Vision of the Communal Roles of Libraries

The library is a place where knowledge and information freely dwell to define, empower, preserve, challenge, connect, entertain and transform individuals, cultures and communities. The dwelling place, whether physical or virtual, is the product of collective reflection, aspiration, commitment, expertise and organization. It is both a byproduct of civil communities and a catalyst for cultural progress, inspiration, expression and exchange. Its absence in this new century would not only deprive many individuals of important resources, but also, more significantly, such loss would deny humanity an essential portion of its shared identity and entitled liberties. The library can never be fully replaced by information technologies. For the essence of its communal role is not the technological mastery over knowledge and information, but rather the provision of sanctuary for human thought and expression in any medium.

Kay Raseroka, International Federation of Library Associations, University of Botswana, Gaborone
Dona Bible, Carnegie-Vincent Library, Lincoln Memorial University, USA
Paul Callister, Leon E. Block Law Library, University of Missouri-Kansas City School of Law, USA
Patrick Craig, Qatar Foundation, Qatar Academy
Barbara Doyle-Wilch, Middlebury College, USA
Lu-Ann Farrar, Lexington Herald Leader, USA
Constantin Ittu, Brukenthal Library, Brukenthal Museum, Romania
Anthi Katsirikou, University of Piraeus, Greece
Lee Yuk-Man, Hong Kong Public Libraries
Robert McCutcheon, Davis and Elkins College, USA
Joan Osborne, Heritage Library Division, National Library and Information Systems Authority, Trinidad and Tobago
Pimrumpai Pemsmit, Department of Library Science, Chulalongkorn University, Thailand
Lillian Sciberras, Division of Library and Information Studies, University of Malta
Gordana Stokie, Library and Science Department, Faculty of Philology, University of Belgrade, Serbia and Montenegro
Leon Tiemensma, Midrand Graduate Institute, University of South Africa
Yiu Chuen Wan, University of Hong Kong Libraries
Yustinus Yuniarto, Tirta Marta-PBK Penabur Christian School, Indonesia

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