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Reception is Nov. 17 at Cambridge Winery

Cornerstone Awards honor Mary Lou Sharpee & Julie Chase

Eight years ago the South Central Library System (SCLS) Foundation created the Cornerstone Award as a way to recognize exemplary individuals for their selfless dedication to libraries and the ideals they support.

The 2016 recipients of the Cornerstone Award are Julie Chase, former director of the Dane County Library Service and Middleton Public Library, and Mary Lou Sharpee, a community activist who has been involved in literacy efforts in the Columbus area for more than 40 years. You can make a contribution to honor Mary Lou and/or Julie at www.sclsfoundation.org.

The eighth annual Cornerstone Award reception will be held from 5-7 p.m. at Cambridge Winery (www.cambridgewinery.com), 700

Kenseth Way, in Cambridge, WI. There is no cost to attend, and there will be a cash bar and free refreshments. The 2015 event raised about \$13,500.

In addition to the Cornerstone Award presentations, library staff members, trustees, friends, or residents can nominate their library to recognize the amazing work public libraries do every day (see article below).

Mary Lou Sharpee

It was 42 years ago that Mary Lou Sharpee came to Columbus, WI,



Mary Lou Sharpee tutors Dan Howard of Beaver Dan in the programming room at Columbus Public Library. The two have been working together for 10 years.

and was blown away by the beauty of the area, its conservation efforts, the quality of the schools, and the community spirit. She served as the reading coordinator for the Columbus Public Schools, working with teachers, students, and community. Over those 42 years Mary Lou continued her efforts to improve literacy through the Columbus Literacy Council and Columbus Public Library.

Sharpee was one of the founding members of the Literacy Council when it formed in the late 1980s. She's still tutoring people who need help with reading, but these days she is also the group's president and chief troubleshooter, making sure everyone in need of assistance gets help, training tutors, and keeping the program on track.

"Mostly, what I like about the Lit-

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Award nomination deadline is Oct. 3

Public libraries do amazing things every day, touching the lives of residents in untold ways. In an effort to recognize these efforts by libraries, the South Central Library System (SCLS) Foundation each year presents three awards as part of the annual Cornerstone Award Reception. This year's event will be held Nov. 17, and the deadline for award nominations is Oct. 3, 2016, at 5 p.m.

Library staff members, trustees, friends, or residents can nominate their library to recognize the amazing work public libraries do every day while serving their communities. The awards and descriptions are listed below. To make an online nomination, visit www.sclsfoundation.org/cornerstone/awards.html and click on the award name.

- **Super Awesome Library Award**—For the library that was over-all awesome in 2016. Maybe they handled a tough situation with grace. Or took a new approach. Or found a lot of money under a

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Cornerstone—*from page 1*

eracy Council is the people,” Sharpee said. “The tutors are people I’ve known ever since I’ve been around Columbus, for 40 years, so they’re old friends. And I like working with people and teaching them to read.”

She also likes the relationships that develop between the tutors and the people they’re helping. “It’s not so much about what you know about teaching reading or phonics or whatever,” Sharpee said. “It’s the relationships that you build over time that really make a difference.”

As a Columbus Public Library trustee, Mary Lou participated in the ALA Libraries Transforming Communities training, which emphasized the library’s role in helping the com-

munity identify its aspirations and achieve its goals.

“Everyone from the Libraries Transforming Communities cohort, library people from all across the country, all loved Mary Lou’s infectious enthusiasm,” said Columbus Library Director Cindy Fesemyer. “She had made friends with everyone before I even knew their names. She’s kind of magical that way.”

Julie Chase

Julie Chase grew up in a small Minnesota town that did not have a public library, but the high school did have a fabulous librarian, Mrs. Quigley. Julie was inspired to become a librarian by observing and interacting with a librarian. In addition to band, newspaper, yearbook, and theater, Julie was active in Library Club.

After earning a Bachelor’s degree from UW-Eau Claire, Julie came to UW-Madison to earn her Masters Degree in Library Science. There she helped found a chapter of Women Library Workers, joined a women’s book group (which still meets monthly 30 years later, although only one woman has managed continuous membership) and began a life-long active membership in ALA.

After a short stint at North Texas State University, her Midwest roots continued to tug her back, and she accepted the position of Assistant Director of the Northwest Regional Library in Thief River Falls, MN.

Public library service proved to be both stimulating and comfortable—a great foundation for a career. Julie most appreciated the opportunity to make a difference in someone’s life multiple times a day. Maybe not big differences, maybe not life-changing, but helpful, useful, kind differences. She came to believe that public library service is, at its heart, about



Julie Chase

service to the individual and that any public library succeeds by providing services and programs that individuals want but other community agencies aren’t providing.

Julie returned to Wisconsin to become the Middleton Public Library Director, then in February of 1985 she was named Dane County director, and served in that capacity until she retired in December of 2014.

During her tenure at Dane County Library Service, Julie treasured her Saturdays and other shifts on the bookmobile, but increasingly found her time taken up with budgets, planning, and program development. She saw aid to libraries increase nearly 10-fold, worked to

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Foundation fund performance

As of July 31, 2016, the SCLS Foundation fund balance (including all library funds) was \$1,023,420.94.

The second quarter return was 1.79% and the one-year return was 2.12%. Investment performance since inception on Dec. 1, 2012, is 7.37% return.

If you’d like more information about investing with the SCLS Foundation, please contact Martha Van Pelt, SCLS Director.

Awards

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rock and did something really cool with it. Or got a lot of local support and kudos because they play well with others. Or are just plain super awesome every day.

- **Program Wizard Award**—For a super creative, innovative and fun library program created by library staff. In the library or out. For babies or seniors or anyone in between. A one-off or a regular series. If Dumbledore thinks it’s worthy of Wizard status, nominate it!
- **Giddy Up Partner Award**—For those strong community partnerships that add value to the library and the community as a whole. It takes two, baby! Or three... or four. Nominate the library and its partner(s) and describe the amazing stuff they’re doing together.

Foundation supports library fundraising workshop

Each year the South Central Library System (SCLS) Foundation supports projects that benefit member libraries, and in 2016 Foundation funds are being used to offer a special all-day fundraising and development workshop.

The presenter for the morning portion of the day will be Library Strategies, St. Paul, MN, which was created in response to increasing requests of The Friends of the Saint Paul Public Library for advice and consulting support from libraries across the country.

The workshop will cover an overview of the major areas of development, the roles and responsibilities of

the Library Board and development staff, best practices of Friends and Foundations, keys to effective fundraising in libraries, issues or challenges facing the library in fundraising, and future directions for libraries in the area of development.

The afternoon session will feature a panel discussion with library directors and others supporters who have recently conducted major fundraising campaigns to support library projects

The all-day workshop will be held on Thursday, Oct. 31, 2016, at Olbrich Gardens, Madison.

Julie Chase—*from page 2*

create a reimbursement program for libraries' facility costs, and purchased two new bookmobiles and secured funding for a third. She also had success securing many private and public grants, including a challenge grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities that was leveraged to secure donations for Beyond the Page, an endowment that continues to fund library programming in Dane County. She credits her success, such as it was, to dedicated colleagues and employ-

ees, supportive and committed library board members, and elected officials who understand that their constituents value library services and are willing to be taxed for them.

"One thing I most appreciate about Julie Chase is her willingness to skip the glory and just get the job done," said Peter Hamon, former SCLS Director and current Foundation Board Treasurer. "For example, Julie went beyond simply supporting the idea of the SCLS foundation, and actually did most of the laborious groundwork required to make it into a 501(c)(3) organization. By so

doing, Julie is actually more responsible for the foundation as it currently exists than almost anyone else who was involved during those early days."

Foundation contributors

These people have donated to the SCLS Foundation since March 1, 2016. The category in which each is listed represents their total Foundation contribution to date.

Benefactor – \$9,999 - \$5,000

Delta Properties

Stewards – \$4,999 - \$1,000

Bob Blitzke & Jane Grogan
Wegner CPAs

Advocates – \$999 - \$500

John Erikson, Hausmann Insurance

Friends – \$249 - \$100

Mary Huset

Sponsors – \$49 - \$1

Nancy Stoller

Celebrations

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Awesome Library Award, the Giddy Up Partner Award and the Program Wizard Award.

We will raise our glasses to Mary Lou, Julie, our three award-winning libraries and the all-around awesomeness of our SCLS libraries at this year's Cornerstone Award Celebration, to be held on Thursday, Nov. 17 at the Cambridge Winery. You'll find the details elsewhere in this newsletter. I'll see you there!

A map to the Cambridge Winery is available at <https://goo.gl/maps/1CDSZ7ZSt612>.

SCLS Foundation Member Libraries

- Adams County Library
- Angie W. Cox Public Library (Pardeeville)
- Black Earth Public Library
- Brodhead Memorial Public Library
- Friends of the Cambridge Community Library
- Columbus Public Library
- Friends of Deerfield Public Library
- Friends of McFarland Library
- Jane Morgan Memorial Library (Cambria)
- LaValle Public Library
- Lester Public Library of Arpin
- Lodi Woman's Club Public Library
- Marshfield Public Library Foundation
- Mazomanie Free Library
- Monroe Public Library
- Reedsburg Public Library
- SCLS Foundation
- Wyocena Public Library

 *South Central Library System Foundation*

Celebrations are Important...and FUN!

by **Cindy Fesemyer, President, SCLS Foundation**
and Director of Columbus Public Library

Public libraries do so much, every day, for so many different people. We say “yes” to almost everything that comes our way. That’s our job and we do it well.

We hold community traditions tight, like maintaining local history collections and preserving back copies of local newspapers. We host meetings of our local Historical Society chapters. We throw events that celebrate the strong histories upon which many of our communities were founded.

We innovate constantly, like vetting and adopting new technologies and responding to community needs in real time. We host community listening sessions with an ear out for the next new thing. We share our resources across county and library system borders.

It’s no small feat to simultaneously honor tradition and innovatively adapt. Libraries are superstars at maintaining this balance and instigating change, all at the same

time. And I say that’s truly something to celebrate!

Please join me as we honor two amazing women who have each given of themselves for the communities they

serve. The 2016 Cornerstone Awards go to Julie Chase and Mary Lou Sharpee. Julie is a city mouse who innovated constantly as the former and long-time Director of the Dane County Library Service. Mary Lou Sharpee is a country mouse who honors our libraries’ roots by promoting literacy skills for all via the Columbus Literacy Council, a program of the Columbus Public Library. Each woman is amazing and vibrant in her own right.

Together, they represent the diversity of services provided by libraries each and every day.

We all know we need to celebrate our successes; it’s literally good for us—our morale, our health, our creativity! Please mark your calendar today and make sure you are there to help honor both Julie and Mary Lou, as well as the three SCLS libraries that will be awarded the Super



Cindy Fesemyer