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Orange County Library System Awarded Two 2026 Florida Library Association Honors

ORLANDO, Fla. (May 15, 2026) - Orange County Library System (OCLS) celebrates recognition earned by staff and community in the 2026 Florida Library Association (FLA) Awards: Outstanding New Librarian and Outstanding Citizen.

“We are proud to have our staff and community recognized with Florida Library Association Awards,” said Library Director and CEO Steve Powell. “Their work reflects the values we champion: removing barriers to service and opportunity and a commitment to being welcoming, connected and forward-thinking.”

Ashton Maggard, Florida Library Association’s 2026 Outstanding New Librarian, has consistently proven to be a staunch advocate and supporter of the library and its community since starting as a librarian in June 2023 at OCLS’s Fairview Shores branch.

Maggard demonstrates a keen understanding of community needs through his thoughtful collection management, meaningful programming, and dedication to creating accessible, engaging library experiences. He has planned and hosted a wide range of programs that attract strong attendance, including a continuing *Dungeons & Dragons* campaign and a companion fantasy minifigure painting program.

He supports colleagues and branch activities with book displays, program and resource development and mentorship. He is focused on making the library accessible, materials discoverable and programs memorable.

OCLS would not be the same without the tireless work of the Friends of the Orange County Library System (FOL). This year’s Outstanding Citizen Award recognizes FOL board member and longtime library supporter Maria Guerrero for her exceptional commitment to the library.

Guerrero’s support of OCLS spans more than 15 years, starting with small-scale female-led art exhibitions at the branches that evolved to become the Women in the Arts Expo, and later the establishment of the Community School of the Arts, which offered a tuition-free summer arts program

for children and adults in partnership with OCLS branches. These efforts saw the library as an arts incubator, emphasizing its role as a community resource and drawing new audiences to library spaces.

After years of advocating for OCLS, Guerrero joined the FOL board in 2024. Through her work with the Friends, she has strengthened community engagement, amplified fundraising efforts, and helped forge lasting partnerships, fostering a vibrant, supportive environment that benefits both the library and its patrons.

FLA will present these and other awards at the close of its annual conference in Orlando on May 15, 2026.

In 2025, OCLS's Steve Powell was named Administrator of the Year, and the Marketing and Public Relations team received the Communications Excellence Award.

Orange County Library System (OCLS) is a public library system serving the 1.5 million residents of Orange County, Fla. With 15 locations and a vast network of online and outreach resources, OCLS enriches lives through experiences and opportunities to learn, grow and connect. With free programs from technology classes for all ages to early literacy education and free online resources including language learning and homework help, an OCLS library card offers unlimited value. In 2026, two new locations and a mobile library will bring library value directly to more residents across the county. For more information, visit ocls.org, follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#), or download our app available now in your app store.

The Florida Library Association (FLA) is a statewide organization that promotes excellence in Florida libraries by advocating strongly for libraries and providing high quality professional and leadership development for a diverse community of library staff, volunteers and supporters. For more information, visit flalib.org.

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