

History of Friends of Canadian Libraries – 1998-2016

Friends of Canadian Libraries (FOCAL) officially formed in 1998 and ended operations in 2016. It was a national association for Friends of Library groups across Canada. Our volunteer Executive Committee and Regional Directors provided conference programming, regional workshops, the FOCAL Point Newsletter and website and a variety of other events, programs and resources.

Our official sponsor was Random House of Canada. The annual Gabriele Schreiber Friends of the Year Award, sponsored by Random House Canada was a much sought-after form of recognition.

One of the events leading up to the formation of our national association was a special Friends' Day program at the Canadian Library Association conference in 1997. The Canadian Library Trustees Association and the Canadian Association of Public Libraries co-sponsored the program. The themes of fundraising, advocacy and community building were considered very relevant.

Trustees and Friends met over a "working lunch" which included a brainstorming session to examine the options for Friends' organizations in Canada. The final Friends Day session looked at the political landscape, a vision of the future and proposed an action plan. Friends' Day at CLA occurred during a time when Friends groups in Ontario were moving towards forming a provincial association. Val Marshall was one individual leading that movement. Rather than form a provincial association in Ontario, the decision was made to investigate the possibility of forming a national association.

The Friends Day program at CLA, and subsequent meetings during the 1998 Ontario Library Association Superconference, convinced members of a newly formed Steering group that a national association was viable.

Members of that early Steering group included:

Val Marshall, Trustees and Friends of the Ajax Public Library
Diane Neitzel, Friends of the Nepean Public Library
Gary Archibald (Nova Scotia) CLTA President
Karen Harrison, past President Canadian Library Association
(Alberta)
Valerie Ethier, Friends of the Victoria Public Library (British
Columbia)
Ken Sparling, Public Relations and Planning, North York Public
Library
Jim Sebastian, Chair of the Friends Advocacy Committee,
Hamilton Friends of the Library
Sylvia Teasdale, Co-ordinator Community Services, Nepean Public
Library
Marie Zelinska , Friends of the Ottawa Public Library
Corporate: Gabriele Schreiber of Random House of Canada

Our Annual General Meeting the following year, elected our
inaugural Executive and Board of Directors:

Executive:

President Val Marshall – Friends of the Ajax Public Library
Vice-President Jami Van Haaften – Friends of the Sudbury Public
Library
Secretary Ken Sparling – Toronto Public Library – North
York
Treasurer Tom Foulkes – Smiths Falls Friends of the
Library

Board of Directors:

Western Canada
Lee Teal, Sooke, BC
Prairies
Nicholas Spillios, Friends of the Edmonton Public Library
Central Canada
Dianne Neitzel, Friends of the Nepean Public Library
Eric Moore, Friends of the Ottawa Public Library
Atlantic Canada

Yvonne Le Blanc, Friends of the Clare Public Library, Nova Scotia
Canadian Library Trustees Association Representative
Gary Archibald, Western Counties Regional Library
Canadian Association of Public Libraries Representative
Sylvia Teasdale, Nepean Public Library
Canadian Library Association Representative
Michael Burris, Vancouver

Friends of Canadian Libraries was incorporated as a federal not-for-profit organization and also became a registered charity.

Past Presidents:

Val Marshall
Jami van Haaften
Peggy Hiscock
Nicholas Spillios
Dorothy Macnaughton
Carol Humphries

Treasurers:

Tom Foulkes
Val Marshall
Lois Magahay
Jami van Haaften
Kevin Risk

Secretary:

Ken Sparling
Heather Graham
Dorothy Macnaughton
Ian White
Jocelyn MacNiel

Regional Directors

Lee Teal BC

Eric Moore ON
Dianne Neitzel ON
Yvonne Le Blanc NS
Sylvia Teasdale (CAPL)
Gary Archibald (CLTA)
Michael Burris (CLA)
Nicholas Spillios AB
Nancy Goodman ON
Margaret Main ON
Bryon Merrett NS
Sylvia Teasdale (CAPL)
Gary Archibald (CLTA)
Michael Burris (CLA)

Jocelyn McNeil BC
Nicholas Spillios AB
Maureen Johnson ON
Margaret Main ON
Bryon Merrett NS
Sylvia Teasdale (CAPL)
Gary Archibald (CLTA)
Michael Colborne (CLA)
Jocelyn McNeil BC
Nicholas Spillios AB
Maureen Johnson ON
Margaret Main ON
Bryon Merrett NS

Sylvia Teasdale (CAPL)
Michael Weidlich (CLTA)
Michael Colborne (CLA)
Jocelyn McNeil BC
Nicholas Spillios AB
Michael Weidlich (CLTA)
Michael Colborne (CLA)
Jocelyn McNeil BC
Nicholas Spillios AB
Jim Nicol ON

Peggy Hiscock NS
Pat Jobb (CLA)
Rick Walker (CAPL)
Jocelyn McNeil BC
Nicholas Spillios AB
Jim Nicol ON
Peggy Hiscock NS
Pat Jobb (CLA)
Rick Walker (CAPL)
Jocelyn McNeil BC
Nicholas Spillios AB
Jim Nicol ON
Peggy Hiscock NS
Jocelyn McNeil BC
Nicholas Spillios AB
Glen White NS
Pat Jobb (CLA)
Rick Walker (CAPL)
Jocelyn McNeil BC
Lorraine Doiron BC
Letty Last MB
Lori Nash ON
Ian White NS
Jocelyn McNeil BC
Lorraine Doiron BC
Letty Last MB
Lori Nash ON
Ian White NS
Jocelyn McNeil BC
Lorraine Doiron BC
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