

Honoring Michael Robinson

Read by Kim Paulsen
President, Riverton Free Library
On the Occasion of Mr. Robinson's Retirement Party
June 23, 2017

It says something special about our library directors, for we have had only eight in our history as a library.

- Our first, Miss Elizabeth Campbell, from 1899 until her death in 1930;
- In 1930, her sister, Antoinette Campbell became our second librarian;
- Campbell retired in 1944, and was replaced by Mrs. Richard Barclay;
- In 1962, Mrs. Quentin Ferguson became our library director;
- Mrs. Alice Myers was library director from 1968 until 1981. Alice retired from the post, but remained an active library member, living upstairs in the library's apartment;
- Donna Tarkington was the library's director for two years, from 1982 until 1984;
- Michael Robinson became the library's director in 1984. After the merge with the Burlington County Library System, he was elevated to become its Branch Manager, serving our library for 33 years, until June of 2017,

Not only has Michael held the post for the longest tenure, he has supervised (and sometimes endured!) so many changes in our little library!

Initially, as an Association Library, which is neither managed nor significantly funded by local municipalities nor the county, our funding sources were from donations and a "family membership" fee, with guidance provided by community members who were elected to a Board. Michael has been a team member to that Board, providing his experience and wisdom throughout the years. He has worked with so many different Executive Board members and faces in that Board. We appreciate his cooperation and leadership over the years.

With fluctuations in funding, Michael made magic with what was budgeted – purchasing books and magazines, providing outstanding programming for adults, and especially for children. He is fondly remembered for his doggedly working to solve reference questions! He has overseen the

many changes in technology that have been added to the library over the 33 years of his dedication to our library.

In September 2008, the Association embarked upon a survey of local residents, asking them for their input as to what they liked about our library, and what we could improve upon. *The Library Service Survey and Planning Document* was created to help the Board use our funding in the most effective way as well as to focus our services to do the best good for our Riverton and Palmyra communities. Of Note: Our patrons, overwhelmingly chose their greatest area of service satisfaction – it was with its librarian, Michael Robinson.

Not surprising.

We honor Michael today. He has been the friendly ambassador of the library to our community, effectively helping all who walk in the door, call on the phone, or reach out to the library through email.

As we said in this past year's *Newsletter and Annual Appeal*, we trust that he will not be a stranger to our library. While not living directly upstairs, like Alice Myers, we hope he will stay local and stay in touch, for we know that he loves our library, too!