



# I Love My Librarian!

2008 Award

## **Nomination for Carol W. Levers**

Community Services Librarian  
Kansas City, Kansas Public Library

Weekend Supervisor  
Plaza Branch Library, Kansas City Public Library  
Kansas City, Missouri

## **Nominator:**

Patricia Gaunce  
Kansas City, Kansas

### **1. How long have you known the nominee and how did you come to know him or her?**

Carol Levers has "been in my life" since 1990 when, fleeing the terror of apartheid rule in Johannesburg, S.A. with her husband, Keith, and two small children after Keith had been jailed and beaten for carrying a copy of a document similar to our Bill of Rights supporting Nelson Mandela, they found themselves classified as political refugees in the heart of the USA, Kansas. Not having a green card for work, she walked to West Wyandotte Library and volunteered her services to better acquaint herself with the community and provide her family with free resources and entertainment they couldn't otherwise afford. I have watched through the years both as her co-worker and now as a patron as she has diligently navigated through the education system, finally graduating with her MLS while working full time, raising her children responsibly, and providing them with the opportunity to also gain a college education. She has been my personal inspiration. Her life story could easily be a made-for-television documentary.

**2. Please list a few ways in which the nominee has helped you and others and made your experience of the library a positive one.**

As an active community volunteer, I have referred countless local residents, government officials, and businessmen and women to Carol specifically as I know I can count on her to interview them, identify their needs, and never quit until she is able to provide them with the materials, service, or specific answer they need. By doing so, she has introduced the library to them as a valuable community resource. Often these people don't think of the library as such an important tool or recognize their library as a popular community center. Carol has helped bring our library to the forefront in community recognition and popularity. She has won the hearts and respect of patrons and staff alike with her dedication to excellence in customer service. Her personal expertise and experience with international history and geography and her comprehensive knowledge of multiple languages has heightened her skills as a reference librarian and attracts many who would not normally feel comfortable asking questions of someone outside their culture.

**3. How has the library, and the nominee, improved the quality of your life?**

We are a low socio-economic community with a high minority population. Through Carol's latest outreach role as Community Services Librarian, she has helped turn our branch library into the busiest circulation and program center in the KCK Public Library system. She has dedicated herself to visiting daycares, senior centers, neighboring cities, and joining community groups to introduce them to the library's abundance of free services and programs. She has also made the non-library user part of the groups she targets. By helping these people educate themselves to the services offered by our library, many have been able to secure employment, find financial resources for education, and connect with needed social services. She always finds time to help anyone who asks. When my community improves and thrives, so do I.

On a personal note, this past year I was stricken with cancer. All during my long months of chemotherapy and radiation, Carol kept a "card shower" and email communication coming my way from library colleagues and community friends...never missing a day that I didn't hear from someone. She showed up with "sunshine baskets" and reading material and provided me with a portable CD player to help me fill those hours I was hooked up to chemo IVs. I'm not the only recipient of this kind of personal caring engineered by Carol. How could I not fight the good fight with this kind of support coming my way. She is definitely the Library Angel.

**4. How does the nominee make the library a better place? Please be specific.**

Through her welcoming smile, genuine caring spirit and consistent hard working attitude, she serves as a role model and creates a spirit of teamwork among her co-workers. Consequently, all of us, as patrons, reap the benefits through their top notch customer service and positive attitudes when approached. Her endless recruitment of volunteers to assist with library programs and outreach is a testament to the leadership she provides and respect she has earned throughout the community. I have often heard people say, "I don't know the answer to that but just call the library and ask for Carol Levers" if you need help.

For several years she has led the library's team in the annual Back to School Fair. All the children attending (several thousand) are allowed to choose a new book and selected school supplies and of course, offered a library card application. People associate the library as a positive player in promoting education in our city thanks to efforts like this.

**5. How has the librarian made a difference in the community?**

In addition to her full-time position with KCK Library, she is also the weekend building supervisor and reference librarian at the Plaza Branch of Kansas City Missouri Public Library (she needed extra funds to help her children complete their degrees even though her husband also works a second job). She bridges the gap for library service between the two states through her referrals from one system to the other as needed and by shared borrowing. She is a tireless community volunteer, having served as the President of the KCK Women's Chamber of Commerce for two terms and on the boards of United Ways Study Circles, KCK Area Chamber of Commerce, Childrens TLC of Metro KC, Womens Assembly of Kansas and Missouri, Kansas City Kansas Community College Endowment Association, and is a graduate of Wyandotte County Leadership 2000 program. She serves as chair of the KLA Cultural and Ethnic Diversity Committee and assisted faculty of Emporia State University in obtaining a \$858,000 grant to recruit minority students for their School of Library and Information Management Masters program.

I cannot begin to do an adequate job of sharing Carol's story in these short paragraphs. There is so much more to this humble, unselfish woman, her life, and her work than the answers I have provided can identify. She is most deserving of this honor. I have never known another librarian in all my years as an employee and now as a patron who deserves it more. Thank you for your consideration.