

Federal and Armed Forces Libraries Interest Group

Reference and User Services Association
American Library Association



Annual Report 2022

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Message from the Chair

This past year as Chair of the Executive Committee ZOOM-ed by! It was a year of changes for the industry in an industry that adapts well to change. Not only did FAFLIG change, but libraries in general – and especially Federal libraries – have capitalized on lessons learned during the long lockdown resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. As all aspects of society have returned to the regular rhythms of life, this profession has incorporated new products and services into its established ways.

One FAFLIG goal is to be a good venue for existing and aspiring Federal librarians to meet, share interests, and ask questions. Staying informed and in touch helps aspiring Federal librarians to chart their career course and can buoy efforts to enter this area of the profession. FAFLIG met that goal with a guest-speaker program at the bimonthly meetings. FAFLIG also conducted a member survey to better understand what the organization could do to meet the expectations of those it serves.

When Communications Committee Chair Ebony McDonald presented the member survey results, I saw a connection between members' desire for human-interest stories and the guest-speaker program. Each speaker revealed not only changes within their organization, but also their personal journeys. Our profession encourages development through participation, service, and publication.

- Julie Arrighetti represented the FEDLINK Leadership Working Group and its useful publication “10 Reasons Federal Agencies Need Libraries,” a publication we all need to use. She connected her work to her personal experience as a federal librarian. When she joined the State Department, she was asked that question and saw a gap in agency understanding of libraries' value.
- Julius Jefferson also expertly wove information about his life in libraries into his work with the Congressional Research Service. Inspiring to me was that his story spanned high school to president of the American Library Association, a lifetime of participation and service.
- Dianne Babski's tale of dynamic change at the National Library of Medicine illustrated improved workflow and a shift to a product-based organization. Plus, it included tips about how new librarians can enter Federal service: NLM used the Pathways recruitment process to add 30 new hires.
- Meg Tulloch, whose career includes both Federal and Armed Forces stints, described librarians as “leaders, doers, and thinkers.” So, true. Her vision of the future highlighted information management and librarians who are expert researchers, versus physical libraries. Ninety-nine percent of the collection at the office of Library Science, GAO, where she works is virtual!
- Nicole Peaks closed out the year on an important note, education. What drew me to this profession was the educational role of librarians. She serves her colleagues, Federal court librarians, with hundreds of educational products and, outside of the library, with her community charitable work. She brings full circle our profession's understanding that being a librarian is not just our job. We are diverse in our work and in our personal lives.

The past year has been eventful – emerging from a health crisis, completing a national election cycle, reassessing the future with high inflation, and tragically, more unnecessary war devastating innocent lives. So, I'll close with a salute to the Ukraine Library Association, our colleagues who continue to preserve and protect history, culture, knowledge, and the future despite the conflict raging as I write this.



Joan Blaylock
Chair of FAFLIG, 2021-2022
Director, Cyber Research Center, U.S. Army Cyber Center of Excellence, Ft. Gordon, GA

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 the Federal and Armed Forces Libraries Interest Group (FAFLIG).

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

FAFLIG's Leadership

Executive Committee, 2021-2022

Joan Blaylock, Chair

Ashley Evans, Chair-Elect and Community Committee Chair

Michael Steinmacher, Immediate Past Chair and Elections Committee Chair

Adria Olmi, Armed Forces Representative and Awards Committee Chair

Ben Leubsdorf, Secretary

Phil Quinones, Advocacy Committee Chair (non-voting)

Ebony McDonald, Communications Committee Chair (non-voting)

Thomas Moss, Programming Committee chair (non-voting)

[Vacant], Federal Representative

Committees, 2020-2021

Advocacy Committee

Phil Quinones, Chair

Awards Committee

Adria Olmi, Chair

Communications Committee

Ebony McDonald, Chair

Community Committee

Ashley Evans, Chair

Elections Committee

Michael Steinmacher, Chair

Programming Committee

Thomas Moss, Chair

FAFLIG Highlights from 2021-2022

June 26, 2021: FAFLIG holds its 2021 annual meeting. Ashley Evans elected Chair-Elect. Adria Olmi elected Armed Forces Representative. Ben Leubsdorf elected Secretary.

July 28, 2021: FAFLIG Executive Committee meeting.

September 15, 2021: FAFLIG sponsors "Opening the Gates: Exploring Military Library Programs, Services, and Collaborations," a panel discussion at the Libraries and Veterans National Forum.

September 22, 2021: FAFLIG Executive Committee meeting featuring guest speaker Julie Arrighetti, chief librarian at the State Department's Ralph J. Bunche Library, who discussed FEDLINK's "Top 10 Reasons Federal Agencies Need Libraries" outreach campaign.

September 30, 2021: Communications Committee Chair Ebony McDonald completes FAFLIG's first member engagement survey. Among the highlights are feedback on what members most value about FAFLIG membership: 67% said information sharing, 43% said networking, and 38% said general professional support.

November 17, 2021: FAFLIG Executive Committee meeting featuring guest speaker Julius C. Jefferson Jr., immediate past president of the American Library Association and head of the Research and Library Services Section of the Foreign Affairs, Defense, and Trade Division of the Congressional Research Service.

January 26, 2022: FAFLIG Executive Committee meeting featuring guest speaker Dianne Babski, Associate Director for Library Operations at National Library of Medicine.

January 31, 2022: Communications Committee Chair Ebony McDonald launches FAFLIG's new quarterly newsletter.

March 10, 2022: FAFLIG Immediate Past Chair Michael Steinmacher presents "The Greatest Show on Earth: Building Your Library Brand Amid Today's Challenges" at RUSA's first-ever virtual forum.

March 23, 2022: FAFLIG Executive Committee meeting featuring guest speaker Meg Tulloch, Director of the Center for Library Science at the U.S. Government Accountability Office, who spoke on "Federal Librarianship: Understanding our Profession, Shaping our Future."

May 25, 2022: FAFLIG Executive Committee meeting featuring guest speaker Nicole M. Peaks from the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit, on "Reading the Scales of Justice: Using Communication, Technology, and Interpersonal Skills as a Law Librarian."

FAFLIG Awards

The Federal Achievement Award and the Federal Rising Stars Initiative are intended to honor those who work in federal and armed forces libraries. RUSA has administered both 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.

Lee Lipscomb is the winner of the 2022 Federal Achievement Award.

Ms. Lipscomb, Assistant Librarian at the Federal Judicial Center, made extraordinary efforts to ensure that the federal and armed forces library communities continued to have a voice within the American Library Association (ALA) by ensuring that their interest groups, programs, activities flourished through two significant organizational changes. She exhibits great leadership, focus and enthusiasm in her endeavors. Ms. Lipscomb has promoted tirelessly library and information services throughout the federal library community and is a staunch advocate for the worth and value of librarianship, promoting career development, user services, and access to information. She has a talent for bringing people together.

In her endeavors within ALA, Ms. Lipscomb provided leadership, initiative and creativity. Ms. Lipscomb was the chair of the Federal and Armed Forces Libraries Interest Group (FAFLIG) within the Association of Specialized, Government, and Cooperative Library Agencies (ASGCLA) when ASGCLA dissolved and she was a driving force behind the solution to bring federal librarians into RUSA. Ms. Lipscomb labored tirelessly with precision and poise, considering the numerous second and third order effects to membership during this organizational change. Previous to this organizational change, Ms. Lipscomb had worked with FAFLRT leadership to merge the round-table with ASCLA into ASGCLA.

In past years, Ms. Lipscomb provided relevant programming at ALA conferences and has advocated on numerous occasions for federal libraries. She contributed to a variety of programs at ALA, specifically focusing on programs and webinars on careers in federal libraries that were well-received and well-attended, one webinar of which was hosted under the aegis of RUSA. She has a talent for bringing people together; she recruited a diverse force of federal librarians to show-case the wealth of opportunity in the federal government for aspiring librarians. Her commitment to the organization and federal librarians ensured that librarians had a home in RUSA.

In her current role at the Federal Judicial Center as an Assistant Librarian, Ms. Lipscomb provides knowledge management, metadata services, reference and user services. She has worked at the Federal Judicial Center since 2012, and from 2006 until 2011 was an attorney in North Carolina, working as prosecutor in rural counties. Her M.L.I.S was obtained from the

Catholic University of America (2012), her J.D. from University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (2001), and her Bachelor of Arts from Hollins University (1995). In addition to working at the Federal Judicial Center, Ms. Lipscomb also has contributed to the education and professionalism of librarians, by working as adjunct professors at Catholic University of America and University of Maryland. Ms. Lipscomb's volunteer activities have included chairing the Federal Libraries Interest Group, membership in the Federal Court Librarians Professional Development Working Group, and leadership role in the Widow's Pantry, a 501(c)(3) non-profit organizational that provides encouragement to the homeless, as well as working as a member of the FEDLINK IT Working Group.

Recent Winners

- 2022: Lee Lipscomb
- 2020: Nancy Faget
- 2020: Karl Debus-Lopez
- 2019: Richard Huffine
- 2018: Jane Cross

[Federal Rising Stars Initiative](#)

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.

No winner selected for 2022.

Recent Winners

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