

Introduced by: Councilmember Seamens

RESOLUTION 2021-5

RESOLUTION HONORING ELLEN ARNOLD-ROBBINS UPON HER RETIREMENT AS LIBRARY DIRECTOR

- WHEREAS, Ellen Arnold-Robbins retired on March 1, 2021 after 48 years of working at the Takoma Park Maryland Library, including 38 years as the Library Director; and
- WHEREAS, during her tenure as Takoma Park Maryland Library Director, the Library greatly increased both the number of patrons and the circulation of books and other materials; and
- WHEREAS, mirroring the City of Takoma Park's pride in being a diverse community, Ellen Arnold-Robbins built a Library collection filled with books and other materials in which diverse voices are amplified and play an important role; and
- WHEREAS, under the direction of Library Director Ellen Arnold-Robbins, the Takoma Park Maryland Library has been a champion of intellectual freedom, including celebrating Banned Books Week each year, and also initiating a Banned Books Club for kids, for which the Library won the American Library Association's prestigious John Phillip Immroth Award, given for contributions to intellectual freedom;
- WHEREAS, Ellen Arnold-Robbins led, with staff assistance, the Library's automation, including the switch to a computerized catalog, the creation of our Library web page, the introduction of public computers, and the establishment of the Library's Computer Learning Center; and
- WHEREAS, over the past two decades, the Library has become known for having the area's best library collection of graphic novels for kids and adults, curated by Library Associate Dave Burbank under the supervision of Ellen Arnold-Robbins; and
- WHEREAS, with assistance from then-Children's Librarian Anne Schwartz Delibert, Ellen Arnold-Robbins oversaw the start of public programs at the Library for two-year-olds when such programs for young children were still a novelty in the library world; since then the Library has added programs for both babies and one-year-olds in which the crucial importance of early literacy is spotlighted and modeled for parents and caregivers; and
- WHEREAS, in conjunction with Library patrons, Ellen Arnold-Robbins shepherded the reincarnation of the Friends of the Takoma Park Library, now a flourishing organization with deep roots in the Takoma Park community and a mission to illuminate the importance of books and reading; and

WHEREAS, with help from Andy Cincotta, Patti Mallin and Tom Roberts, Ellen Arnold-Robbins aided in the creation of the Friends of the Takoma Park Maryland Library's twice-annual fund-raising book sales, which have been hugely popular with local book lovers and have allowed the Library to offer many special programs such as Spanish Circle Time, French Circle Time and the SummerQuest and WinterQuest reading programs; and

WHEREAS, the Friends of the Takoma Park Maryland Library's highly-successful book clubs for adults, spearheaded by Merrill Leffler and continued by Phil Schewe and Tim Rahn, were promoted by Library Director Ellen Arnold-Robbins; and

WHEREAS, Ellen Arnold-Robbins supported her staff's national and regional leadership roles, such as Children and Young Adult Librarian Karen MacPherson's participation in the Caldecott Awards program and in writing about children's resources for the *Washington Post*; and

WHEREAS, as Library Director, Ellen Arnold-Robbins played a pioneering role, deftly utilizing the Library's status as one of the few independent municipal libraries in Maryland, to offer unique programs to the Takoma Park community, including the annual programs led by noted storyteller Candace Wolf, Tomas "Eaglebear" Shash, and the Foggy Bottom Morris Men; the Favorite Poem Evening, and the Takoma Park Film Festival, as well as one-of-a-kind programs such as the evening of original dance in the Library – featuring Library staff as well as others – choreographed by the Liz Lerman Dance Exchange; and

WHEREAS, under the guidance of Ellen Arnold-Robbins, the Library joined in a successful partnership with Politics and Prose Bookstore in 2013 that has brought numerous programs to the Takoma Park community featuring illustrious children's authors and illustrators; and

WHEREAS, when the Library building was forced to close on March 13, 2020 because of the pandemic, Library staff, led by Ellen Arnold-Robbins, established the "Books to Go" curbside pickup service, through which more than 15,000 books and other materials have been checked out by patrons in the first eight months of the program; and

WHEREAS, in the decades she served as director, Ellen Arnold-Robbins truly shaped the Takoma Park Maryland Library into the beloved and dynamic community treasure and hub it is today.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Council of the City of Takoma Park gratefully acknowledges, and extends deep thanks for, the unwavering service and commitment of Ellen Arnold-Robbins in her 38 years as director of the Takoma Park Maryland Library.

Adopted this 3rd day of March, 2021.