



**OHIO HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
FINANCE SUBCOMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION
CHAIRMAN – THE HONORABLE RICK PERALES**

**OHIOANA BUDGET HEARING TESTIMONY – HB 49
February 16, 2017**

David Weaver, Executive Director

Chairman Perales and members of the committee, thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak on behalf of the Ohioana Library Association (OLA). I am pleased to be joined by several members of the Ohioana Board of Trustees. OLA's board is comprised of 20 elected members representing every region of the state, three appointees of the Governor, and Ohio's First Lady, who serves in an ex-officio capacity. A roster of our trustees is attached to this testimony.

The OLA, since its founding by Ohio First Lady Martha Kinney Cooper in 1929, has represented the model of a successful public/private partnership between the State of Ohio and a not-for-profit organization.

With the support of the Governor and the General Assembly and citizens from across the state, the OLA promotes and celebrates Ohio as one of the nation's leading literary centers while directly serving more than 150,000 Ohioans each year. It serves as the caretaker of our state's rich literary heritage. Most importantly, through its collection, publications, awards, and programs, Ohioana vibrantly connects readers and Ohio writers and is a vital contributor to the dynamic educational, cultural, and artistic environment that promotes Ohio as a state on the move, bringing jobs, growth, and prosperity.

We are grateful that Governor Kasich has recognized our unique role in serving the state and its citizens in his "Building for Ohio's Next Generation" budget by recommending the Ohioana Library Association receive \$175,000 in FY2017 and \$180,000 in FY2018.

Mission and Programs

In 2014, as part of a Five-Year Strategic Plan that will carry Ohioana to its 90th anniversary in 2019, the Ohioana Board of Trustees revised and updated our Mission Statement and adopted its first-ever Vision Statement:

Mission: Ohioana collects, preserves, and celebrates Ohio literature and other creative endeavors.

Vision: Ohioana will be the literary capital of Ohio.

The Board reaffirmed its commitment to Ohioana's three core programs:

- Collection and Reference
- Educational Outreach
- Public Programming

The Collection and Reference Program supports researching, developing, maintaining, and making accessible to the public a growing collection of over 80,000 items by Ohioans or about Ohio subjects.

The Educational Outreach Program supports the production and distribution of the *Ohioana Quarterly*, with a print and online audience of 8,000 readers per issue. The *Quarterly* is used by libraries, bookstores, and the general public to select books and serves as an invaluable source of information about Ohio writers and literary events. The program also supports partnerships with libraries and agencies that promote reading, writing, and literacy, such as the Ohio Literary Map, Poetry Out Loud, and Choose to Read Ohio.

Ohioana's Public Programs include the Ohioana Book Festival, which in a single decade has become the largest literary event in the state of Ohio, drawing nearly 120 authors and an annual audience of 50,000 through in-person and extended outreach activities. The program also includes the annual Ohioana Awards, among the oldest and most prestigious literary prizes in the country, with past winners including such notables as James Thurber, Toni Morrison, Anthony Doerr, Rita Dove, Douglas Brinkley, Jacqueline Woodson, and David McCullough.

Ohioana leverages its state support to generate individual, corporate, and foundation funding for its programming. We could not do that without adequate staffing. In 2014, due to retirement and staff transitioning, Ohioana went from four full-time employees to three (which is half of the six full-time staff Ohioana had in 2009, when our annual support from the State was \$200,000).

In the current biennium, with the support of the Governor and the General Assembly, Ohioana strengthened the organization by adding a part-time position and contracting a development and marketing professional. These improvements were especially key in 2016 as two of Ohioana's major public programs celebrated significant milestones: the 10th anniversary Ohioana Book Festival and the 75th anniversary Ohioana Awards.

Through its collection, publications, educational partnerships, and events, including the annual Ohioana Book Festival and Ohioana Awards, OLA promotes and celebrates the state of Ohio as a national literary nexus directly serving 150,000 Ohioans annually.

2018-19 Priorities and Programming

Our priorities in the coming biennium are to:

- Promote Ohio as one of the nation's leading literary centers.
- Connect Ohio readers and Ohio writers through the annual Ohioana Book Festival, Ohioana Awards, and other live and media events.
- Increase awareness of Ohio authors and literature through the Ohioana Quarterly, Ohioana Newsletter, Ohioana website, and social media.
- Develop, maintain, and make accessible to the public a growing collection of more than 80,000 items by Ohioans or on Ohio subjects.

- Support reading, writing, and literacy through educational partnerships with agencies and organizations throughout the state.

Specifically, the funding provided as recommended by the Governor will support Ohioana staff and operations, help it to leverage private support to:

- Produce the annual Ohioana Book Festival with participation from 120 authors, 3,500 attendees, and an outreach audience of 50,000 in each fiscal year.
- Produce the annual Ohioana Awards event to recognize outstanding achievement by Ohio writers and on Ohio subjects; with a live and virtual audience of 10,000 each fiscal year.
- Publish the *Ohioana Quarterly*, which serves as a resource for readers and libraries on new books by Ohio authors and on Ohio subjects, and has a print and online readership of 8,000 people per issue.
- Maintain and develop the Ohioana Collection of more than 80,000 items; research, solicit, process, and catalog 350 to 500 new books each year for the collection; provide access and service to more than 4,000 users of the collection each fiscal year.
- Collaborate with the State Library of Ohio and the Ohio Center for the Book at Cleveland Public Library to distribute 5,000 copies of the new Ohio Literary Map to schools, libraries, and the general public.
- Promote and participate with Ohio authors in live literary events and media programs around the state, reaching a live and virtual audience of nearly 30,000 people.
- Partner with the Ohio Arts Council on the Poetry Out Loud program and the State Library of Ohio on the Choose to Read Ohio program. Annually, these educational programs serve more than 12,000 students statewide.
- Use the Ohioana website and social media to communicate with Ohio readers, schools, libraries, and the general public about Ohio authors, books, literary events, and literary sites; reaching more than 40,000 people each year, including visitors from all 50 states and 112 foreign countries.

Our greatest challenge in the next biennium is operating costs, including health insurance for employees, our annual audit, and insurance to cover Ohioana's collection, which is valued at nearly \$2-million.

We are grateful that in his new budget the Governor has recommended Ohioana for an increase – from \$160,000 in FY2017 to \$175,000 in FY2018 and \$180,000 in FY2019 to help Ohioana meet these expenses, which do not lend themselves to fundraising as do programming or events like the Ohioana Book Festival. Most importantly, it will help Ohioana to retain and support its staff, who are not state employees and do not receive state insurance benefits nor are they covered by PERS.

Commitment to Serve Ohioans Creatively and Efficiently

Governor Kasich has asked that those funded by the state be efficient, creative, and innovative as they serve the taxpayers of Ohio. The Ohioana Library has responded:

- Full-time staff has been reduced from six in 2009 to 3.5 in 2017.
- We've utilized contract professionals to maximize our resources.
- We have made judicious cost-saving reductions where possible without compromising our mission and core programs.

- We have expanded our use of technology to reach all of Ohio and beyond.
- We have expanded our partnerships with agencies and non-profit organizations across the state, enabling us to provide programs and services without additional cost to the taxpayer (see attached list).

Summary and Conclusion

We believe that the State of Ohio and Ohioana has been a winning collaboration for nearly 90 years; demonstrating how a successful private/public partnership can work to serve the people of Ohio. We believe that we are, to use the title of the Governor's budget, "Building for Ohio's Next Generation."

We hope the General Assembly will agree with the Governor that the Ohioana Library Association is a program worthy of the state's continued support, a modest investment that yields major dividends for Ohio, both in terms of direct service to the people and to enhancing the state's image both here and beyond our borders.

In the second half of the next biennium, Ohioana will begin to celebrate the 90th anniversary year of its founding. I would like to close with the words of Governor Kasich and Lieutenant Governor Taylor, from their resolution honoring Ohioana's 85th anniversary in October 2014:

"We encourage all Ohioans to join us in recognizing the Ohioana Library Association as one of our state's cultural treasures. We thank you for 85 years of outstanding service to the people of Ohio and for promoting and celebrating Ohio literature, and for collecting and preserving for future generations the rich literary heritage of our State."

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

OHIOANA LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

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OHIOANA LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

STAFF

Executive Director – David Weaver

Office Manager – Kathryn Powers

Library Specialist – Courtney Brown

Program Assistant – Morgan Peters

OHIOANA LIBRARY ASSOCIATION PROJECT PARTNERS & FUNDERS

The Ohioana Library Association partners with many organizations in presenting its programming, some of whom are also funding partners. The list of these supporters includes:

- The Aldus Society (Ohioana Book Festival)
- The Book Loft of German Village (Ohioana Book Festival)
- Books by the Banks (Ohioana Book Festival)
- Bricker & Eckler (Ohioana Awards)
- Cbus Libraries (Ohioana Book Festival, Ohioana Awards)
- The Columbus Foundation (Operating and project support)
- Columbus Metropolitan Library (Ohioana Book Festival)
- Columbus State Community College (Ohioana Book Festival)
- Dispatch Media Group (Ohioana Book Festival)
- Experience Columbus (Ohioana Book Festival)
- Fort Hayes Metropolitan Education Center (Ohioana Book Festival)
- Greater Columbus Arts Council (Ohioana Book Festival)
- Honda of America, Mfg., Inc. (Ohioana Book Festival, Ohioana Awards)
- Huntington Bank (Ohioana Awards)
- Institute of Library & Museum Services (Ohioana Book Festival)
- Minority Brands Media (Ohioana Book Festival)
- Harry C. Moores Foundation (General operating support)
- Nationwide Children's Hospital (Ohioana Book Festival)
- OELMA – Ohio Educational Library Media Association (Ohioana Book Festival)
- Ohio Arts Council (Ohioana Book Festival, Ohioana Awards, Poetry Out Loud)
- Ohio Center for the Book at the Cleveland Public Library (Ohioana Book Festival, Ohio Literary Map, Poetry Out Loud, Choose to Read Ohio)
- Ohio Humanities (Ohioana Book Festival)
- Ohio Department of Travel & Tourism (Ohio Literary Map)
- Ohio Government TV/The Ohio Channel (Ohioana Book Festival, Ohioana Awards)
- Ohio Magazine (Ohioana Awards, Ohioana Book Festival)
- Ohio Poetry Association (Ohioana Book Festival)
- The Ohio State University (Ohioana Awards, Ohioana Book Festival)
- The Ohio State University Press (Ohioana Book Festival)
- Ohio University/Swallow Press (Ohioana Book Festival)
- Pickerington Public Library (Ohioana Book Festival)
- Porter, Wright, Morris & Arthur (Ohioana Awards)
- The Reinberger Foundation (Ohioana Book Festival)
- The Public Library of Cincinnati and Hamilton County (Ohioana Book Festival)
- Society of Children's Book Writers & Illustrators (Ohioana Book Festival)
- State Library of Ohio (Ohioana Book Festival, Choose to Read Ohio)
- Thurber House (Ohioana Book Festival, Poetry Out Loud)
- Toledo-Lucas County Public Library (Ohioana Book Festival)
- Upper Arlington Public Library (Ohioana Book Festival)
- Vorys, Sater, Seymour & Pease (Ohioana Awards)
- Margaret Wong and Associates (Ohioana Awards, Ohioana Book Festival)
- WCBE (Ohioana Book Festival, Ohioana Awards)
- WOSU (Ohioana Book Festival, Ohioana Awards)
- Westerville Public Library (Ohioana Book Festival)
- VoiceCorps (Ohioana Book Festival)