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About the Librarian



Carla Hayden was sworn in as the 14th Librarian of Congress on September 14, 2016. Dr. Hayden, the first woman and the first African American to lead the national library, was nominated to the position by President Barack Obama on February 24, 2016, and her nomination was confirmed by the U.S. Senate later that year on July 13.

Her vision for America’s national library, connecting all Americans to the Library of Congress, has redefined and modernized the Library’s mission: to engage, inspire and inform Congress and the American people with a universal and enduring source of knowledge and creativity.

During her tenure, Dr. Hayden has prioritized efforts to make the Library and its unparalleled collections more accessible to the public. Through her social media presence, events and activities, she has introduced new audiences to many of the Library’s treasures – from [Frederick Douglass’ papers](#), to the [contents of President Abraham Lincoln’s pockets](#) on the night of his assassination, to [James Madison’s crystal flute](#) made famous by Lizzo.

By investing in information technology infrastructure and digitization efforts, she has enabled the American people to explore, discover and engage with more with this treasure trove of America’s stories maintained by the Library of Congress, even if they never visit the Library’s buildings in and around Washington, D.C.

With the support of a \$15 million grant from Mellon Foundation, in 2021, Dr. Hayden launched the [Of the People](#) initiative, which is creating new opportunities for more Americans, especially Black, Indigenous, Hispanic or Latino, Asian American and Pacific Islander and other communities of color underrepresented in the Library’s collections, to engage with the Library and add their perspectives to the Library’s collections. The initiative has three programs that invest in [community-based documentarians](#); fund [paid internships and fellowships](#) to engage the next generation of diverse librarians, archivists and knowledge workers; and invite underserved communities and institutions to [create digital engagements](#) with Library collections.

Prior to her current role, Dr. Hayden was the CEO of the Enoch Pratt Free Library in Baltimore, Maryland, since 1993. She was the deputy commissioner and chief librarian of the Chicago Public Library from 1991 to 1993, an assistant professor of library and information science at the University of Pittsburgh from 1987 to 1991 and library services coordinator for the Museum of Science and Industry in Chicago from 1982 to 1987. She began her career with the Chicago Public Library as the young adult services coordinator from 1979 to 1982 and as a library associate and children’s librarian from 1973 to 1979.

Dr. Hayden was president of the American Library Association from 2003 to 2004. In 1995, she was the first African American to receive Library Journal’s Librarian of the Year Award in recognition of her outreach services at the Pratt Library, which included an after-school center for Baltimore teens offering homework assistance and college and career counseling. Hayden received a B.A. from Roosevelt University and an M.A. and Ph.D. from the Graduate Library School of the University of Chicago.

Among her numerous civic and professional memberships and awards, Dr. Hayden is an elected member of the American Philosophical Society and the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.

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