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BUFFALO & ERIE COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY ANNOUNCES 2023 BOARD OF TRUSTEES

*Kimberly L. Johnson Re-elected to Serve as Board Chair
Trustees Also Vote to Stand Against Censorship*

At the January 19 meeting of the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library Board of Trustees, **Kimberly L. Johnson** was re-elected as board chair for a second one-year term. Ms. Johnson is credited with bringing authors to Buffalo for discussions on topics ranging from the rich history of Juneteenth to racism in the workplace. She is senior billing account clerk for the Erie County Probation Department. Ms. Johnson is a recipient of the 2021 Annual Black Achievers Award, vice president of Agents for Advocacy, Inc., and a member of Buffalo's 5/14 Survivors Fund Steering Committee and the New York State 8th Judicial District-Childrens Centers in the Courts Advisory Committee.

Carima El-Behairy was re-elected vice chair for a one-year term. Ms. El-Behairy is executive director of Buffalo Heritage Carousel, Inc. She is also the acting chief financial officer of the Association of Typographie Internationale. Additionally, Ms. El-Behairy is board treasurer for Ascension for the Arts.

Joel C. Moore, Esq. was re-elected secretary for a one-year term. Mr. Moore is an associate court attorney with the Erie County Surrogate Court.

Alan J. Bedenko, Esq. was re-elected treasurer for a one-year term. Mr. Bedenko is a partner at Smith, Sovik, Kendrick & Sugnet, PC.

Executive Committee members, along with Board Chair Johnson and Vice Chair El-Behairy, are: **Lucy A. Candelario**, executive director, The Belle Center, **Elaine M. Panty**, retired City of Buffalo Water Authority employee and the namesake of the Elaine M. Panty Branch Library in Buffalo's Riverside neighborhood, and **Christopher Sasiadek, Esq.**, associate attorney, Rupp Pfalzgraf LLC. and founder of Lakeward Spirits.

The other Buffalo & Erie County Public Library System Trustees include:

- **Michael Amodeo, Esq.**, confidential law clerk to Hon. Craig D. Hannah;
- **Kathleen Berens Bucki, MLS**, school librarian;
- **John Craik**, program and grants officer, Mother Cabrini Health Foundation;
- **Frank Gist**, owner, Greater Buffalo Bail Bond Agency and feature columnist, Buffalo Criterion News;
- **Theodore K. Johnson**, president, Hadley Exhibits, Inc.; and
- **Sharon M. Kelly, Esq.**, retired attorney, Hodgson Russ LLP.

Trustee emeriti are W. Lawrence Buck, Jack Connors, Richard O. Hopkins, the Hon. Salvatore R. Martoche and Rebecca L. Pordum.

Additional board actions:

Trustees took a moment of silence to reflect on longtime Trustee Sheldon Berlow who died earlier this month.

The Library Board also approved a resolution reaffirming the values that protect the rights of all to access a variety of reading materials. The Library Board agreed to stand against censorship challenges and to join the national organization *United Against Book Bans*. Library Director John Spears said, "In recent years there has been a dramatic increase in book challenges with a vast majority of the titles about or written by people of color or members of the LGBTQ+ communities. Individuals should have the freedom to choose what to read and be trusted to make their own decisions and know that we will defend that freedom."

About the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library System

There are 37 Buffalo & Erie County Public Libraries and two mobile libraries. [Programming highlights](#) include onsite and virtual events celebrating Black History Month, Women's History Month and Indie Author Day as well as health and wellness, career, and financial literacy workshops, technology and genealogy classes, and programs for all ages.

In 2022, Buffalo & Erie County Public Libraries circulated over 5.95 million materials, including over 1 million eBooks and eAudioBooks. There were 5.79 million website visits and more than 1.86 million onsite library visits. The Library System holds over 3 million materials that are available for borrowing including traditional books, eBooks, DVDs, CDs, Chromebooks, hotspots, children's sports equipment and more. There are over 408,000 Buffalo & Erie County Public Library cardholders.

Traditional and online Library card applications are available in libraries and on the System website at <https://www.buffalolib.org/library-cards>. For more information about library hours, programs, downloadable materials, databases and more, call 716-858-8900 or visit www.BuffaloLib.org.



Buffalo & Erie County Public Library Board Chair
Kimberly Johnson



Buffalo & Erie County Public Library Board Vice Chair
Carima El-Beairy