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**AFSCME Local 1526 and James Fish are SirsiDynix – ALA-APA Award Winners**

**CHICAGO, Feb. 21, 2006** – The American Library Association-Allied Professional Association (ALA-APA) is pleased to announce that AFSCME Local 1526 of the Boston Public Library and James Fish, director of the Baltimore County (Md.) Public Library are the winners of the second annual SirsiDynix-ALA-APA Award for Outstanding Achievement in Promoting Salaries and Status for Library Workers. The award is given to an individual, group of individuals or institution that have made an outstanding contribution to improving the salary and status of library workers in a local, regional or national setting. Eileen Muller, president of the Brooklyn Library Guild, Local 1482, was given an honorable mention. AFSCME will receive \$3,000 and Fish, \$2,000.

"By selecting Boston Public Library's AFSCME Local 1526, nominated by Diane Fay, we honor a segment of our profession without a big voice," said jury chair Peter McDonald. "The union did an outstanding job in their last contract negotiations to win upgrades for all 76 library support staff in the 26 of the 27 branches of the city public library system. With support of administration, and in good faith negotiations with the city, Local 1526 was able to win a 10% salary increase over the next four years, through exemplary effort, dogged perseverance, and impeccable arguments of how important library support staff are to the libraries they serve."

The committee viewed the union's actions as "a textbook model of salary negotiations for library systems nation-wide."

Fish was nominated by Jean Mantegna, BCPL Human Resources manager. A salary study completed in FY 2000/01 revealed BCPL librarian salaries were 17% lower than competitive levels, while staff salaries were as much as 13% lower. Using this study, Fish began what Jury member Jennifer Kutzik calls "the relentless education of the Board of Library Trustees and the County Executives." In April 2004, the Baltimore County Council approved a \$450,000 increase for BCPL salaries. In FY 2004/05, a new pay program resulted in a 7.34% pay adjustment to all staff, annual merit steps of 5%, and the base starting salary for librarians increased by 13.4%.

Muller, who was nominated by Lillian Roberts, Executive Director, AFSCME District Council 3, received an honorable mention for her 10 years of work increasing the wages of more than 950 Guild workers, including librarians, and adding two new levels of clerical job descriptions which increased their wage structure. In the last two years, Muller focused on increasing custodial staff salaries by using a creative square foot method to document their (lower) wages compared to other city workers. Through her efforts, Jury member Ron Stock said "the entire Brooklyn Library Guild benefited."

"Once again, we received a record number of submissions by people who have incredible experiences to share of triumph over seemingly insurmountable odds to achieve higher salaries," the committee noted. "Their stories inspired us." After reading three nominations for each nominee, the jury is adamant that, "This shouldn't end here! We want the stories we read to reach more people to give them hope and guidance for making a difference in our profession's compensation."

"Librarians and information professionals have a vital role to play in the 21st century," said Patrick Sommers, SirsiDynix chief executive officer. "Being uniquely positioned to make sense of the vast world of information, they bring knowledge to life for real people with real needs. At SirsiDynix, we seek to partner with libraries to create a future in which they play a more strategic role within their communities. And the SirsiDynix - ALA-APA award is one of the many ways we do that. Congratulations to the AFSCME Local 1526 of the Boston Public Library and to James Fish, director of the Baltimore County Public Library, for their great achievements in improving their libraries and communities."

The winners will be honored during the ALA Annual Conference in New Orleans in June. This award is given annually, thanks to a contribution from SirsiDynix, the global leader in strategic technology solutions for libraries.

The recipient of the award does not have to be an ALA member or a current or past library staff member. The requirement is that the award recipient's achievement(s) has been notable. Officers of the ALA or the ALA-Allied Professional Association are not eligible for the award, nor are members of the ALA-APA Salary Awards Committee, ALA-APA Standing Committee on the Salaries and Status of Library Workers or employees of SirsiDynix.

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### **About SirsiDynix**

SirsiDynix is the global leader in strategic technology solutions for libraries – vital institutions whose primary mission is to make sense of the vast world of information for people and communities. This is an exciting role as libraries assist people in discovering and using knowledge, resources and other valuable content for their educations, jobs and entertainment. In concert with key industry partners, SirsiDynix supports this strategic role for libraries by offering a comprehensive integrated suite of technology solutions for improving the internal productivity of libraries and enhancing their capabilities for meeting the needs of people and communities. SirsiDynix has approximately 4,000 library and consortia clients, serving more than 200 million people through more than 20,000 library outlets in the Americas, Europe, Africa, the Middle East and Asia-Pacific. For more information, please see [www.sirsidynix.com](http://www.sirsidynix.com).