



Responsibilities of Trustees: Collective And Individual

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THE CONCEPT OF TRUSTEESHIP is an ancient one, reaching far back into the history of mankind. Closely allied with the tutelary, regency, and guardianship principles, trusteeship is recognized as the agency of a person or persons designated to act as governors or protectors over property belonging to another.

The history of libraries very nearly parallels the history of civilization itself. From the 21st century B.C., we are able to trace libraries from their beginnings as royal or temple collections, to the universally available public institutions of education and recreation of today.

It is not definitely known whether or not boards of governors or trustees shared the responsibilities of administration of the ancient collections, the public libraries of Greece and Rome, and the monastic, royal, and university libraries of later centuries. Ironically, few written records survive to give us the detailed history of these treasuries of the written record. But about the middle of the nineteenth century, the public library, as a tax-supported institution operated under the control of a board of trustees, began to appear throughout the United States. Swelling demands for broader and better library service were matched by the growth of the public library movement into today's urban, county, and multicounty library systems all over the country.

The past century has seen a corresponding growth in the responsibilities of the library trustee. What was once a minimal listing of simple responsibilities has grown until today's public library trustee finds himself in charge of a complex public facility, presenting an analogous complexity of responsibilities for its trustees. These responsibilities divide themselves into two categories: collective, or the responsibilities of the library board as governing body; and individual,

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or the responsibilities involving the trustee's personal undertaking in his discharge of the duties of a board member. In some areas these responsibilities are, of course, identical. In other fields a distinction may be drawn between the collective duties of the board of trustees and the individual's commitment to effective service as a member of the board.

First among the collective responsibilities of library trustees, and carrying the strongest impact upon the library's operation, is that of policy making. Every public library should have a written statement of policy which governs rules, regulations, and operations. Written policy should also be on record showing the library's objectives and embodying its criteria of selection of books and materials.

Policies should therefore be worked out and recorded by library boards governing such important matters as (1) days and hours open, holidays, duty hours of staff; (2) vacation and sick leave benefits of librarian and staff; (3) salary schedule, setting out qualifications required, tenure benefits, in-service training leading toward promotion; (4) standards of selection of books and other materials; (5) fines on overdue books, charges for lost books; (6) services to school pupils and school libraries, services to other specialized groups; (7) special services (to nonresidents, use of auditorium, etc.); (8) acceptance of gifts and memorials; (9) extension of services (through branches, bookmobiles, system participation, etc.); (10) public relations; (11) payment of expenses for trustees and staff to attend library conferences, workshops, and professional meetings; and (12) payment of state and national association dues for board members and librarian.

Since the librarian is charged with the responsibility of carrying out policies established by the board, policy should be worked out in close cooperation between board and librarian. Often the librarian, fortified by close daily contact with patrons and by professional experience, can suggest needed new or changed policy to the trustees for their consideration.

Written library policy has been well likened to a road map, and no library can progress without such a guiding chart.

The responsibility of the board which is second only to policy making in force of impact is selection of a librarian. It is not necessary to point out to readers of *Library Trends* that there are no cut-rate bargain days in good librarianship. Public library boards should, therefore, be prepared to offer to a qualified candidate the best in salary that the finances of the library can afford, together with promotional

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incentive and fringe benefits. The librarian chosen will be the single most important factor in the library's progress, and pains should be taken to fill the post with the best talent available.

The word "talent" is used advisedly, since nothing less leads to librarianship that is inspired and inspiring. Thus, when the question of selection of a librarian is before the board, it is the board's inescapable responsibility to act as talent scout as well as prospective employer.

The fiscal responsibility of the board toward the library calls for thorough grounding in knowledge of the library's resources, its financial needs, and its estimated expenditure for any projected expansion. The library board must therefore be informed as to tax monies available and the library's fair share of the tax dollar, as well as the amount of income essential to provide adequate library service to the community. Acting as an advisory committee, the board should assist the librarian in preparing the budget, and the chairman and the librarian, together with other board members acting as consultants, should jointly present the budget to the appropriating body.

When additional expenditures become necessary, it is the responsibility of the board to make such request, pointing out sources for such funds (such as larger appropriation, increased tax levy, or bond issue). Since the library board, by statute, is responsible for the use made of the library's funds, it is the duty of the board to be conversant with tax laws affecting the library and with the provisions of any bond issue proposed for the benefit of the library. It is the board's duty as well to justify and interpret not only appropriations requested, but also the suggested means through which the funds are to be made available.

Preparation of the budget, reflecting not only costs of daily operation but also projected expansion of the library's services from year to year, is properly the duty of the librarian. But fiscal responsibility for the library is fixed by law in the library board and cannot be delegated. To be carried out well, this responsibility must be carried out wisely.

The trustees' collective responsibility in the field of public relations is primarily that of sounding board to interpret distinctly the echoes of public opinion and public demand related to the library's program and the library's needs. In their position as board of control over the library which belongs to the public, trustees must act as liaison between the public and the institution. The board, in consultation with

the librarian, must form and direct the public relations program of the library, since a favorable climate of public acceptance is essential to the library's welfare and progress.

Every public contact is a form of public relations. Actions and attitudes of the staff in this respect come under the head of library administration and are properly left to the supervision of the librarian. But board members, in social contacts and business, professional, and civic interests, have constant opportunities to "talk library," and consequently, to "sell library." In this liaison work, the board may call favorable attention to the library's services and thereby gain acceptance for planned expansion. At the same time, the board learns public reaction to the library program and gains valuable information as to public needs and desires.

Avenues of public relations are numerous, and all should be explored. Newspaper releases reach the entire community and give publicity to changes in policy, new services offered, or new programs planned. Radio and television time, often donated as a public service, can be utilized for book reviews and other items of interest presented by the librarian or a staff member. The library's annual report should be well publicized.

National Library Week and Children's Book Week provide two well advertised occasions to focus public attention on the library. Local or regional authors and their works may be honored by special observances. Book fairs may be planned to sharpen public interest. These are all means which the librarian and the board should consider as channels of public relations for the library.

Friends of the Library groups offer an ever-widening circle of excellent public contacts. Such groups should be welcomed by board and librarian alike, and the objectives of the Friends should be planned in consultation with the librarian and members of the board. The work of the Friends should be pointed toward supplying a need of the library not otherwise attainable or toward supplementing certain programs suggested by the librarian and board. It is the responsibility of the board to work closely with these well-wishers of the library, both to give direction to their generous efforts and to cooperate with them in their plans.

A board responsibility often overlooked governs gifts, endowments, and memorials proposed for the library. Most of the public relations work inviting gifts and endowments is doubtless done by individual trustees through personal contacts, but the board must at all times

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present a receptive and appreciative attitude toward such benefactions. Equally, the board must be prepared to avoid entanglements resulting from "the gift with strings attached" which would hamper any benefits accruing to the library. A practical and tactful policy should be worked out by the board touching these matters, and the policy should provide that the library is not to be restricted in making the best use of such gifts.

The board has a collective responsibility to participate in library and trustee organizations at state, regional, and national levels. Membership of every trustee in such associations and provision for payment of dues and travel expenses to the meetings should be as much a part of the board's policy of record as similar and corresponding expenses for the librarian. Benefits of membership in professional organizations for librarian and staff and attendance at meetings and workshops are obvious and should be considered essential in preparation of the library's budget.

But many trustees are seemingly less aware of their own responsibilities toward library and trustee organizations. Individual rewards of such membership, in the form of education and growth, will be treated later in this article. It is the board's collective participation which gives support to the organizations, both in financing and in broad-range programs. The work of these associations will be found invaluable in creating favorable public relations for libraries as a whole, and the backing of such associations, particularly at the state and national level, is indispensable in the political process of obtaining legislation helpful to libraries.

And it is in the political process that one of the heaviest responsibilities of the library board falls. Public libraries, as tax supported institutions, are dependent upon public tax resources for support. Distasteful as many trustees profess to find the idea, this means that the library must compete with other tax supported institutions and facilities for a share of the public monies. Too often the public library with an unaggressive board finds itself shunted into a corner and given only a token, or bare-maintenance appropriation, while more aggressive or more novel public works bear off the lion's share.

It is in the creation of a receptive public climate of thought toward the library, built by skillful public relations, that the board must take the lead. Presentation to the governing body of the library's budget, justification for the amount sought, and request for increased income—all should emanate from the library board through its chairman. While

the librarian is an essential member of the team as coworker and consultant, it is an injustice to look to the librarian to carry the ball as a substitute for the board.

Similarly, when expansion or improvement of the library's services necessitates a tax or a bond issue, the board should constitute itself sponsor of the political campaign which is called for. Through speeches, public and private contacts, organized campaign work with civic, social, educational, and service clubs, the library trustees have an opportunity and an obligation to mold public opinion toward a vote favorable to the library's progress. Since America's public business is transacted democratically through the ballot box, the forward movement of America's libraries depends upon the political process. Trustees of those libraries must, therefore, bear the responsibility of representing the library in politics.

Narrower in scope, but of equal importance to the library's well-being, are relations between the board and the librarian and staff. After the board has employed the best librarian available, it is the collective responsibility of the board members to stand solidly behind him. Here, perhaps, the *limitation* of the board's responsibility is its most important aspect, for while the board is responsible for the overall control of the library, internal administration of the library is the librarian's responsibility, and never the twain should meet. To avoid collision or overlapping, sharp definition of the two separate responsibilities should be recognized by the board. In a recent publication of the Small Libraries Project of the American Library Association, the writer has expressed the situation in these words: "As the happy ship is not the ship where all discipline is relaxed, but the ship whose captain and crew work together in common cause, the smoothly-running library has its own recognized chain of command."¹

Once the board has established policy leading to the best possible operating conditions for the library, its responsibility is to maintain cordial cooperation with the librarian and friendly interest in the staff members. The perils of confusion, partisanship, or divided authority can be avoided by bearing in mind that the librarian supervises the internal management of the library.

In-service training and further educational opportunities should be encouraged by the board and made available to staff members. With recruitment to the profession of librarianship an acute problem of the present day, library boards may well assume the responsibility of encouragement and assistance to staff members.

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A library board responsibility of first magnitude, but one that frequently fades into invisibility, is that of attendance at board meetings. Library boards, like other boards of directors, operate only through meeting for the purpose of acting upon agenda. A quorum is a legal necessity—attendance and interested participation by all members are much more effective. An attitude of “Oh, they can get along without me,” registered by one trustee, can multiply throughout the board until even a bare quorum is difficult to obtain.

Board meetings should be called regularly and should be attended by all members. The chairman and the librarian (who is often the secretary of the board) should be prepared with a carefully worked out agenda. Handbooks of many state trustee associations and much of the library literature indicate that the following order of business is the accepted one for meetings of library boards:

- Roll call
- Reading of minutes of previous meeting
- Communications
- Report of librarian
- Financial report and approval of expenditures
- Report of standing committees
- Report of special committees
- Unfinished business
- New business
- Adjournment

With the introduction of a new board member, much of the new appointee's first board meeting may well be devoted to orientation in the duties of trusteeship. Available for distribution to library boards is the *Trustee Orientation Program* of the American Library Trustee Association, which should be part of every board's reference shelf.² Although the orientation process may be mainly a trio between chairman, librarian, and new trustee, all members of the board should be present and participating, since this is an occasion when precept and example carry equal weight. Assignment of the new trustee to an immediate committee or other duties additionally insures his interest from the very beginning of his service.

Meetings, besides being the means for transaction of library business, afford an opportunity for close and candid consultation between librarian and board members. This intercommunication is essential to the library's operation, and the only proper channel is through the

board meetings. Part of this communication should be periodic evaluations by the board of the librarian's work and program, in order that revisions or adjustments may be made if needed. This evaluation process is helpful to the librarian both in conduct of current programs and in framing plans for the future.

Since the library board is also the overall planning body of the library, time should be reserved at all meetings for creative discussion and projection of such plans. Board meetings are the ideal occasion for planning sessions, for with a survey of current business and conditions before them, in close consultation with the librarian, and with all board members participating, the trustees are in position for informed discussion. No library ever struggles out of the doldrums without a creative, forward-looking board, and the board meetings should invite and expect plans and suggestions at every session. Cyril O. Houle has written that the ultimate test of a board's success is the success of its program.³

Above all, it is the responsibility of the board that meetings should be neither perfunctory gatherings attended in a spirit of "Let's get it over with", nor merely social get-togethers. Board meetings have a strongly active function to perform, and it is the collective responsibility of the board's members to insure vital performance of that function.

Duties and responsibilities of county, system, and state boards are essentially the same, embracing the same fundamentals, as those of the local library boards. State and county library laws are often broader in framework, since the political subdivision is a larger unit, and programs are necessarily somewhat more diffused over the larger area than the concentration possible to local operations. In the main, however, all library boards have as their first responsibility the supplying of library services to the citizens of the area in question. The second responsibility is constantly to improve the library services offered. All other duties and responsibilities of library boards stem from these primary obligations.

"Obligations" is none too strong a word. To preserve a literate society, and to strengthen an advancing civilization, public libraries are a stark necessity. The library board, whether elected or appointed to trusteeship, exists as agent or deputy of the public which owns the library. The purpose of the library board is therefore the carrying out of a public trust. Indeed, it is the recognition of library trusteeship as a public trust that establishes values for the individual trustee. In

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many states, the trustee is required to take an oath of office upon entering his term of service—an excellent thing, since the taking of such an oath stresses the public service involved.

Individual trustee duties and responsibilities are of course identical with those of the collective board, related to individual capacities and interpretation. Involved in the individual's interpretation of service in terms of his own potentials are certain subjective responsibilities which determine the worth of his trusteeship.

Probably the most fundamental of these is the individual's *attitude* toward trusteeship. If the trustee has an animating interest in the library and a recognition of its importance to the community, he will work for its welfare and progress. The fact that such work often entails sacrifice of time, effort, and personal convenience will be secondary. Every exercise of the duties of citizenship requires such sacrifice in some degree, and if the trustee is convinced that the library ranks high in importance to the welfare of the community, its service will rank high in importance to him.

An individual with such an attitude willingly devotes time and effort to trusteeship. Too many cases have been known where trustees were appointed out of friendship with the governing official or body or to repay political debts. Trustees who campaigned purely for the prestige of the office have come onto library boards through election. But even trusteeship originating in such motives can, through the individual's awareness of the value of the library to society, take on an attitude of dedicated public service.

The trustee who is genuinely interested in carrying out his public trust, and who recognizes the importance of the library to the community, will taste the rewards of a deep personal involvement in his trusteeship. Recognizing that neither facile lip service nor perfunctory routine motions of performance meet the demands of his pledge, he will give the library his best in thought and effort. Nothing less, he knows, will be good enough.

It is as the result of this attitude that the trustee will then hold himself in readiness to take time to attend all board meetings, since the board crippled by nonattendance cannot properly function. Meetings of the board offer the individual trustee an opportunity to acquaint himself with the library's programs, plans, and problems. Alert to learn, the trustee must also be alert to his obligation to use what he learns in working out answers to the questions that arise in the board room. Writing in *North Country Libraries*, Evan Hill titles his

article "Can We Afford Bashful Trustees?" and answers his own question: "There is little room on a library board for a trustee who either is too bashful to implement the responsibilities of his trusteeship or who is satisfied with a board that is a social club of pleasant, socially acceptable, safe people." 4

Without being overaggressive or overactive to the detriment of the polity of the board, the trustee must expect to be articulate and informed in board meetings. Personal disagreements with other board members or the librarian, such as are inevitable in any free exchange of opinion, need to remain in the privacy of the board room. Publicly, the individual attitude of the trustee must in justice support the majority vote of the board, preserving a unified backing of policy and of the librarian's administration. Along with strong personal convictions, the trustee must maintain receptiveness toward the opinions of others with whom he serves.

The closed mind learns nothing, and a library trustee must be prepared to learn much if he is to have any value at all to the board and to the library. Much he will learn through receptiveness, and a great deal more of what he learns comes through practical experience in service. Trusteeship has in common with the Dodo's instructions on holding a caucus-race, the fact that the best way to explain it is to do it. Library trusteeship may involve a sum-total of trial and error before best results are obtained, but even the errors represent activity rather than apathy.

For a know-nothing board is a do-nothing board and calls uncomfortably to mind the strange image of a library board encountered here and there in the library literature: a group of puppets (amiable or otherwise), shepherded paternally by the librarian in and out of board meetings, and sent home. If there ever was a place for such a board of trustees, it is not in today's libraries.

"Decisions, decisions," laments the old joke. Yet decisions are precisely what the library board must make, in fields of finance, real estate, employment practices, tax legislation, and a very complex of similar technical areas. Naturally the board collectively will make use of competent professional advice in considering these problems, just as the members would do in conducting their personal business. But the decisions are solely the responsibility of the trustees.

In this era of rising costs and inflated real estate prices, the population explosion has forced many established libraries out of their old quarters. During this period of heavy taxation, the library—a tax

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supported institution—faces greater demands than ever before in history for increased services. Once-rural areas are becoming suburban; urban areas wither from overcrowding and die, and their population moves away. For economic reasons, smaller libraries, whose budgets can no longer bring ever-widening ends to meet, begin seriously to explore the advantages of joining a library system. County and regional libraries study maintenance costs of bookmobiles in comparison with other outlets for library services.

These and other library problems present no quick and easy solutions. Yet every one of these problems must be solved in some fashion by the decision of a library board. No; the board-room of a modern library offers no snug retreat for the bashful or ignorant Milquetoast trustee!

The attitude of the individual trustee, outside the board room, is one of relationships—internal relations with the librarian and staff members, and external or public relations with the community. The relationship of the individual with the librarian should reflect the collective attitude of the board in cordiality and cooperation, friendly consultation, and a respect for the librarian's authority in administration. The prestige of librarianship implicit in both position and person should be supported at all times.

Relationships with members of the staff should also be genial, friendly, and impersonal, recognizing that personnel problems are under the supervision of the librarian. Too-personal relationships are an intrusion into the library's administration, and the wise trustee steers wide of favoritism, hostility, and nepotism—three jagged rocks which have foundered many a bark of library harmony.

In public relations, the library trustee should remember that in the eyes of the community, he embodies the library's image, and it is his obligation to make that image favorably received. Particularly when the question of tax revenue or bond issue is before the community—in other words, when the library inevitably becomes involved in the political process—the library trustee individually becomes a public relations specialist working for the library's needs. Individual talents and contacts should be usefully brought into play. Speeches before organizations and clubs, appearances on radio and television, telephone calls to prospective voters—all form a part of the trustee's contribution to the success of the library program. In his article on bashful trustees, Evan Hill also says, "Generally, if trustees have a good case, and make a good case for their requests, they will get what

they request. We cannot get what we do not ask for. Good manners or bashfulness cannot get us what the community genuinely needs.”⁴ But a hard-driving library board, devoted individually and collectively to the library’s welfare, can!

Attitude alone, however, cannot be effective unless the individual has knowledge to back it up. For this reason, the second of the subjective responsibilities falling upon the library trustee is *education*—self-education in the duties of trusteeship. If the individual’s attitude toward the library is one of dedicated service, he will be eager to learn all he can in order to serve as well as he can.

Before the new trustee attends his first meeting and receives his orientation, he should at least have glanced through *A Handbook for Library Trustees*, edited by Marian Manley Winsor.⁵ This handy reference manual on all aspects of trusteeship should be another part of every library board’s reference shelf. Better still, a well-thumbed copy should be in the personal possession of every library trustee! As varying aspects of the problems confronting the library board occur, the trustee will want to refer to books on specific subjects of library policy, the library and the political process, Friends of the Library, and the like. A brief reading list appended to this article suggests titles of value in these and other fields.

Each trustee should be entirely familiar with the trustee handbook issued by his own state association, containing library laws of the state, qualifications for trustees, and valuable reference material on the operation of public libraries. If his state association has not published such a handbook, the alert trustee should make such a proposal the first order of business at the next annual meeting.

Although trustees, who are busy persons in their own right, cannot be expected to absorb all the current library literature, selective reading in periodicals will be very helpful. The *ALA Bulletin*,⁶ monthly publication of the American Library Association, goes to all ALA members, and nearly every issue contains one or more articles of particular interest to trustees. The American Library Trustee Association, a division of ALA, publishes quarterly *The Public Library Trustee*,⁷ a newsletter of the activities of the trustee division of the national association. Other periodicals of the library field should be on the subscription list of every library and should circulate briskly among board members.

One of the broadest fields of trustee education is membership and participation in trustee and library associations at all levels—state,

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regional, and national. If the trustee has a tendency toward a parochial viewpoint, fixed on his own library, he will find his horizons widened by activity in such organizations. He will find, moreover, that his state association is a tower of strength when support of state legislation affecting libraries is needed. Membership in regional associations is particularly valuable since trends in public institutions have a tendency to manifest themselves on a regional basis. Discussion panels, trustee workshops, and trustee-oriented programs at state and regional meetings are invaluable sources of trustee education.

Governors' Conferences of Library Trustees have proved another effective channel of trustee education. Oriented in a current aspect of the problems confronting trustees, these one-day statewide conferences of library trustees have been found to fill a definite need in states where they have been held—so much so, that many states have repeated the Conferences from year to year.

The American Library Trustee Association each year conducts a pre-Conference workshop for trustees just prior to the opening of the annual ALA Conference. These workshops present an intensive day-and-a-half or two-day program of discussion and participation on subjects of current trustee interest. Membership in ALTA, affording this and other programs of trustee education, offers the trustee contact with techniques and tools of trusteeship geared to the national picture.

Is it possible for the trustee to become overeducated in the technical and professional aspects of the library world? Surely not, since everything the trustee learns will enrich and strengthen his trusteeship. Yet, speaking before the Library Institute at the University of Chicago in August 1938, Clarence E. Sherman referred to "semiprofessionalizing trustees."⁸ Carried further his words imply that the trustee who loses his freshness of viewpoint along with his layman's approach is apt to lose at the same time his effectiveness in trusteeship.

It is as a *citizen* board of control that library trustees serve. Dwelling, so to speak, in two worlds at once, the trustee as layman serves as liaison between the community and the library world. His value as interpreter of the community's needs and desires is diminished if he attempts to range himself within the professional library world.

The trustee has another liaison responsibility toward the community and the library. Every librarian must be free to move on at any time toward improved professional and financial status. But the trustee, always a local resident, is rooted in the community. His business, professional, and social contacts, his experience, and his citizenship

activities are bound up in the community's life. The trustee is therefore an unparalleled interpreter between librarian and library and the community.

Indeed, the wise trustee always maintains his relationship with the librarian and the library on a parallel or complementary basis—never steering a collision course against either. Trustees and librarians cannot possibly supplant one another, and competition between them is, in Euclid's terse expression, "therefore absurd." Trustee-librarian relationships are not a game of one-upmanship. Rather, they should together engage in one-goalmanship—with their mutual goal the library's present good and future progress.

A third subjective responsibility presents itself to certain trustees—those whose term of service is not limited by law. Briefly, it is this: Shall I resign? Or shall I stay on the board, giving the library the benefit of my long experience, my knowledge of library affairs, and my practiced trusteeship? In many states, tenure is strictly limited by statute, as is the interval before reappointment or reelection is permissible. In other states, a trustee may be reappointed indefinitely or may run for the office, if elective, as often as he chooses. Each procedure has its adherents.

Continuity in office, it is felt, makes up in valuable experience and knowledge what may be lost in lack of new faces and fresh ideas. Certainly the trustee who has sincerely dedicated himself to learning as much as possible about his responsibilities and who has carried them out to the best of his capability may modestly but honestly assess himself as valuable to the library. On the other hand, proponents of the limited term of office argue that even when a valuable trustee's service is thus terminated, the library has still a staunch friend in the former trustee, at the same time absorbing new blood into the board.

Both of these arguments have a large measure of truth. But laws, operating impartially across human relationships, may produce the reverse of the effect desired. It is entirely possible that the limited term evicts the most valuable and knowledgeable trustee, leaving behind disorganization on the board. It is also entirely possible that the permissive tenure of service produces the stagnant thought so likely to result from a self-perpetuating board. In discussing this question Oliver Garceau has written: "The indefinite reappointment of board members leads to dry rot so frequently that it should be forbidden."⁹ And Carleton B. Joeckel wrote: "Of the value of continuity in library-board membership there can be little reasonable doubt. . . .

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But there is real difficulty in securing a nice balance between a reasonable amount of continuity and stagnation. It is quite possible that too long extended tenure of office may be fully as dangerous as terms which are too short.”¹⁰

There are many arguments both for and against limitation of trustee terms of service. Experience in many libraries, however, has proved that loss of valuable trustees from the board by legal limitation of tenure is offset by the absorption of new talent. When dates of expiration are staggered by overlapping terms, the board is never left wholly without experienced trustees, while it benefits at the same time from the lively thoughts and energies of new members.

When a library trustee's tenure has been extremely long, the question of his voluntary termination by resignation or refusal of reappointment is one for his individual conscience to decide. Certainly, in justice to his public trust, he should make this the occasion for self-examination and for objective appraisal of his *present* service. Regardless of how much and how good was his service twenty years ago, or last year, his most reliable yardstick is the honestly answered question: “How valuable am I to the library *now*?” If the trustee's character and attainments are such that he has been valuable to the board, they can be trusted to guide him to act rightly.

Many of the responsibilities of the trustee and the board are written into the statutes. Others are no less binding because unwritten. Speaking to the Pre-Conference Trustee Institute of ALTA in Cleveland, Ohio, July 8, 1961, Dr. Lowell A. Martin said: “We do have great human ability now on boards. The task is to release the power that exists. How? By all trustees—no, by each trustee, individually—coming first to *know* and then to *act*.”¹¹

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