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MELLON FOUNDATION AWARDS HISTORIC GRANT OF $1 MILLION TO JACKSONVILLE PUBLIC LIBRARY

Mellon Foundation Awards Historic Grant of $1 Million to Jacksonville Public Library

Memory Lab services and the African American History Collection to be expanded

Jacksonville, Fla., January 10, 2024 – The Mellon Foundation granted Jacksonville Public Library $1 million through the Library Foundation of Jacksonville to expand Memory Lab services and its African American History Collection, it was announced Thursday by Mayor Donna Deegan, marking the largest private grant in the histories of the Library and Library Foundation.

Grant funds will allow the Library to expand the number of Memory Lab stations at the Main Library where customers may digitize and preserve books, photos, slides, negatives, audiocassettes, films and other media. New furniture, scanners and transfer units will enhance the capacity and capabilities to convert these items from obsolete formats into shareable and easily stored formats. The existing African American History Collection will be expanded through new acquisitions and subscriptions, the recording of oral histories, and the digitization and publication of newspapers, yearbooks, annual reports, church directories, and other community materials.

“We are grateful to the Mellon Foundation in New York City for making this tremendous investment in the Jacksonville Public Library,” said Mayor Donna Deegan. “A strong library helps build a strong community. The Library is at the very center with our other partners in a new citywide literacy challenge for students of all ages we are launching later this month.”

“The Library’s mission is to enrich lives, build community and foster success by bringing people, information and ideas together,” said Tim Rogers, Jacksonville Public Library’s chief librarian and library director. “I am so pleased that the grant will enable the Library to help our residents to digitize and share their individual histories in order to build a better understanding of our community’s journey from past to present.”

The Library hopes to qualify to join the Sunshine State Digital Network (SSDN) in August 2024. This would extend the reach of the digital archive portion of the African American History Collection to a larger audience because it will result in the first of the Library’s digital collections becoming part of the Digital Public Library of America.

“Public libraries are perfect places for memory labs, where community members may receive help to care for their personal artifacts in the form of audio and video recordings, for example,” said Patricia Hswe, program director for public knowledge at the Mellon Foundation. “We are pleased to support
the Jacksonville Public Library to undertake this important work and highlight the richly diverse communities in its midst through these labs.”

Grant funding will also provide two support staffers to the Special Collections team. A semi-annual speaker series is also planned.

“The history and legacy of Andrew Mellon and his family are inspiring,” said Scott Evans, executive director, Library Foundation of Jacksonville. “We are deeply honored!”

**About The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation**
The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation is the nation’s largest supporter of the arts and humanities. Since 1969, the Foundation has been guided by its core belief that the humanities and arts are essential to human understanding. The Foundation believes that the arts and humanities are where we express our complex humanity, and that everyone deserves the beauty, transcendence, and freedom that can be found there. Through our grants, we seek to build just communities enriched by meaning and empowered by critical thinking, where ideas and imagination can thrive. Learn more at [www.mellon.org](http://www.mellon.org)

**About Jacksonville Public Library**
The mission of the Jacksonville Public Library is to enrich lives, build community and foster success by bringing people, information and ideas together. Last year, more than 2.2 million visits were made to Jacksonville Public Libraries, items were checked out more than 4.7 million times, and over 8,000 programs and services were offered to Duval County residents at the Main Library and 20 branch locations. For more information about Jacksonville Public Library, call 255-BOOK (2665) or visit [jaxpubliclibrary.org](http://jaxpubliclibrary.org).

**About The Library Foundation of Jacksonville**
The mission of the Library Foundation of Jacksonville is to inspire, advocate and grow philanthropic support for the Jacksonville Public Library in service to lifelong learners throughout our diverse community. The Foundation—a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization—provides the community members, corporations, and other stakeholders with opportunities to invest in the success of the Library. With private financial support, the Foundation expects to support and enhance the Library’s current funding system, not to replace the tax base and public community dollars so essential to the core of the Library’s mission. Managed by the Board of Directors, the Foundation is wholly independent of the City of Jacksonville, the Library, and the Library Board of Trustees. To learn more call 904-255-6192 or visit [www.lfjax.org](http://www.lfjax.org)

**About the City of Jacksonville**
The City of Jacksonville is the largest city by land mass in the contiguous United States, serving approximately 900,000 residents. Located in Duval County, City of Jacksonville leadership includes the mayor and a 19-member City Council. To learn more about the City of Jacksonville, visit [www.coj.net](http://www.coj.net)

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