

William Broadnax

Congratulations to William T. “Bill” Broadnax on his retirement after 52 years of service to the Ossining Public Library



Everyone at the Ossining Public Library, staff and patrons alike, has a Bill Broadnax story. Usually centering around his effervescent personality, and always mentioning the wardrobe that would put most fashion houses to shame, these stories paint a portrait of a library and a town touched by the kindness he has brought to Ossining for decades. Retiring after 52 years, Mr. Broadnax leaves behind a legacy of service, outreach, and joy.

Born in Alabama and raised in Columbus, Georgia during the Jim Crow era, Mr. Broadnax wasn't welcome in his home library as a child, making his career all the more remarkable. After receiving his Master of Science in Library Science (MSLS) from Villanova University, he first worked as a school librarian in Deptford Township Public Schools and moved to Westchester when Northern Westchester BOCES needed a librarian. For nearly 30 years, he served as the Director of Special Education Resource Training/Library Media Specialist, and turned the library into the campus's focal point;

urging administration to build wooden shelves, rather than metal, he created a warm and welcoming space for students. His vision made the library a showcase as well as a nurturing environment where he connected with students personally, enjoying arts and crafts with them, decorating for holidays, and creating bulletin boards.

His connection with his students extended to his experience at the Ossining Public Library, where he was hired in 1968. Working in three library buildings and assisting countless patrons, Mr. Broadnax's favorite moments have always been watching the happiness of the library's youngest patrons as they explore the building.

Dedicated to community, Mr. Broadnax has made service a cornerstone of his life. After being gifted a lifetime NAACP membership by his parents as a child, he served in leadership roles in the Peekskill, Ossining, Camden, and national NAACP organizations and hosted A Symphony of Fashions and Luncheon, the Ossining branch's premier fundraiser, for over 20 years.

“Success is not about achieving what you desire”, says Matthew Weiss, president of the library's Board of Trustees. “It is about something that calls us to improve our shared humanity with our fellow man.” For more than five decades, Mr. Broadnax worked tirelessly to improve the community and bond with his fellow man, and the Ossining Public Library is forever indebted to him. The library wishes him the best of luck in his retirement and already misses him dearly.



Bill wearing his original African “costume” at the Ossining Public Library's anniversary fundraiser, “Mad for the Library” in 2018.