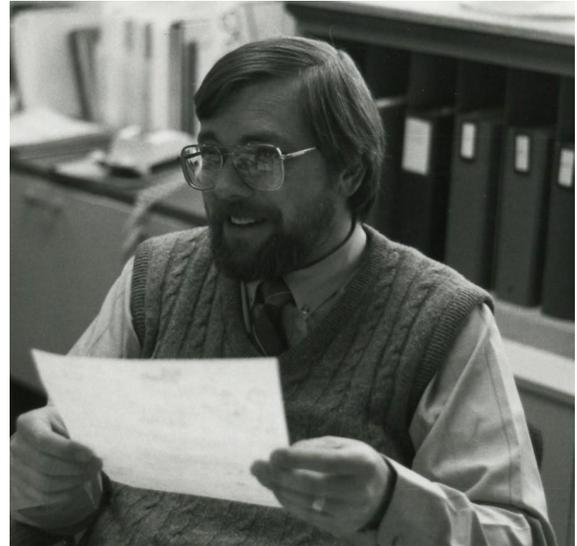


Dale Bartkowiak

Nominated by Matthew Bartkowiak

Dale Bartkowiak was an integral part of growing the Marshfield Public Library into the remarkable resource it is today. His seventeen years as Director included the establishment of the Marshfield Public Library Foundation, Inc and Friends of the Marshfield Public Library (FOMPL), as well as leading the library to a Wisconsin Library of the Year honor in 1991. His dedication and belief in the power of literacy and access to information



and knowledge for all brought our community not only a wealth of books, periodicals, films, and music, but also fostered the library's life in the digital age.

Bartkowiak became Library Director of the Marshfield Public Library in 1987. As Director, he oversaw improvements to library service that increased library use, automated circulation and the catalog, brought in Internet access, and successfully advocated for a change in state legislation which allowed the Town of McMillian to appeal beyond Marathon County to become a joint library with Marshfield.

Numerous summer reading goals were achieved in the community thanks to his willingness to sacrifice himself as a public spectacle for the cause. Kids pushed their page counts in the community with the promise of Bartkowiak shaving off his hair and beard, working on the roof of the library for a day,, working for a day in his pajamas, and other memorable, annual program markers.

Many of the librarians who worked with and for Dale have deep respect and appreciation for his mentorship and support. He encouraged them to find their strengths, develop new skills and have fun on the job. He was a wonderful storyteller, using his experiences to make a salient point.

Before his early retirement due to health issues, Bartkowiak successfully worked with the City to increase the footprint of the library by assisting in the procurement of land where the Everett Roehl Marshfield Public Library building stands today.

Upon his retirement, the Wisconsin Library Association recognized his more than twenty five years of service. This included his time as President of the Association in 1996,

where he “generously provided our Association with his time and talents representing WLA before legislative hearings in Madison, and at library programs and meetings throughout the state. He also was involved in the negotiations that culminated in the location of the WLA office at its current site providing better working conditions and space for Association meetings.”

In addition to his library commitments, Dale found time to involve himself in community improvement by serving on the Marshfield Area School Board, the Literacy Council of Wood County Steering Committee, United Way, and as a member of the noon Rotary Club.

Bartkowiak’s legacy and love of the library lives on today through his daughter-in-law, Sara (who works in the children’s department), his wife, Barb (a part-timer in her retirement), and his granddaughter, Ella (now a part-time library page).

*Thank you to Lori Belongia for her generous contributions to this piece, and for being a valued and appreciated colleague of Dale’s for so many years.