MCPL Director Celebrates 10-Year Anniversary, 30 Years of Service

Greater Kansas City, MO – This month, Mid-Continent Public Library will celebrate Library Director Steven V. Potter’s 10-year anniversary in his current role and 30 years of service at MCPL in total. As director, Potter oversees the largest library system in the Kansas City metropolitan area, which serves more than 816,000 residents across Jackson, Clay, and Platte Counties.

“Steve is an outstanding leader and public servant,” said Michelle Wycoff, MCPL Board President. “His dedication to providing exceptional service to the community is evident in all he does, and we are very proud of everything he has accomplished on behalf of the Library.”

During his tenure as director, Potter has ushered in many significant milestones and achievements for the Library, including:

- **2010** – “MyMCPL.org” website is launched. This is a significant upgrade of the Library’s website and information infrastructure.
- **2011** – Downloadable eBooks are added to MCPL’s services. eBooks become the fastest growing and most quickly adopted service in the Library’s history.
- **2013** – The Story Center at MCPL is established with support from the Kauffman Foundation to help storytellers create and share their work and connect with the work of others.
- **2014** – **MCPL wins the IMLS National Medal for Museum and Library Service Award, presented by First Lady Michelle Obama.**
- **2014** – Square One Small Business Services at MCPL is established with support from the Kauffman Foundation to help local entrepreneurs and business owners.
- **2015** – The Library celebrates its 50th anniversary and launches its new “Grow A Reader” app as part of the Grow A Reader early literacy initiative.
- **2016** – **Voters pass Proposition L, which increases the Library’s funding for the first time in more than three decades,** allowing the Library to enhance its offerings and update its physical spaces.
  - Prop L enables MCPL to expand branch hours, grow its collection (books, movies, music, online resources, etc.), and increase early literacy and other special programming.
- **2017** – MCPL launches its “Reading Rocket,” a mobile early literacy unit that travels to “transportation deserts” to provide services.
• 2018 – MCPL kicks off its Capital Improvement Plan, made possible by Prop L, which calls for improvements at all of its branches as well as the addition of two new branches by late 2022.
  o To date, the Library has renovated (or replaced) 18 of its 33 branches and erected the brand-new East Lee’s Summit Branch.

In 2015, Potter wrote an article with Diana Kander for Library Journal, and he coauthored the book The Purpose-Based Library with John Huber about how libraries can best serve their communities by adapting their offerings to people’s needs. This is a strategy that he continues to employ to this day.

“Steve is passionate about the core mission of libraries and is continually searching for new and innovative ways to support and uplift the community,” said Susan Wray, Assistant Library Director and Chief Operating Officer at MCPL.

Prior to his current position, Potter served in many other capacities at MCPL—from shelving books and managing day-to-day branch operations to cataloging and digitizing items, overseeing system-wide technology projects, and performing administrative functions at the Library’s headquarters. He earned his bachelor’s degree and Master of Public Administration degree from the University of Missouri–Kansas City and his Master of Library Science degree from the University of Missouri–Columbia.

In addition to his work for MCPL, Potter is a member of many regional and national organizations, including:

• Clay County Economic Development Corporation, Board of Directors
• Independence Chamber of Commerce, Public Policy Committee
• Truman Heartland Community Foundation, Board of Directors
• Amigos Library Services, Board of Directors
• EveryLibrary Institute, Board of Directors
• Mid-America Library Alliance (MALA), Officer
• Missouri Public Library Directors, Officer
• Missouri Library Association
• Public Library Association
• American Library Association
• Rotary Club of Independence

Looking forward, Potter says he doesn’t know what the future holds, but he knows the Library will have a role to play, and he is ready.

“I think over the past several months, we’ve all seen how rapidly and unexpectedly life can change from anything you had predicted,” said Potter. “So, I can’t say for sure what’s in store for all of us. But what I can say is that no matter what happens, the Library will be here for its customers, and I’m proud to continue to have the opportunity to be part of that great work.”

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**Access Your World**

Founded in 1965, Mid-Continent Public Library is the largest library system in the Kansas City metropolitan area, operating 33 branches and two Library-To-Go locations and serving more than 816,000 people in
Jackson, Clay, and Platte Counties. MCPL is an award-winning library system that strives to enrich citizens and communities through expanding access to innovation, information, ideas, and inspiration. Connect with the Library on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.