



**MILWAUKEE**  
PUBLIC LIBRARY

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**Joan R. Johnson Confirmed as Milwaukee Public Library Director  
and City Librarian**

MILWAUKEE (September 23, 2020) – The appointment of Joan R. Johnson to serve as Milwaukee Public Library Director and City Librarian by Mayor Tom Barrett was confirmed by the Milwaukee Common Council on Tuesday, September 22, 2020. Johnson was the Deputy Director of the Milwaukee Public Library System since March of 2009. She succeeds Paula A. Kiely who retired on August 28, 2020 and will take her place in MPL’s 142-year history as its 12<sup>th</sup> Director, 4<sup>th</sup> woman to lead the library and the first African American in this role. Johnson has been with MPL since 2006 when she came from Seattle where she served as a Branch Manager and a Department Director.

**“I am looking forward to working with Joan as she guides the Milwaukee Public Library in providing our city’s residents with equitable access to library resources,”** said Mayor Tom Barrett. **“Joan is committed to the people of Milwaukee and to the library’s increasingly innovative programming and collaborative solutions to today’s challenges. Her leadership will ensure the continuation of the library’s mission to help people read, learn and connect.”**

Johnson is well-known and respected in the library field in the state of Wisconsin as a presenter and collaborator with other systems. She is also known nationally for her work to enact Library NOW, an historic partnership that gives digital library cards to every student in MPS and beyond. Johnson also serves on the board of the Westtown Association.

Johnson has a Bachelor of Science degree from the University of Wisconsin-Madison and received her Master of Librarianship from the University of Washington. Born in Gary, Indiana, Johnson moved to the City of Milwaukee as a child and is a graduate of Milwaukee Public Schools. Johnson lives in the Washington Heights neighborhood.

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**About the Milwaukee Public Library**

Milwaukee Public Library is an anchor institution that helps build healthy families and vibrant neighborhoods – the foundation of a strong Milwaukee. Since 1878, Milwaukee Public Library has been a free provider of education and information for residents of Milwaukee and beyond. With 14 locations, and nearly three million items in circulation, MPL offers free access to a rich collection of materials both physical and digital, access to technology, classes, exhibitions, programming and more. From toddlers to scholars, MPL serves more than one million patrons who come through its doors annually and many more around the globe who use its resources at [www.mpl.org](http://www.mpl.org). To offer this wide array of free programming, MPL relies on both public and private funding. Learn more about how to support Milwaukee Public Library at [mpl.org/support](http://mpl.org/support).