



Nominations for Dwight McInvaill

Director
Georgetown County Library
Georgetown, South Carolina

Nominator:
Nancy Bracken
Pawleys Island, South Carolina

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

Upon relocating to Georgetown County, SC., in 1996, I immediately sought out the library and met Dwight McInvaill. I came to know him when I joined the Friends of the Waccamaw Library and began participating in all the events at the library. As a volunteer at a local child care center and an artist, I found many connections to the library. Over the years, I have become involved with many other organizations as a volunteer, and have had the opportunity to see Dwight McInvaill and the library playing a key role in the community.

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. For instance, did the nominee inspire in you a love for literature; assist you in a research project or finding other information?

Dwight McInvaill has brought together a talented and committed staff who understand the diversity and needs of the community. The library staff under the direction of Dwight McInvaill has made every experience I have had at the library a positive one. About five years ago, I decided to get a doctorate degree and began work on it at the Medical University of South Carolina. The staff at the library in Georgetown County became a wonderful resource for me as I pursued my course work and thesis research.

The library is a source of cultural and intellectual programs that enhance our lives. My husband has been actively involved in the Senior Scholars program at the library for many years. Through this program each week, members of the

community gather to hear speakers on a broad range of topics including history, healthcare, the arts and other subjects of interest.

Evening events have included film series, musical events, authors speaking about their books, and historical reenactments. The library is a center of activity for everyone in the community.

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

The library is a warm, welcoming social and learning center with cultural, educational, and entertainment events for the whole family. Over the years, my husband and I and our friends have participated in art events, fund raising, community meetings, and special programs in addition to making full use of the books and media collections. Every trip to the library is an exciting experience, made even better by Dwight McInvaill's leadership. We have made friends at the library and enjoyed many learning opportunities. The new emphasis on computers, technology, and gaming has opened new doors for everyone in the community to grow and learn.

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

Dwight McInvaill provides leadership and commitment to the library and the community. He is a visionary leader who constantly presents challenges and new ideas for growth and change. He recognizes the unique qualities of each of the communities in the county and works to develop programs in each library to fit the community. The buildings are open, welcoming, and safe places for adults and children to gather. Services are provided for everyone and are readily accessible.

The library staff members are well-trained and qualified. They take pride in helping library patrons find what they need and encourage them to explore new programs and materials. When a program is being presented on a certain topic such as local history, the staff arranges for books from the library collection to be available.

Dwight McInvaill has shared his love of and roots in the community through the preservation of local history. He has shared his interest in new technology and commitment to involving youth in learning through the development of the computer gaming programs in the library. He has shared his belief in the importance of the libraries to the communities by seeking new funding sources and advocating for libraries at state and national levels.

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

Dwight McInvaill has made a difference in each of the communities in Georgetown County. He has established connections with each of the communities and has learned of the specific needs of each. Georgetown County

is a diverse community located on the Atlantic Ocean and divided from north to south by the Intercoastal Waterway. Much of the county is rural and poor with residents who have never left the area. Many of them have not completed high school. Other sections of the county are newly developed with well-to-do, highly educated retirees who have come here from other parts of the country and hold high expectations for their retirement. These diverse populations have very different needs and wants from their libraries. Dwight McInvaill fully understands the diversity and has successfully made the libraries in each community appealing to the populations.

Programs are available to meet literacy needs, to provide babies and children with a love of reading and learning, to provide a safe and challenging place for teens and young adults, to assist adults in learning new skills and finding jobs, and to provide retirees with learning and service opportunities.

Dwight McInvaill's vision has made Georgetown County Libraries an important part of the quality of life for all our residents.

Nominator:
Geales Sands
Pawleys Island, South Carolina

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

I have known the nominee for ten years which is when I moved to this community. Dwight, a native of this area, leads the County Library and I served on the Library's Board for four years. As a "come here" I found Dwight's professionalism and passion for his work encouraging and inspiring. One wants one's local library to be an integral part of the community—thanks to Dwight, ours is.

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. For instance, did the nominee inspire in you a love for literature; assist you in a research project or finding other information?

As a funder for community projects, the Foundation for which I work was seeking ways to make positive impact on young people living in the rural, impoverished area of our county. The county library had plans to build a branch in the parking lot of the brand new high school and middle school which had recently been built in the middle of a corn field out in the rural Carvers Bay area. Realizing that young people in this area have no transportation, limited resources, little parental involvement and a shortage of out of school activities, Dwight McInvaill envisioned a branch library geared towards middle and high school students. Fortunately, the library building was in early enough building stages that the plans could be altered to accommodate extreme wiring and technology upgrades. When it opened in May 2006, this small branch library in rural South Carolina had a gaming program complete with x-boxes, personal computers, video and music capabilities as well as experts on staff to guide the young patrons in the use of these materials. The number of library cards issued for the first time was phenomenal. Students come to the library after school to participate in the gaming club, tournaments, and to check out library materials. On Saturdays a program is offered to middle school students to teach them about incorporating technology into the arts. They make videos that are posted on YouTube and they hone their video and still camera skills. After only three months of operation, this new library branch was featured as the Library of the Month on WebJunction. The next year the library was featured by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation in a short documentary made for libraries that featured four innovative libraries in the nation! This county has a population of 60,000. To receive this kind of recognition for innovation is huge for us. We would not be in this place without Dwight McInvaill's guidance and enthusiasm. His willingness to take risks and step out into a realm he was not that familiar with is what helps make our library great!

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

Dwight's work with the library has not just improved my life, but the lives of so many young people in our county who would otherwise be overwhelmed by the hopelessness of poverty in which they live. The Carvers Bay branch of the library has become an oasis for young people as well as an informal community gathering place. Making the library a "cool" place to be is an enormous accomplishment in a community where the illiteracy rate is staggering. Working with Dwight as a collaborative partner to put in place the type of supportive library that can help change lives is very gratifying. Based on the success of this rural branch library targeting young people, the Foundation has now provided the library with additional funding to recreate the Carvers Bay model in all of the branches of the library (four total).

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

Dwight's enthusiasm for his library and his community is contagious. He sees the library as the passport for young people to learn about the wider world. At Carvers Bay, he took a risk and hired a high school student to act as the technology guru for the branch library to work with young people and help them gain maximum benefit from the technology offered. Four years later, that student is in college and still works at the library as an integral member of the library staff. This young person is not only a role model for his peers but for all patrons utilizing the library.

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

Making the library accessible and exciting is making a huge difference in our community. When young people learn that the library wants them to be there and is making efforts to prepare them to compete in a global economy through technology and gaming, great relationships are built. Dwight McInvaill's vision has made Georgetown County Libraries an important part of the quality of life for all our residents.

Nominator:
John Sands
Murrells Inlet, South Carolina

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

I have known Dwight for almost all of the ten years I have lived in this area, having first encountered him as a speaker on the subject of a noted local artist (Alice Ravenel Huger Smith) who had been a very close family friend. I was amazed then, and continue to be amazed today, with the depth of his knowledge, with the understated charm of his presentation and with his willingness to share and inspire. His family papers include sketches and records kept by the artist, and he has wonderful watercolors she executed. However, he has never had the slightest interest in recognizing any economic benefit from these. His interest has been in making the information more available and stirring an interest in the local populace in a fascinating chapter of history that took place in the Lowcountry of South Carolina. Through a few lectures and now through a manuscript he has produced, he continues to share this information generously.

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. For instance, did the nominee inspire in you a love for literature; assist you in a research project or finding other information?

I am the program officer for a private foundation that works to make obscure collections more available to the public through a variety of mechanisms. Typically the collections involved are chosen because they are reflective of regional culture and often the efforts involve conservation, enhanced storage, on-line cataloguing and digitizing. In 2006, we were approached by several small organizations that were interested in grants to increase public access to their important but modest collections. Suspecting that none of the organizations had sufficient capacity to do the job properly, I asked Dwight to consider building a county-wide digital archive that might provide enhanced access to all this material in a more professional fashion. It was a radical thought. Although venerable (founded in 1799 as a public library), this library system is located in a rural county with vast disparities in education and resources. It would have been all too easy to dismiss this concept as beyond the capacity or mandate of such a library, but Dwight immediately saw the value to the community and jumped on it. Three years later, the photo collections of ten non-profit organizations have been digitized and indexed, several private collections are now being recorded, and the project stands as a model in the state. With nearly 20,000 images catalogued (photos, newspapers, and land grant records), the Georgetown County Digital Library is the only public library to have been accepted as a partner with the three main research universities that are building the South

Carolina Digital Library. The site is used by the software provider, Content DM, as a prototype when they are demonstrating their product to potential purchasers.

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

By virtue of his willingness to take on a project that was, at best, experimental and outside the normal range of activities in a county library system, Dwight has built a remarkable resource that is bringing an increasing sense of self awareness and self confidence to this community. I have found it a pleasure to work with him on this task and have been constantly amazed at his desire to accomplish the goal and his ability to overcome obstacles. Others must recognize this as well—he is often called upon to speak at the state and national level on a variety of topics including the digital library project. Recognition for the library system from the Gates Foundation and the Institute of Museum and Library Services has been well deserved; recognition of the critical role played by the self-effacing director is overdue.

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

In a few lucky non-profit agencies, the right person is in a leadership role and the organization and the individual become inextricably intertwined. In the best of these situations, the organization is healthy and the staff is competent and motivated, all the while cognizant of the important stability offered by a long-term leader with vision. With strong but quiet leadership, an organization can prosper and grow without the calcification that so often occurs when change is resisted or the vision is only of the past, not the future. The Georgetown County Library System under Dwight's leadership continues to grow and evolve, driven always by an awareness of the important role that a library can play for the citizens of the county.

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

Dwight has diligently built a library that is a source of community pride as well as inspiration and that will serve as an educational tool and cultural touchstone for future generations. Go to the Georgetown County Digital Library Web site and you will find pictures of Bernard Baruch, Winston Churchill and Franklin Delano Roosevelt. But more importantly, you will find pictures of the servants that prepared their meals, the hunting guides that took them into the remarkable Lowcountry, and the houses where they raised their families. When Anderson Cooper 360° prepared a segment on Michelle Obama's family roots as slaves on an ante-bellum plantation in Georgetown County, the research staff found the images that illustrated the story through the county's digital library. Without those images, the story and our collective understanding would have been vastly less valuable. Without Dwight McInvaill's vision and willingness to take a chance on a new concept that would serve his community, there would have been no digital library.