systems Specialist at the PBGC in 2015, then became an IT specialist in 2019. After a brief stint at the Defense Security Cooperation Agency as a Knowledge Management Specialist in 2021-2022, she returned to the PBGC as a records specialist. She serves as the Agency Records Officer and Controlled Unclassified Information (CUI) Program Manager.

In nomination letters, she was described as a "dedicated information professional" who has worked in multiple facets of the information profession and "strives to demonstrate the value of information management at every level of an organization."

**Recent Winners**

- 2023: Michelle A. Ortiz
- 2022: Lee Lipscomb
Federal Rising Stars Award

The award highlights the achievements of those new to the profession. Rising Stars are those people who display a passion for the profession, both at work and via volunteer or association activities. Before this year, it was called the Federal Rising Stars Initiative.

Three Armed Forces librarians were recognized in 2024 with the Federal Rising Stars Award:

- **Elán Marae Birkeland**, Library Program Director at Headquarters Marine Corps in Quantico, VA.
- **Max Gonzalez Burdick**, Library Branch Manager at Shadow Mountain Branch Library, U.S. Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center (MCAGCC) in Twentynine Palms, CA.
- **Lori Ann Mullooly**, Events and Programming Librarian at the U.S. Military Academy Library in West Point, NY.

Birkeland earned her M.S. in Library Science from the University of Kentucky in 2019. She worked as a library manager at Marine Corps Community Services (MCCS) in Okinawa, Japan until 2023, when she returned to the United States. In her role as Library Program Director, she oversees 35 Morale, Welfare, and Recreation (MWR) libraries and remote reading rooms at 12 Marine Corps installations around the world.

Gonzalez earned his MLIS from San Jose State University in 2023. A former social worker, he joined MCAGCC in 2020 as a library technician. He became the Library Program Coordinator in 2021, and took over the Shadow Mountain Branch Library in 2022 as Library Branch Manager.

Mullooly is no newcomer to libraries, having worked in a variety of roles in access services, resource sharing, and collection development in both academic and public libraries before she decided to pursue her master’s degree. She earned her MLIS in 2022 from the iSchool at Syracuse University and became the Events and Programming Librarian at the U.S. Military Academy Library that same year.

Recent Winners

- 2021: Mariah Antoinette Lovick
- 2017: Heather Kiger
- 2014: Katie Rapp
- 2012: Caralyn Champa
- 2011: Aimee Babcock-Ellis