



I am Rinny Lakin, SSD Chair, and I have the honor of presenting the OLA Distinguished Service Award to Margaret Harmon-Myers, who unfortunately wasn't able to attend. But that means I get to take ALL of the time allotted to her in my speech, and I intend to take it in full.

Before I do that, I want to recognize the current SSD Board and their supportive managers who make their participation possible.

Jordan Popoff, SSD Treasurer from The Curry Public Library in Gold Beach. Her awesome Director, Jeremy Skinner has been very supportive and involved in OLA leadership also.

Chelsey Comstock. SSD Secretary of Newport Public Library, her Director is Laura Kimberly who has been a big supporter of Chelsey's involvement and has been deeply involved in OLA as well.

Sara Trott, our Digital Communications Specialist, from Oregon State University. Her supervisor is Steve Weber, who is part of a supportive leadership team.

Eufrosina Cervantes Santos, Member at Large, from Multnomah County. Her current supervisor is Raul Vergana Barria.

Myself and Deanna Kohn, our archivist, have the same Manager, Amy Miller. That makes her doubly supportive and she is also involved in OLA leadership!

We recently had a Member at Large from Multnomah County. It has been a very MCL heavy board.

We in SSD could not think of a better recipient of this award than Margaret Harmon-Myers and we had planned to nominate her in 2020, but things happened and what we really wanted was to give her this in person.

I know what you are thinking, what is SSD? You cannot understand Margaret's worthiness for this honor, without understanding SSD.

# What's SSD?

## Support Staff Division

- **We ARE library support staff**
- **We DO support library staff**
- **We DON'T support: staff division**

Solid-state drive?  
Google can't be wrong,  
right?

Systems, signals and  
devices? But google  
sends me to their  
conference!

SSD is Support Staff Division, we are one of the seven divisions of OLA.

If you work in a library and you are not a capital "L" Librarian or a director, will you indulge me and raise your hand?

Before SSD, which started as a round table, OLA was a Librarian and Directors club.

SSD has fought for decades to expand the OLA tent and create opportunities for all of Oregon's Library staff regardless of job title, education and duties, and that is why you see so many support staff here today. The name may feel old timey, but it comes from ALA. It was settled on after discarding more offensive feeling terms like paraprofessional (we are all professionals). My now retired co-worker, Dale Ivan, reminds us in his new book "A Shush Before Dying," a highly researched 1980's library mystery series, that support staff is also much better term than "paralibrarian."

We ARE library support staff  
We DO support library staff  
We don't support: staff division



## Years of exceptional service

- Oregon Librarian or **Library Staff Member**
- 15+ years in the library profession (10 in Oregon)
- Current member of OLA



But this is about the OLA Distinguished Service award!

Margaret more than meets the criteria!

**Years of exceptional service.** Margaret poured at least 13 years into SSD and OLA!

**An Oregon Librarian or Library Staff Member?** *I think they can remove librarian now, since we are all Library Staff Members.* At least 15 years, 10 in Oregon.

Margaret worked in the Eugene Public Library system for 22 years!

\*Current OLA member, well she \*just\* retired, so we will give her a break on this one.

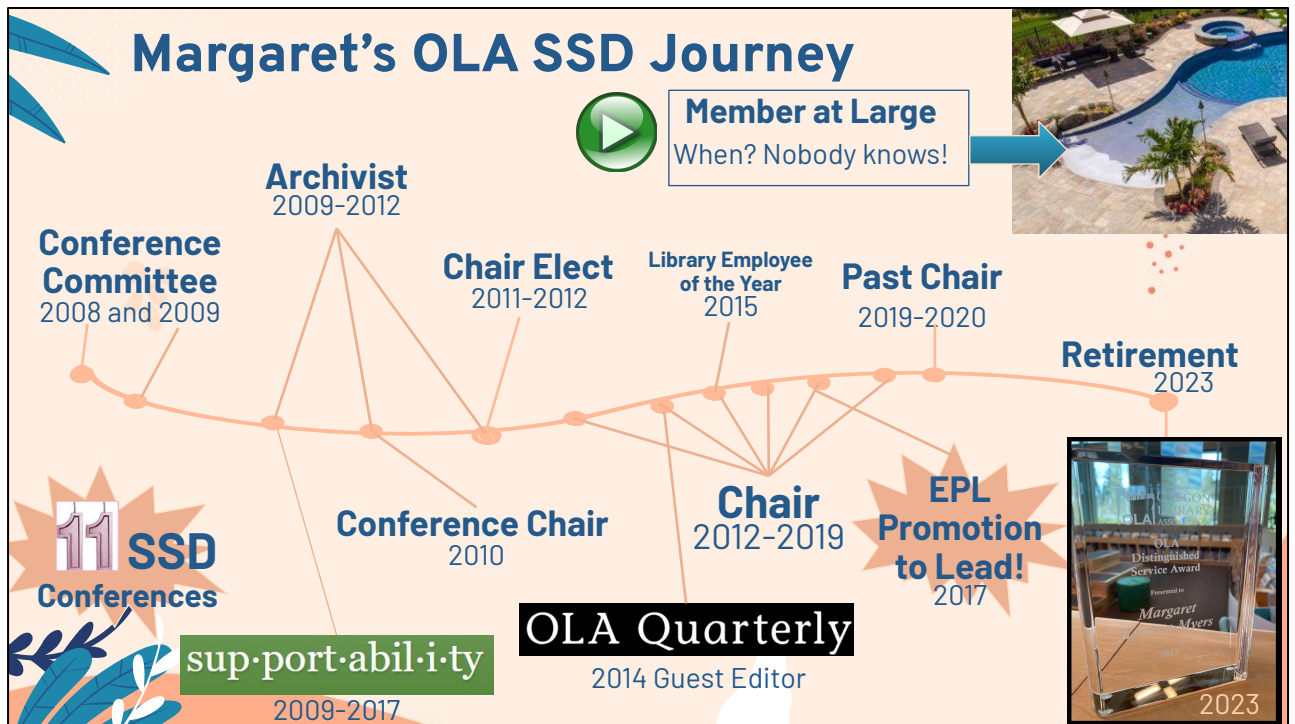


SSD had this physical award made for Margaret, because we felt she deserved something more tangible than a piece of paper. As you can see, we aren't quite sure when Margaret started, and on paper she was past chair through August 2020, but she continues to answer my questions, so...



This is the July 2019 SSD Conference. Margaret's last SSD conference as the SSD Chair, before passing the baton to Sare Webster and becoming the past chair for a year. That is me as the Treasurer.





Margaret started as a Member at Large, but nobody can recall when, not even Margaret. Member at Large allows you to wade in at the shallow end and get enough exposure to the board to determine if you want to stay in the pool or try the hot tub instead. If you have never served on a board, I highly recommend beginning here until you find what lights you on fire and makes you want to dig in.

Margaret's would have been a very typical progression into the deeper end of the pool, but it is distinguished in the longevity and determination to stay until SSD was stabilized, with deep roots to keep it going strong into the future.

Going through the timeline, after serving on two conference committees, she decided to try her hand as archivist, a 1 year position and she started the Supportability blog (which is very good!). Then she added Conference Chair for the 2010 SSD Conference, juggling multiple hats. Here is what she has to say about being the conference chair (read quote from July 24, 2010 post of Supportability).

## How to Chair a Conference in 100 Difficult steps, part one

"I can tell you how it feels when over 80 hungry, sleepy people find out they are not going to be fed the hot breakfast they were promised because the conference center "forgot" to arrange for it! For about 5 minutes there I teetered between throwing up and bursting into tears. But I had an empty

stomach, so nothing to throw up, and had sweated out every drop of moisture, so no tears were forthcoming. I suppose that was a good thing. Everyone was looking to me to do something and I realized that I was not alone.”

It is amazing to me that her SSD path didn’t abruptly end right there! She did 8 more conferences after that, making 11 total.

When she stepped up as Chair elect a year later, she remained the archivist for that entire chair elect year and continued the blog through 2017! Again juggling. (read quote from July 22, 2011 post of Supportability)

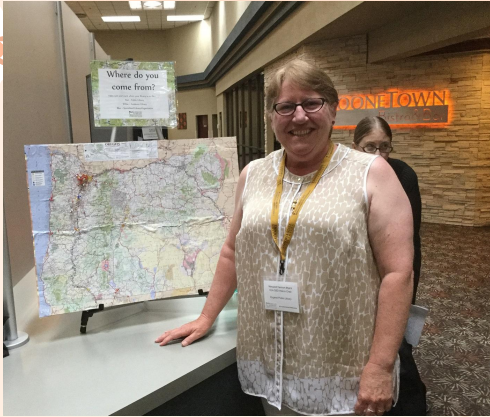
“Yes, Margaret now holds two posts. She wanted to and there is nothing in the SSD by-laws saying someone can't do so. So thank you doubly, Margaret, for your double duties!”

Back then, you were chair elect for a year, chair for a year and past chair for a year. She was the Chair for SIX years!!! She tried, but no one *could* step up. What it comes down to wasn’t a lack of willingness, it is that no one’s institution would support them in serving as the SSD chair. The option is always there to dissolve SSD. She refused to do that, she saw that support staff across Oregon still needed support and professional opportunities. She worked diligently to regrow our division until it was stable and in good hands to carry this important work into the future.

In the midst of that, she somehow managed to edit the OLA Quarterly issue focused on Support Staff and was selected as Library Employee of the Year, demonstrating the real value she was bringing to the profession and her library. She embodies how SSD professional development makes you a better employee.

Notice that she promoted, and yet remained with SSD? Many, many people, most people actually, promote and leave SSD.





Years as chair

She did it when it was  
**hard** and *at least* 30  
hours/month!

*SSD Chair is super easy now! ~10 hrs/month*  
*And only a 2 year commitment*



## The call Margaret answered was even missing critical details!

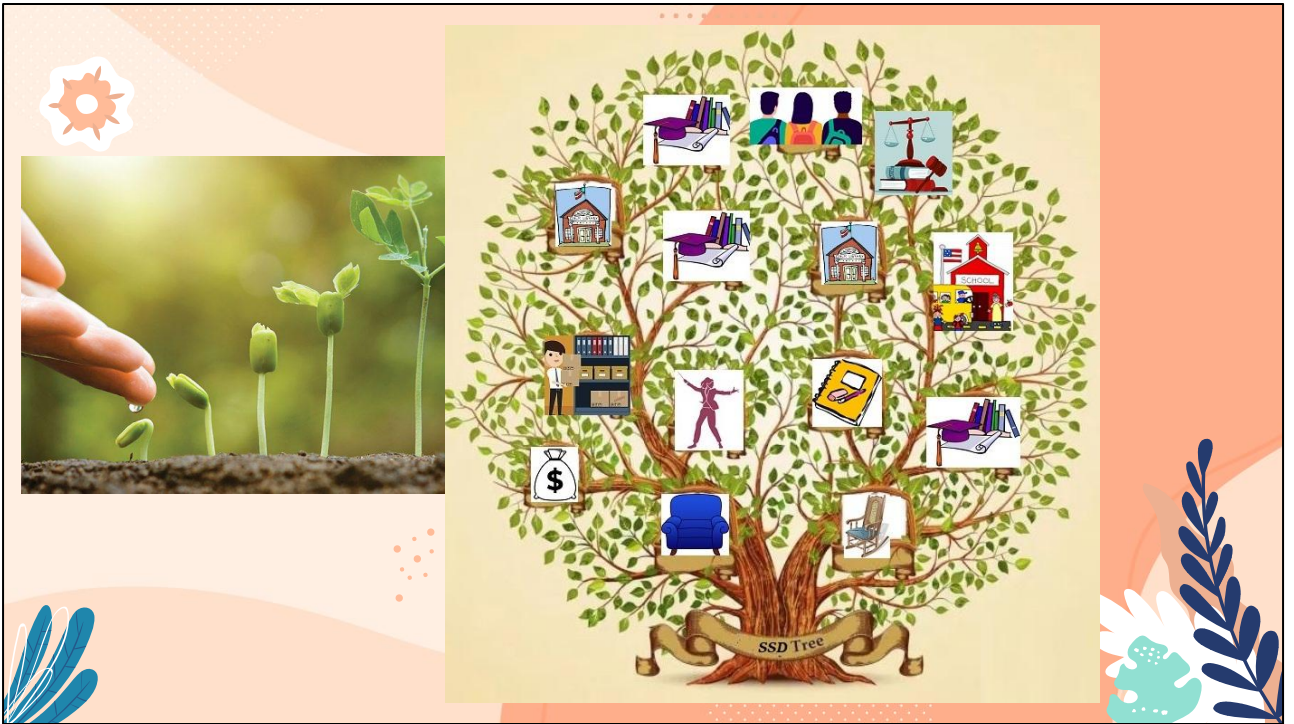
### Time commitment:

- Chair the monthly SSD board meetings, which can be attended in person or remotely via phone or videoconferencing (4 hours per month, depending upon travel)
- Compose the monthly SSD board meeting agenda (1 hour per month)
- Attend the monthly OLA Executive Board meetings (in person or remotely, 5 hours per month)
- Attend the annual OLA Board retreat in Silver Falls in person (2 days per year)
- Attend the annual SSD conference (1 day per year)
- Liaise with OLA to assist members representing SSD at the OLA Conference (1 hour per month)
- Arrive to SSD conference the day early to set up and stay through clean up
- Run a 2-4 day SSD leadership retreat
- Acting Conference Chair if none exists
- Contracts and purchases, oh my
- Do things for and at the OLA conference
- Recruit and mentor new folx
- Public speaking + presentations

This is not how Margaret taught us how to make a slide. She is probably going through her own personal nightmare seeing all of these bullet points up here.

On the left is the actual call for nominations for chair elect that she answered. On the right are the super important details missing from that announcement. She thrived anyways.

I remind you again that it is MUCH easier to be the SSD chair now...



Margaret plants and nurtures seeds into gardens and she builds family trees.

She worked to build the SSD family and make sure that it represented the different kinds of libraries and wide variety of support staff roles across Oregon.

# Margaret planted a variety of seeds



In order to grow the SSD family, Margaret planted seeds.

Sometimes the seeds Margaret planted were short term opportunities to take part in something simple, like the SSD conference raffle, or the SSD Meet and greet at the OLA Conference. The seed planted in Ekatrina took 6 years to bear fruit. Sometimes seeds are like that. But winning the raffle in 2017 excited Sare so much, they signed up as Member at Large, promoted at work, became Chair and promoted again! Sometimes seeds are like *that*!





Here we can see Margaret watering her seeds. Sare as Member at Large, Deanna as Archivist and me as Treasurer.



Sometimes Margaret was so busy planting seeds and watering, that she forgot to eat!





She felt that food was fertile ground for planting seeds. After that 2010 experience, she made sure meals went off without a hitch! I also suspect that even bad carpet was part of the magic ingredients to sprouting seeds.

This photo from the 2012 SSD Conference breakfast has Margaret busy cultivating the SSD family tree and connecting its roots. She is right in the heart of things while innocent and quiet little me hung waaay back to the very edges of any and every room.

I recently sent Margaret part of the report I wrote to share back with my co-workers about that conference:

At lunch, I met new people. One from an academic library, one from a law library, one from Jackson County and one from Eugene Public. We were able to connect on some common ground and contrast our experiences thoughtfully. A nice lady at our table has been active in planning the SSD conference for many years. She explained the process and the challenges. Later on, I discovered that I had somehow volunteered to join the planning committee. Um, ok. That actually sounds pretty exciting. I don't remember volunteering, but I'll do it!

She said "too funny, and so it began."



Sometimes sprouts outgrow SSD, becoming Branch Managers, capital L Librarians and directors. We always celebrate these successes! These are the leaders you want, the ones that are mostly likely to understand and support library staff.





She taught us how to plant the seeds, such as promoting SSD in a variety of ways at the OLA conference.



Support Staff don't often get a lot of practice presenting, so Margaret taught us how to do 10 minute Lightning Talks, which are a very achievable starting platform for Support Staff to share ideas with each other in the most supportive environment of your peers that you can imagine.

You get can a lot across in 10 minutes and they can have a lasting impact on attendees as well as the presenter. It was very popular at our last conference in 2022!

She also inadvertently taught us that we need a photographer at these conferences...



NOBODY looked good at that conference...


In closing, I want to go back to Margaret's own reflection about the changing of the guard here in SSD. (Read quote from July 13th, 2012 Supportability blog)

"Naturally in the past couple of years we have said goodbye to some of our long-time members as they retired, to others who stepped back for a well-deserved rest from active board roles but they continue as members of SSD; making room for new members to take on those active roles. This keeps the organization vibrant, vital, alive - we all get excited to have new members join and become active to whatever degree they want."



**Thank you Margaret  
You have earned this!**

**Please stand if Margaret helped you in  
some way along your journey!**



Thank you Margaret for tending the garden for so long and deepening the SSD roots!

Please stand if Margaret has helped you in some way along our journey!