

Dear First Name

On April 4, 2022 the [State of America's Libraries Report](#) was released along with the [Top Ten Most Challenged Books of 2021](#). The information is both disheartening and encouraging. The Office of Intellectual Freedom documented over 700 attempted book bans, the largest number since these statistics were first collected over twenty years ago. As evidenced by the list of Top Ten Most Challenged Books, the majority of challenges were against books by or about marginalized people, specifically people of color and the LGBTQIA+ community. This fact is especially disheartening considering the disparities in publishing that already make it difficult for these books to be published and circulated.

That is why I chose to dedicate my annual Chair's Program to these authors. This year at the 2022 ALA Annual Conference in Washington, D.C., the IFRT Chair's Program will be a conversation with [George M. Johnson](#). George M. Johnson (they, their) is a non-binary, activist, journalist, and bestselling author of *All Boys Aren't Blue* (number 3 on the 2021 Top Ten Most Challenged Books List) and *We Are Not Broken*. Johnson's books tell the story of Black boyhood, brotherhood, matriarchal love and the trauma from dealing with homophobia, transphobia and racism. *All Boys Aren't Blue* experienced attempted bans and even criminalization in at least 15 different states. This program will look at this situation from the perspective of the author, and if you are attending ALA Annual this year I encourage you to come and hear George's story (Saturday, June 25th at 1pm ET).

The encouraging news from the report is that, in spite of the increasing number of challenges, the majority of people oppose the removal of books from public libraries and hold a high level of confidence in the expertise of librarians. This news is inspiring, and we should continue to encourage those who oppose book banning to speak out against the very vocal minority who challenge books that allow for a more comprehensive understanding of the world we live in. Join the [Unite Against Book Bans](#) movement.

However, I know that librarians are already doing this work. I wish to congratulate [Terri Lesley](#), the 2022 [John Phillip Immroth Memorial Award](#) recipient. Congratulations are also due to the Tennessee Library Association (TLA) and the Tennessee Association of School Librarians (TASL), the recipients of the [Gerald Hodges Intellectual Freedom Chapter Relations Award](#), as well as [Jamie M. Gregory](#), winner of the IFRT [Eli M. Oboler Memorial Award](#).

Thank you all for the work that you do and for your support for intellectual freedom. Please continue to support our colleagues who are on the front lines by contributing to the [Merritt Fund](#)!

IFRT Chair, Rhonda Evans



All Member Gathering

The Intellectual Freedom Round Table (IFRT) invites all current members to attend our spring All Member Gathering of IFRT on Sunday, May 1st from 6pm-7pm (Central Time). This virtual gathering will feature breakout rooms for discussion over various Intellectual Freedom topics and an overview of IFRT committee involvement. Several attendees will win a copy of *Banned Books: Defending Our Freedom to Read* by Robert P. Doyle! Questions? Topics you want to see discussed? Contact Molly Dettmann (mdettmann@norman.k12.ok.us). [Register here.](#)



IFRT Award Announcements

The IFRT [Eli M. Oboler Memorial Award](#) has been given to [Jamie M. Gregory](#). The award is presented each year for an excellent work in the area of intellectual freedom. Ms. Gregory is National Board Certified Teacher in Library Media working as the Upper School Librarian and journalism/newspaper teacher at Christ Church Episcopal School in Greenville, SC.

The IFRT [John Phillip Immroth Memorial Award](#) has been given to [Terri Lesley](#). The Award "honors notable contributions to intellectual freedom and demonstrations of personal courage in defense of freedom of

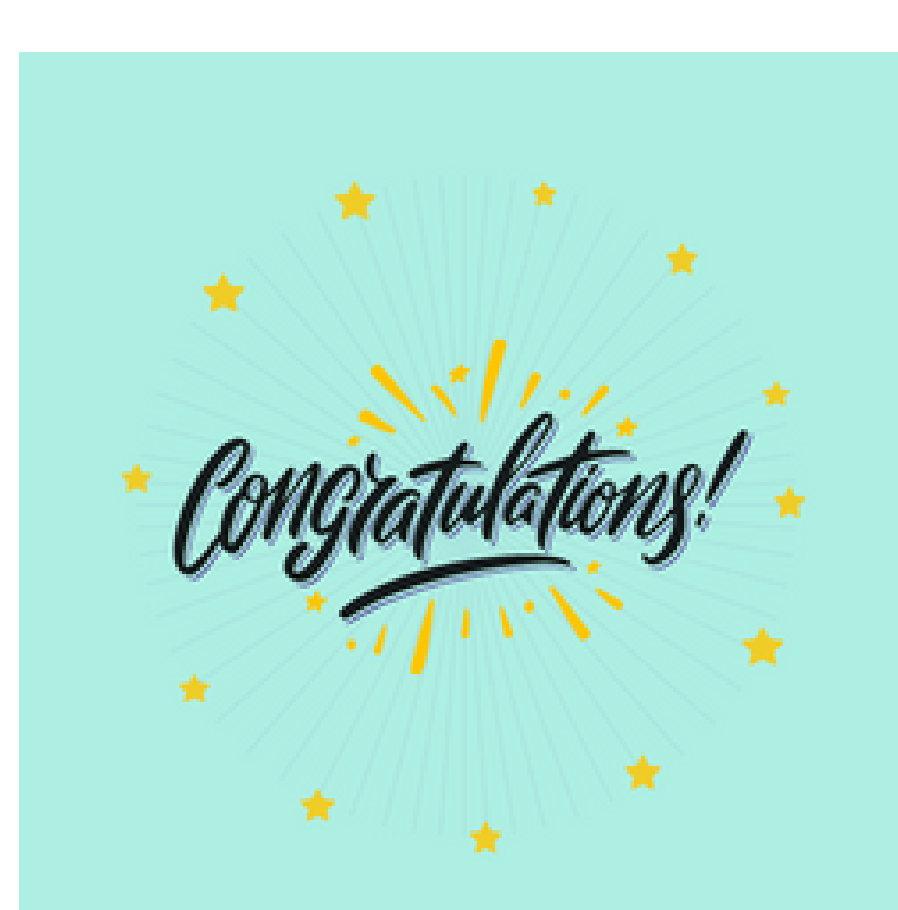
expression." Ms. Lesley, Executive Director of Campbell County Library System in Wyoming, has led library staff and trustees through terrible challenges.

The [Gerald Hodges Intellectual Freedom Chapter Relations Award](#) was awarded to the [Tennessee Library Association \(TLA\)](#) and [Tennessee Association of School Librarians \(TASL\)](#). The award recognizes an intellectual freedom focused organization that has developed a strong multi-year, ongoing program or a single, one-year project that exemplifies support for intellectual freedom, patron confidentiality, and anti-censorship efforts. [Learn More.](#)



Volunteer for IFRT

Volunteer for an IFRT committee today! Your talents can be put to good use on a number of diverse and amazing committees. We always have room for your voice at IFRT. The following committees would be happy to have you join them: [Bylaws](#), [Coalition Building](#), [Immroth Award](#), [Membership](#), [Merritt Fund Promotion](#), [Nominating](#), [Oboler Award](#), [Programming and Events](#), and [Publications and Communications](#). [Volunteer here.](#)



Election Results

Thank you to everyone who ran for a spot on the IFRT Executive Committee, and congratulations to the winners:

- [Amanda Vazquez](#) will hold the position of the next Chair Elect
- [Michael Kirby](#) and [Rebecca Moorman](#) will serve as the next Directors-At-Large and
- [Rita Ennen](#) will hold the position of the next Secretary



Unite Against Book Bans

In response to the dramatic increase in book bans in 2021, ALA launched [Unite Against Book Bans](#) to empower readers everywhere to stand together in the fight against censorship.

Although book bans are nothing new, there were more censorship attempts in 2021 than at any time since the American Library Association began tracking more than two decades ago. These orchestrated efforts to ban books are too numerous for a single person or local group to fight alone. [Join the movement.](#)