



DURHAM COUNTY
Library

FISCAL YEAR 2025

ANNUAL REPORT

Stanford L. Warren Edition

WELCOME

Library Executive Leadership Team

For over a century, our Stanford L. Warren Branch Library has stood as more than just a building of brick, stone, and shelves. It has been a gathering place, a safe harbor for ideas, and a witness to our community's history. Generations have passed through its doors—students seeking knowledge, families enjoying storytime, neighbors gathering for thoughtful conversation and sharing of local news—each adding their chapter to our shared story. Reopening in December 2024 after extensive renovations means that future generations will write their own chapters of the Stanford L. Warren story. The library has always been, and will continue to be, a living bridge between the past and the present.

When our doors first opened, the world outside looked very different, yet the mission was the same: to connect people through access to information, culture, and community. In those early years, our reading areas provided warmth in the winter, a quiet refuge for study, and a place where curiosity was celebrated. The library's beautiful architecture and well-worn tables became a second home for many—a place where the hum of turning pages mixed with the laughter of friends and neighbors.

Today, while the tools of learning have evolved, the heart of our work remains unchanged. We continue to bring people together through shared resources, educational programs, and cultural events. Whether someone comes to borrow a book, attend a lecture, learn a new skill, or simply enjoy a moment of peace in a familiar space, they are part of the same tradition that began decades ago. Our historic walls now shelter both print and digital worlds, uniting old and new forms of discovery.

As we look to the future, we honor our past. This library is more than a reservoir of knowledge—it is a testament to what happens when a community values connection, literacy, and discovery. Together, we will ensure that it remains a place where stories are not only read, but also lived, shared, and remembered for generations to come.



Stephanie Fennell
Interim Director/Deputy Director



Sandra Lovely
Assistant Director,
Planning & Facilities



Katherine Makens
Assistant Director,
Resources & Finance



Stephanie Bonestell
Public Relations Officer



Lakesia Farmer
Library Human Resources



David Green
Information Technology Manager

The story of publicly supported libraries in Durham and the state begins with a June 1895 meeting of the Canterbury Club, at which the literary group debated the question of how club members could contribute to their young city's development. Edwin Mims, professor of English at Trinity College (now Duke University), suggested a public library.

**February 10,
1898**

Durham Public Library opened its doors in Durham's downtown Five Points neighborhood.

Lalla Ruth Carr, club member and daughter of prominent Durhamite Julian S. Carr, sold her father on the idea. He and his wife Nannie G. Carr donated a lot worth \$2,500 at Durham's Five Points in addition to Thomas H. Martin and his wife donating

an adjacent lot worth \$500. Durham Public Library opened on February 10, 1898, without help from national philanthropic organizations and in a region of the country which at that time was largely poor, rural, and illiterate—an amazing feat.



1913

Durham's African American library owed its existence to the vision and commitment of one person: Dr. Aaron McDuffie Moore.



In 1913, Moore set up a 799-volume library in the basement of White Rock Baptist Church, where he was a Sunday school teacher. The library remained in the church for three years. Moore's business partner, John Merrick, owned a building on the corner of Fayetteville and Pettigrew Streets, which he agreed to rent to the library. On August 14, 1916, the Durham Colored Library—the second library for African Americans in the state—opened its doors to the public with Hattie B. Wooten as its first librarian.



1923

Dr. Stanford L. Warren

Dr. Stanford L. Warren, a prominent, forward-thinking physician and businessman, became president of the Durham Colored Library Board of Trustees in 1923. Through the efforts of Warren, other board members,

and Hattie Wooten, the Durham Colored Library soon became a central community institution, with Wooten spreading the word about the library and developing numerous programs.



In 1932, Selena Warren Wheeler became director of the Durham Colored Library. She was the daughter of Stanford Warren and wife of John H. Wheeler, trustee and secretary of the library board from 1931 to 1966 and a lifetime library advocate. Through the efforts of these three, Durham's African American library expanded its programs, built a branch location, extended its countywide outreach, and secured significant increases in appropriations from local authorities.

1932
Selena Warren Wheeler

1939
Stanford L. Warren Library

In 1939, Stanford Warren donated \$4,000 to purchase a lot at the corner of Fayetteville and Umstead streets for a new library building. The opening of the Stanford L. Warren Library on January 17, 1940, brought about a dramatic expansion of services. The new library contained a separate children's room, and on

Mrs. Wheeler's advice, the library designated its collection of books on and by African Americans as a non-circulating special collection. This collection is still available for viewing today at the Stanford L. Warren Branch Library.

Bookmobile services have played a pivotal role in servicing our community since the early days of libraries.



Stanford L. Warren Library introduced bookmobile services

Mobile Services, Then and Now

1942

Bookmobiles extend the reach of library services far beyond the walls of a building. For rural communities, neighborhoods without nearby library locations, or individuals with limited transportation, the bookmobile is more than a traveling library—it is a lifeline to learning, literacy, and connection. By bringing resources directly to where people live, work, and gather, bookmobiles break down barriers and make the library truly accessible to all.

Beyond lending books, bookmobiles serve as mobile community hubs. They introduce children to the joy of reading, support lifelong learning for adults, and foster connections between neighbors. Whether it's delivering early literacy programs at daycare facilities, providing Wi-Fi access in remote areas, or hosting pop-up events in local parks, bookmobiles adapt to meet the unique needs of each community they serve. In doing so, they embody the library's mission to connect, inspire, and empower one stop at a time.





From its earliest days, Durham County Library has recognized that knowledge belongs to everyone. Historically, libraries offered free access to books, newspapers, and community programs at a time when such resources were often out of reach. Many also pioneered services for the differently abled. This included items such as the braille collection, ensuring that vision loss did not mean a loss of access to information or the joy of reading.

The Library Corner for the Blind was introduced
Accessibility Services, Then and Now

1949



Today, accessibility remains at the heart of Durham County Library's mission, though the definition has expanded. In addition to offering physical access to books and spaces, libraries now ensure that digital resources, assistive technologies, multilingual materials, and inclusive programming meet the needs of every patron. From wheelchair ramps to online catalogs, from large-print books to virtual programs, libraries adapt to include everyone. Just as in the past, the goal is the same—to create a welcoming place where all people can learn, connect, and thrive.

DID YOU KNOW?

Aaron McDuffie Moore's daughter, Lyda Moore, created Stanford L. Warren's Library Corner for the Blind with John C. Washington. It provided information, resources, and recreational opportunities for blind Durhamites. The pair also founded the Negro Braille Magazine.

DID YOU KNOW?

Along with other programming at Stanford L. Warren, in 1953 The American Heritage Series was created. This was a series of periodic community meetings jointly sponsored by the American Library Association, the North Carolina Library Commission, and local libraries. Each meeting centered on a theme of contemporary social life discussed within the context of traditional American values.



Summer Reading at the Library Then and Now

Mid-
1900s

Summer reading programs help prevent the “summer slide” in reading skills by keeping children and teens learning during the school break. Through reading, themed activities, challenges, and prizes, these programs encourage a lifelong love of books and learning. They also give families a reason to visit the library together, building positive memories around reading and turning the library into a vibrant summer gathering place.

Summer reading is proof that literacy is not just an academic skill, but a shared source of joy and connection.



WELCOME to STANFORD L. WARREN LIBRARY

Reopening our historic Stanford L. Warren Branch Library in December of 2024 after three years of closure due to water intrusion is more than the return of a building—it is the restoration of a cornerstone of community life. For over a century, this library has been a place where neighbors gather, students learn, and history is preserved. The branch's closing for repairs and renovations left a temporary gap in the cultural and educational fabric of Durham County. The reopening marked not only the repair of bricks and mortar, but also the revival of a space where people connect, ideas flourish, and our shared heritage is celebrated.

The careful restoration ensured the library's historic beauty remains intact while safeguarding it against future damage. By reopening its doors, we honor the generations who built and sustained this institution, and we reaffirm our commitment to those who will rely on it in the decades ahead. The return of this beloved landmark signals resilience, renewal, and the enduring importance of preserving community spaces for learning, inspiration, and belonging.



Reopening of Stanford L. Warren Branch Library

2024

2025

Programs at the New Stanford L. Warren Branch Library

✓ **Build Your Own Sensory Kit!**

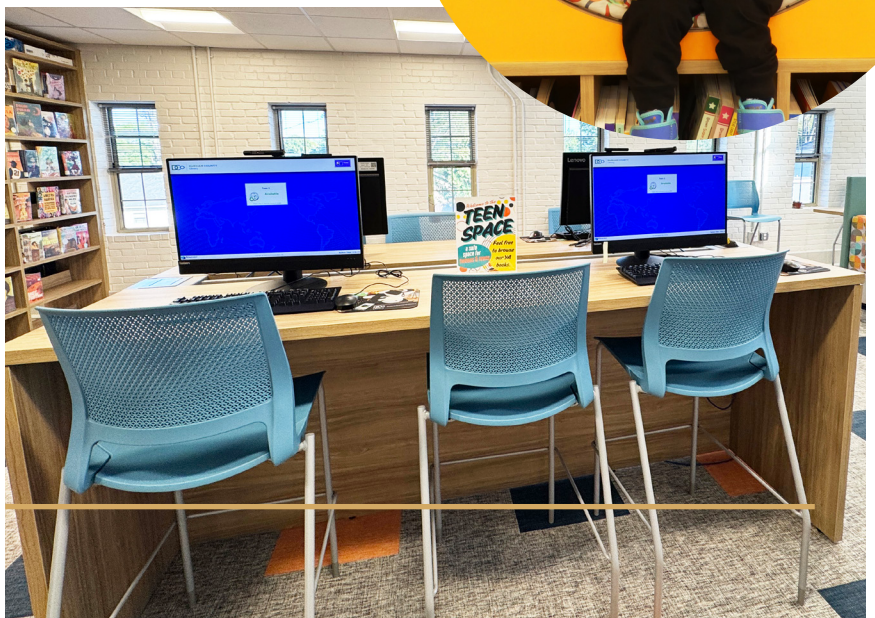
With the generous support of the Friends of the Durham Library, attendees of this program crafted their own sensory kits to take home with them. The young participants' kits included textured stickers, sensory bracelets with taste-safe beads, tactile boards, and fidgets like pop tubes and squeeze balls.

✓ **Cynthia Hakins, Art Notes**

For over half a century, artist Cynthia Hawkins has investigated the potential of abstract painting. During her event, Hawkins discussed her creative process and career during the blossoming of New York City's African American gallery scene in the 1970s and 1980s with art historian and scholar Dr. Amalia Amaki.

✓ **The Mirror Project**

With the help of Stanford L. Warren's teen librarians, participants created personalized mirrors that encouraged them to look at themselves from new angles. The teens also wrote letters to their past selves to highlight all they have accomplished in their lives so far.



The Library Family

Durham County Library is proud to have the support of the organizations that make up the Durham County Library Family. The Board of Trustees, the Durham Library Foundation, and the Friends of the Durham Library all play a role in supporting the mission of Durham County Library.

Durham Library Foundation

The Durham Library Foundation is a 501(c)(3) organization that supports the library through fundraising for innovative programs and services.

President
Arthur Rodgers

DurhamLibraryFoundation.org



Friends of the Durham Library

The Friends of the Durham Library support our team members with grants and continuing education scholarships for staff.

President
Bruce Mitchell

FODLNC.org



Library Board of Trustees

Our Board of Trustees serves in an advisory role for Durham County Library leadership.

Chair
Ann McLain



Financials



Collections
\$1,943,581



Salaries
\$8,393,388



Library IT
\$474,978



Benefits
\$2,031,640



Other Operating
\$921,814

Statistics



Door Count



525,540

A 5% increase over the prior year



Computer Sessions



91,015

Every public computer was used daily



Questions Answered



298,793

This equates to almost 1,000 questions a day



Circulation

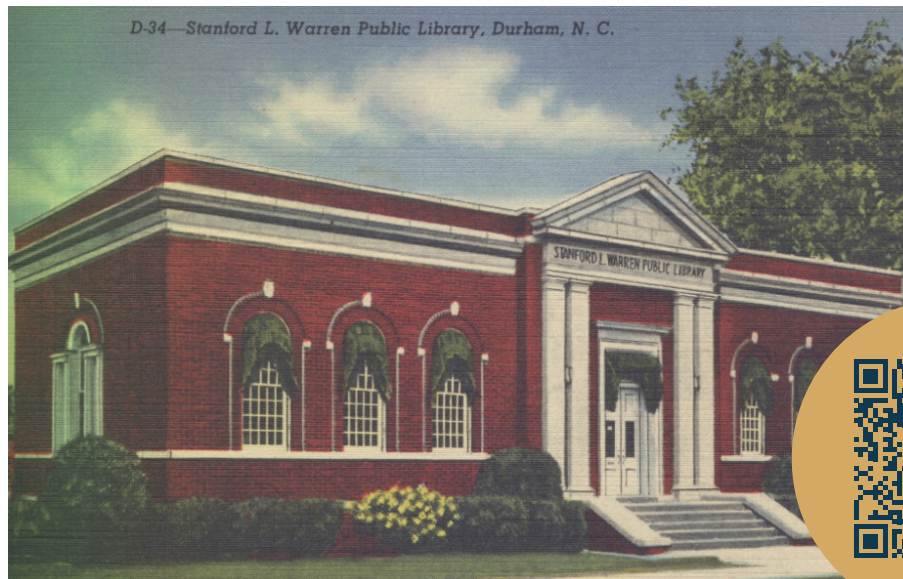


3,487,000

A year over year increase of 7%

Stanford L. Warren Branch Library Digital Exhibit

The North Carolina Collection preserves and makes available materials related to the history of Durham and offers a wealth of information about North Carolina-related topics. Though physically located in its own space in Main Library, the North Carolina Collection also produces digital collections and exhibits. One of these digital exhibits covers the history of our Stanford L. Warren Branch Library.



Scan the QR code
to explore the exhibit!

Locations

Main Library

300 N. Roxboro St., Durham, NC 27701, 919-560-0100

East Regional Library

211 Lick Creek Ln., Durham, NC 27703, 919-560-0862

North Regional Library

221 Milton Rd., Durham, NC 27712, 919-560-0236

South Regional Library

4505 S. Alston Ave., Durham, NC 27713, 919-560-7409

Southwest Regional Library

3605 Shannon Rd., Durham, NC 27707, 919-560-8593

Stanford L. Warren Branch Library

1201 Fayetteville St., Durham, NC 27707, 919-560-0270

Bragtown Branch Library

3200 Dearborn Dr., Durham, NC 27704, 919-560-0210



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