

The Hon. James Moore,
Minister of Canadian Heritage
and Official Languages
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0A6

May 23, 2013

RE: Appointment of the Librarian and Archivist of Canada

Dear Minister Moore,

We are writing on behalf of over 5,000 Ontario Library Association members to urge the Government of Canada to appoint to the position of Librarian and Archivist of Canada, a professional who has the appropriate credentials, expertise and experience and the passion to work collaboratively to lead Library and Archives Canada into the future.

Professional management of national libraries and archives requires specific and expert knowledge in addition to the competencies that are required of senior level management in the public service. Critical knowledge areas include: collection management (acquisitions, development, preservation, rights management), content organization and structure (taxonomies, information architecture), tools and outreach to provide access to content, knowledge management, library and information technology management (assistive technologies, security, social media), copyright, intellectual freedom, and reference and research (subject knowledge).

It is our understanding that the majority of staff currently in senior management positions at Library and Archives Canada, do not have the necessary professional credentials, expertise, and experience in library or archival science and most importantly, lack the passion and understanding for these professions and the unique work that they do. This has resulted in a policy of “modernization” which has caused significant reduction over a short period of time to the means to access and to preserve Canada’s literary and cultural heritage. This is not modernization; it is an erosion of the purpose of Library and Archives Canada.

It is also crucial that a national library and archive have a robust international presence. Our international presence has been diminished. Our national institution should be active internationally to monitor and advise on standards, to promote access to Canada’s collection of cultural heritage, to consult and advise on the latest technologies required to manage print and digital collections, and to leverage economies of scale in international efforts. For this, we need a professional who is expert in library, information and archival

science and who can communicate and partner with professionals to once again demonstrate *leadership* in library and archival work on a national and international scale.

We understand also that the position that the library and archival community refers to as the 'Librarian and Archivist of Canada' is now being referred to as the 'Deputy Head' and that the current interim Deputy Head also does not have the experience nor credentials in leading a library and archive at any level. Appointment of another public servant who has no understanding of the value of the treasures for which he or she is guardian, will not set Library and Archives Canada back on track. OLA urges the government to restore the integrity of this position by appointing a qualified candidate, and preserving the title of Librarian and Archivist of Canada.

Canada has a rich cultural history, a thriving creative community, and until recently, Canadians had access to all of this precious material. The Government of Canada has required that federal departments make severe cuts in order to achieve a balanced budget. A qualified, experienced, and educated team, working in broad consultation with library and archival professionals, would have been able to strategically prioritize where these cuts would occur without incurring irreparable loss to one of our nation's most valuable institutions.

The Ontario Library Association members work in all types of libraries. We have worked collaboratively in the past with Library and Archives Canada, and look forward to a renewed opportunity to work openly and transparently with a new, qualified, Librarian and Archivist, in tandem with library and archival professionals across Canada, to restore the reputation and mandate of this treasured national institution.

Sincerely,



Susanna Hubbard Krimmer
2013 President, Ontario Library Association



Karen McGrath
2012 President, Ontario Library Association

cc.

Mr. Wayne Wouters,

Attachment