



Library Trustee Election

[UPDATED 5/26/20 at 3:30 pm] Seven Albany residents are running for two available seats on the Albany Public Library Board of Trustees in the June 9, 2020, election. The vote will be conducted by absentee ballot. You will be asked to select two people.

The active library candidates, listed in ballot order, are:

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| 1. Jessica Balarin | 6. Katherine McNamara |
| 3. Donna Dixon | 7. James Munro |
| 4. Jeffrey Keller | 8. Brigitte Pryor |
| 5. Thomas McCarthy Jr. | |

IMPORTANT NOTE: Kewsi Burgess is no longer competing for a seat on the board. He ended his campaign after the ballots were printed and mailed, so his name still appears on the ballot in the #2 position.

- The city School District of Albany is mailing absentee ballots to all qualified voters by May 26. The ballots will be sent with postage paid return envelopes.
- Completed ballots can be mailed back to the school district or dropped off at the District Office in Academy Park on Elk St.
- In order to be counted, completed ballots must be received by the school district by Tuesday, June 9, at 5:00 pm.

On the following pages you will find photographs and biographical statements from the trustee candidates. All of that information was provided by the candidates.



Meet the library trustee candidates virtually on May 26 (Tues) at 6 pm

Watch live or later at [youtube.com/user/albanynlibrary/](https://www.youtube.com/user/albanynlibrary/)

Questions about the ballot & voting?

Contact Albany City School District
(518) 475-6010



Questions about the candidates?

Contact Albany Public Library
(518) 708-3912



REMEMBER!

Completed ballots are due back to the school district on Tuesday, June 9, by 5:00 pm

1. JESSICA BALARIN

Partridge St.



Occupation & Special Skills

Physician Assistant. Pertinent skills: Treasurer for political campaign, interpersonal communication skills.

Biography

Jessica attended many programs in the public library as a child and now volunteers repairing library books. Jessica came to Albany to attend Albany Medical College's Physician Assistant Program. She works for Albany Med as a Physician Assistant and resides in Albany with her husband, infant son and two dogs. Jessica is the treasurer for her husband's political campaign and is an active member of her church. She also volunteers time for the FOCUS breakfast program.

Why are you running for the library board?

Jessica considers literacy the gateway to knowledge and wants to convey this to her son. She recognizes the essential community role the library plays and wants to ensure sufficient funding. She supports continuing virtual programs created during this crisis because they increase access.

3. DONNA DIXON

Fleetwood Ave.



Occupation & Special Skills

I've worked as a public reference librarian, a scholarly and trade book publisher, and a library sales consultant. I'm currently a freelance book editor.

Biography

I've lived in Albany most of my life, and I love this city. I'm a graduate of Siena College, where I majored in English, and the University at Albany, where I received my master's degree in library science. I chose librarianship as a second career because I believe passionately that libraries are vital to an informed and thriving society, and I wanted to be a part of that work. I'm an avid cyclist and runner.

Why are you running for the library board?

I served on the board 2011–2016, in secretary, VP, and committee chair roles. Community service is very important to me, and my experience could serve Albany well during these challenging times. I would be honored to support APL's outstanding leadership and staff as a trustee once again.

4. JEFFREY KELLER

Walter St.



5. THOMAS McCARTHY JR.

Steuben St.



Occupation & Special Skills

Many changes have happened to the library since I worked as a clerk at the Main and North Albany branches. I would bring a fresh set of eyes and an open mind to what is happening.

Biography

I have served as a Peace Corps Volunteer (in the Congo), a journalist, the (first) executive director of the Chautauqua County Mental Health Association, and the deputy director of a statewide nonprofit (NAMI-NYS). In the last two of those jobs, I worked closely with boards of directors, so I know the process and the value of good governance. I'm now an editor for the NYS Education Department and an Albany resident for 20 years.

Why are you running for the library board?

Libraries are essential, especially during challenging times. I'll work to insure the survival of the branches, increased community engagement, flexibility, creativity, and diversity, the conservation of the library as a commons, and the preservation of its assets for the future.

Occupation & Special Skills

I'm currently Legislative Director for a state Assemblymember. I have experience in state-level policy, including library policy as former staff for the Assembly's Library Committee.

Biography

I am a lifelong resident of Albany, and a proud graduate of Albany High School '13. After college, I came home to Albany, working for the state legislature. I participate in several community groups - including representing our community as a current Albany Public Library Trustee. I ran for trustee in 2019, and was elected to a one-year term. During that time, I've been honored to support APL's mission to "educate, entertain, and empower the community."

Why are you running for the library board?

I'm running for re-election to continue contributing to APL's amazing work by advocating for an accessible, diverse, and responsive library. As a young person and lifelong resident, I believe I bring an important perspective to our board. I love sharing my positive experience at APL with the community. That's what motivates me as a trustee!

6. KATHERINE McNAMARA

Cardinal Ave.



Occupation & Special Skills

I work in legislative affairs for the Department of Environmental Conservation. I have experience in developing and implementing policy, budgetary matters, and constituent communication.

Biography

I have been an active library user for all my life. Returning to Albany in 2012 I realized how fortunate I am to have this library system. Working for the NYS Legislature and DEC has encouraged me to use my skill set to serve the library and the city. In my spare time I enjoy running, and am attempting to run every street in the city to learn more about each of the Albany neighborhoods.

Why are you running for the library board?

Albany has a phenomenal network of libraries that offer valuable and diverse resources. I am committed to being a part of Albany Public Library's growth and success, advocating for both the library and the residents to help APL continue to evolve to meet the needs and interests of the community.

7. JAMES MUNRO

Glendale Ave.



Occupation & Special Skills

I teach high school Social Studies and have in the past taught remedial reading and writing at a community college.

Biography

I am a proud teacher and a father of a soon-to-be reader. At work, I feel strongly about supporting all types of learners with classroom activities that enable students to discover their unique skills. Throughout my career as a teacher I have always enjoyed engaging students who don't think of themselves as great students and have enjoyed helping them find something about learning that they like.

Why are you running for the library board?

I am running for the library board because I think that APL is a vital community institution and I want to ensure it remains strong during these difficult times. As a trustee, I would do my best to make sure APL continues to be forward-thinking and responsive to the needs of this diverse city.

8. BRIGITTE PRYOR

Myrtle Ave.



Occupation & Special Skills

She has worked for the Albany Housing Authority for 26 years as the Elderly Service Coordinator.

Biography

Brigitte Pryor is a life-long resident of Albany, NY. Brigitte is a Cazenovia College alumni, graduating with honors Magna Cum Laude in 2019, earning her BA in Human Services. She also attended Hudson Valley Community College graduating with honors in 2016 with her AA in Human Services. Brigitte characterizes herself as a racer. She believes it does not matter how long you take to run the race as long as you finish. When Brigitte is not working or in school, she loves gardening, traveling, and of course, reading.

Why are you running for the library board?

Brigitte is running as a candidate for the library board because she loves the library. She says the library is part of her DNA. She has witnessed in the last fifty years the transformation of the library and what it is and means to the people of Albany. She describes the library as the heartbeat of a city. She has witnessed the most amazing people who work at the library and wants to become part of an organization where all walks of life are welcomed without judgment. Brigitte has seen the librarian effortlessly take off the library hat and become a social worker (superhero) right before her eyes. Brigitte loves the library so much that when she does have the pleasure of traveling to different cities, she is also visiting their libraries.