



## Hall of Fame Librarian

### Jeff Yahraus, Retired Director, Williams County Public Library

Jeff Yahraus has served the Williams County Public Library (WCPL) for 42 years and has made significant and lasting contributions to WCPL, the residents of Williams County and the Ohio library community.

Yahraus has demonstrated significant participation and leadership in various library organizations and committees. His involvement includes notable achievements such as being named Support Staff Member of the Year in 1996, serving as the coordinator of the Northwest Ohio Action Council, and a key member of the OLC's Legislative Network.



His dedication and commitment to the library field are further evident through roles in organizations like the SEO Governance Committee, the NORWELD Board, and as the Chair of the OLC's Innovation Conference in 2021. These leadership positions highlight his influence and impact on the library community at both the local and state level.

One admirable quality of Yahraus is his consistent effort to acknowledge and credit his staff members where it is due. By recognizing and appreciating the contributions of his team, he has cultivated a positive work environment, boosting morale, and fostering respect among staff members. This practice of giving credit reflects his strong leadership values and commitment to fostering a supportive and collaborative atmosphere.

Yahraus is a steadfast advocate for Ohio's public libraries and actively engages with members of the General Assembly. His consistent presence at OLC's Legislative Day and other legislative meetings showcases his dedication to championing the mission of libraries and the essential role they play in communities, regardless of size or zip code.

Maintaining relationships with external organizations is another notable aspect of Yahraus' work. He has established connections with the YMCA, the school system, United Way, and Rotary, where he has served as the Past President. Additionally, his involvement as Past President of the Bryan Academic Booster Club demonstrates his commitment to educational development within the community. These collaborations highlight his ability to forge partnerships and work collaboratively with diverse stakeholders to enhance library services and community outreach.

Yahraus has achieved several successes throughout his tenure, including securing two successful operating levies and achieving renewal success five times. He implemented a Dewey Lite shelving system, initiated a staff wellness program, and earned the NORWELD Award for Best Teen Space. Furthermore, the partnership with the Young Adult FINS books program has ensured that every third grader in Williams County receives a book for three consecutive years, emphasizing his dedication to early literacy.

His impact extends beyond programmatic achievements. He has successfully led efforts to rename the library and spearheaded various renovation projects, such as the Local History Center, the Main Library Adult Services Department, the Stryker Branch Library, and the Main Library Children's Library. Additionally, he has undertaken the restoration of the 1903 Carnegie Stairs. These initiatives showcase his ability to envision and implement transformative changes that enhance the library's physical space and services.

Yahraus is a true advocate for libraries and those who work in them. For his exceptional leadership, dedication to the profession, and tremendous impact on library services in Ohio, Yahraus has been named a Hall of Fame Librarian.