



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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ULC Press Contact

Curtis Rogers
202-750-8658

crogers@urbanlibraries.org

Former Nashville Mayor Joins the Urban Libraries Council Executive Board

ULC Announces New Executive Board Member and Officers

WASHINGTON – The Urban Libraries Council has elected former Mayor of Nashville Karl Dean as a new member of the ULC Executive Board. Dean began his two-year term on the ULC Executive Board following a vote by ULC members – who represent top public libraries from across the U.S. and Canada – during a meeting held on June 22.

“We are honored to have Mayor Dean join the ULC Executive Board,” said ULC President and CEO Susan Benton. “He is a visionary leader who truly understands what it takes to strengthen 21st-century urban centers, including the critical value of public libraries as partners to city and county governments.”

At the June 22 meeting, ULC members also elected a new slate of Executive Board officers who will serve one-year terms:

- **Vickery Bowles** (City Librarian, Toronto Public Library) as Chair
- **Richard Reyes-Gavilan** (Executive Director, DC Public Library) as Vice-Chair/Chair-Elect
- **Brandon Neal** (Senior Counsel, Law Department of Wells Fargo & Company; Trustee, Charlotte Mecklenburg Library) as Secretary/Treasurer
- **Dr. Rhea Brown Lawson** (Executive Director, Houston Public Library) as Immediate Past Chair

“I am thrilled to be starting my term as Chair of the ULC Executive Board,” said Bowles. “As library leaders, we have important work to do. Now more than ever, we need to work together to put a spotlight on the issues challenging our core beliefs and values, including growing economic and social divides, threats to our democratic freedoms and the proliferation of misinformation in the digital age.”

Below is biographical information about ULC's new Executive Board member and officers. Additional information about the ULC Executive Board can be found at urbanlibraries.org.

Karl Dean served as the sixth mayor of the Metropolitan Government of Nashville and Davidson County. Through his strong leadership during his two terms in office, Nashville is now strategically positioned for economic growth in the present and well into the future as a city offering affordability, high quality of life and a talented workforce. Dean first held public office when he was elected as Nashville's Public Defender in 1990. He served as Metro Law Director from 1999 to January 2007, when he resigned to run for the office of mayor. Since leaving office in September 2015, Dean began teaching at Belmont University as a distinguished visiting professor of history and political science. He also joined Boston University in January 2016 as the first "Initiative on Cities Mayor in Residence." And he joined the ranks of Boston University faculty as a visiting professor in the Department of Political Science with a focus on urban studies.

Vickery Bowles is the city librarian at Toronto Public Library, a 100-branch library system serving 2.7 million people. She believes passionately in the difference public libraries make in the lives of individuals, communities and cities. Bowles has worked in a number of leadership positions, spearheading service development including with Toronto's high needs and diverse communities to develop library-led solutions that support capacity building, civic engagement and settlement. She is currently working to advance TPL's new strategic plan and its digital strategies that support new service models, mobility, e-learning and innovation.

Richard Reyes-Gavilan was appointed executive director of the DC Public Library in January 2014. He oversees a campus of 26 libraries, a staff of 600 and an annual operating budget of \$57 million. In Fiscal Year 2015 over 4.2 million people visited public libraries in D.C., a number that exceeds the combined home attendance of D.C.'s professional baseball, hockey and men's basketball teams. He is responsible for oversight of an ambitious capital improvement plan that includes almost \$300 million budgeted over the next six years for branches designed by renowned architects Bing Thom, TEN Arquitectos and others. Most important among the projects for which he is responsible is the full modernization of the landmarked Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Library, D.C.'s only building designed by Ludwig Mies van der Rohe and Mies' only realized library in the world.

Dr. Rhea Brown Lawson has served as director of libraries of the Houston Public Library since 2005. HPL is the largest public library in the state of Texas, serving over 2.2 million people of diverse backgrounds through a network of 42 locations. Under her leadership, HPL has earned over 30 prestigious local, state and national awards for service, innovation and building projects. The system is continuously evolving and moving forward a comprehensive platform of innovative library services and programs to meet the rapidly changing needs of customers and the virtual environment. A strong and passionate advocate for public libraries, Lawson is keenly focused on ensuring that public libraries remain highly visible and vibrant organizations that provide leadership for, and remain essential to the quality of life in, their communities. Lawson serves on a number of professional and civic boards and committees.

Brandon Neal is a senior counsel in the Law Department of Wells Fargo & Company in Charlotte, N.C. Neal serves as a Wells Fargo nominee on the National Urban League's board of trustees, serves on the

leadership team of the Wells Fargo My Generation Team Member Network and has served as Wells Fargo's representative member of the 2014 Fellows Program of the Leadership Council on Legal Diversity. He currently serves on the board of directors of the Bechtler Museum of Modern Art, Bechtler Young Visionaries, N.C. Center for Nonprofits and Duke Law Alumni, and he currently chairs the Firebird Society. In addition to his board service, he serves on the Unite Charlotte Advisory Council, serves as the Charlotte Region Lead for Duke Black Alumni, served on the Men's Shelter Charlotte's Capital Campaign Cabinet and is involved in numerous other community endeavors. He received his Bachelor of Science degree in business administration from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and his Juris Doctor from Duke University School of Law.

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About the Urban Libraries Council

The Urban Libraries Council, founded in 1971, is the voice for public libraries and the force that inspires them to evolve. ULC creates the tools, techniques and ideas to make ongoing improvements and upgrades in services and technology. ULC also speaks loudly and clearly about the value public libraries bring to communities, and secures funding for research that results in the development of new programs and services. And by serving as a forum for library leadership, ULC produces innovative ideas and leading practices that ensure community impact.