



NAMING FACILITIES NOMINATION FORM

DIRECTIONS: Please complete all requirements and portions of this form that relate to your nomination. Only one name is accepted per form submission. Partially completed forms will not be considered.

NOMINATED NAME IS SUBMITTED BY: Jimm Allen

ADDRESS: L&N STEM Academy, 800 World's Fair Park Drive, Knoxville, TN 37902

PHONE NUMBER: 865-329-8440 DATE OF NOMINATION: 3/31/2026

EMAIL: james.allen@knoxschools.org

NOMINATION

NOMINATED NAME: Mike Ragsdale

FACILITY RECOMMENDED FOR NAMING: L&N STEM Academy Library

DIRECTIONS: Please complete the following section if the nominated name relates to a person.

1. How many years has the nominated person lived in Knox County? 25+ years

2. Did the person graduate from a Knox County school? Yes No

If so, what year? _____

3. How many years has the person served Knox County Schools as a staff member or volunteer?
15+ or N/A

4. How has the person made a significant contribution to the district? This recognition reflects not only Mike Ragsdale's instrumental leadership in the founding of the L&N STEM Academy as Mayor of Knox County, but also his continued commitment to its success as a parent, advocate, and founding president of the L&N Foundation.

5. How has the person represented the virtues or characteristics as a role model to students, staff, and the community? Mike Ragsdale exemplified visionary leadership and collaboration by helping found L&N STEM Academy, modeling innovation and teamwork for students and staff. His steadfast commitment to education and public service demonstrated integrity, responsibility, and a dedication to improving opportunities for all.

6. How has the person made a significant contribution to public education? Through his public service and leadership, Mike helped not only L&N STEM Academy, but not all schools in working to fund our school system and partner with the Knox County Schools Superintendent to propose and manage the county budget to make sure that students and faculty had what they needed to make KCS such a wonderful place.

7. How has the person made a substantial contribution to his or her field of endeavor or to society in general? During his time in office, Mayor Ragsdale consistently championed initiatives that enhanced educational opportunities across Knox County. His administration supported investments in school infrastructure, fostered partnerships between government and educational institutions, and promoted programs that emphasized college and career readiness.

8. How has the person exemplified scholarship, creativity, leadership or humanitarian and public service? Mike exemplified leadership and public service through his pivotal role in founding L&N STEM Academy, working collaboratively to create innovative educational opportunities for students. He demonstrated a commitment to scholarship and creativity by championing forward-thinking, STEM-focused learning environments that prepare students for the future. His continued service as founding president of the L&N Foundation and as an engaged parent reflects a deep humanitarian commitment to supporting students, families, and the broader community.

DIRECTIONS: Please complete the following section if the nominated name represents an event, place, or geographic location:

1. What is the significance of the nominated name to Knox County Schools and the Knox County community? Mike was the Mayor of Knox County, Tennessee from September 2002 through August 2010.

2. How does the nominated name exemplify the values of Knox County Schools and the Knox County community? Mike Ragsdale's name reflects the core values of Knox County Schools by embodying a commitment to educational excellence, innovation, and strong community partnerships. His legacy of public service and continued investment in students and families aligns with the broader Knox County community's dedication to opportunity, collaboration, and lifelong learning.

ATTACHMENTS:

- **Required:** If you have nominated a person's name, please include a written and signed release from the nominated person, or the most closely associated family representative to the nominated person (e.g., spouse, parent, children, or sibling).
- **Required:** Please include contact information for the nominated person or the most closely associated family representative.
- **Required:** Please attach any and all research that supports the name that you have nominated for consideration, including picture(s).
- **Required:** Three (3) letters of recommendation.
- **Suggested:** Additional letters of recommendation are welcome, but not required.

This form, along with all attachments, should be mailed or delivered to:

**Knox County Board of Education
Naming Facilities Committee
P.O. Box 2188
Knoxville, TN 37902-2188**

Reference: Knox County Board of Education F-140 "Naming Facilities"
<https://www.knoxschools.org/cms/lib/TN01917079/Centricity/domain/974/board%20policies/F-140%20Naming%20Facilities.pdf>

Note: Names may be submitted at any time. The Naming Facilities Committee shall convene within a reasonable period of time following receipt of nomination and submission of all required documents. The Committee recommendation will be submitted to the Knox County Board of Education for consideration as part of the regular session agenda process.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I acknowledge that I have reviewed Knox County Board of Education Policy F-140, have submitted the Naming Facilities Nomination Form with all required documentation and confirm that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, all information provided is true and correct.

Signature Jimm Allen **Date** _____

For questions, please contact the Board of Education office at (865) 594-1630 or by email at board.office@knoxschools.org.

For Use by Naming Facilities Committee only

Principal acknowledgement and confirmation of review of documentation, research and input.

Signature Jimm Allen **Date** 3/31/2026

Regional Director Megan O'Dell **Regional Supervisor** Thomas Watson

Superintendent acknowledgement and confirmation of review of documentation, research and input.

Signature _____ **Date** 4/21/2026

Statement of Nondiscrimination: In accordance with Public Law 101-336 and 42 U.S.C. § 12101, Knox County Board of Education does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex or disabilities in providing education services, activities, and programs, including vocational programs, in accordance with Title IV of the Civil Rights Act of 1964; Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972; and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

**NAMING
FACILITIES
GUIDELINES**

The Knox County Board of Education shall have complete authority and responsibility for the naming of district facilities.

The term "facility" shall refer to a new or existing school or district-wide complex owned and operated by the district. The term "portion of a facility" shall include a building, library, media center, auditorium, performing arts center, gymnasium, athletic field, or other portion of a school support complex or property owned and/or operated by the district. A portion of a facility shall not include individual classrooms.

The following guidelines shall govern the permanent naming or renaming of new or existing district-owned facilities or portions of facilities. A facility or portion of a facility may be named for a person, in honor of a history event or place, a distinctive geographic location, or for a major donor.

The Board shall consider naming a facility or a portion of a facility for a person, historic event or place, geographic location, or major donor who meets one or more of the following criteria:

1. The person has made or is making significant contributions to the district and represents virtues or characteristics that serve as a role model to students, staff, and the community.
2. The person has made or is making significant contributions to public education and has a significant connection to the district as a student, an alumnus, a staff member, an administrator, a donor, or a supporter.
3. The person has made substantial contributions or his or her field of endeavor or to society in general.
4. A name may be reused for facility naming purposes in the event a facility is consolidated or demolished.
5. A facility named for a historic event shall have major significance to the district, geographic area, state of Tennessee, or our nation.
6. Extensive research shall be conducted on a proposed honoree before a final decision is made regarding naming a facility or portion of a facility for a person.

**Recommendation
Process for
Naming Facilities
or a Portion of
Facilities**

The Board may request the Superintendent to solicit names for a specific facility and direct the Superintendent to form a committee for the purpose of proposing a name. Names may also be submitted by the public directly to the attention of the Board of Education Naming Facilities Committee.

**Naming
Facilities
Committee**

Nominations shall be made in writing on a form provided by the district within the designated time frames established by the Naming Facilities Committee and only accepted for the facilities or portion of facilities of which the names are being solicited.

The Naming Facilities Committee shall be comprised of three (3) members of the Knox County Board of Education appointed annually by the Board Chair.

Specific Criteria and Selection Process

The Naming Facilities Committee shall consider the following in making recommendations to the Board for the naming of any facility or portion of a facility:

1. Whether the nominee reflects direct and substantial association and achievement of extraordinary and lasting distinction (e.g., an individual's scholarship, creativity, leadership, and humanitarian and public service).
2. If a nominee has served the district:
 - a. The length of years of service.
 - b. The contributions, both subjective and objective, to the district. Emphasis shall be given to the quality as well as the quantity of benefits and value derived by the district as a direct result of the nominee's contributions.
3. Weight may be given to an individual who gained distinction in the area or areas related to the usage of the facility.

The committee's responsibility shall be to review all submitted names and supporting documentation and conduct background research to determine whether the names meet the requirements of this policy. The district and school administration shall also review all documentation, research, and input to determine whether it is in the best interest of the district to consider a name. If a name is selected by the committee, the name shall be submitted to the Board of Education for consideration.

Selected names shall be recommended to the Board through decision-making consensus. Decision-making consensus is defined as the apparent preference after each committee member has had an opportunity to participate in the discussion, and then the committee members shall decide whether they can support the name as a recommendation to the Board. The committee chair shall declare the consensus of the committee for each name selected and recommended to the Board. A selected name may be tabled or dismissed for further consideration based on the declared consensus of the committee.

Timing

Nominations may be submitted to the committee at any time, but consideration by the Board shall happen as part of the regular session agenda process. Names submitted in an untimely manner may be considered in future years.

Recommendation Process for Programmatic Renaming

A facility or portion of a facility may be renamed based on a programmatic change if the new name would not affect the namesake of the facility or the portion of the facility. This type of name change would only require the recommendation of the Superintendent. For example, if a library had been named after an individual, such as the John Doe Library, and the term for "library" changed to "media center," a recommendation could be made for the name to be changed to the John Doe Media Center.

Proposal to Name the L&N STEM Academy Library in Honor of Former Knox County Mayor Mike Ragsdale

Introduction

This proposal recommends naming the library at L&N STEM Academy in honor of former Knox County Mayor Mike Ragsdale. This recognition reflects not only his instrumental leadership in the founding of the school, but also his continued commitment to its success as a parent, advocate, and founding president of the L&N STEM Academy Foundation.

Foundational Leadership and Vision

Mike Ragsdale's tenure as Knox County Mayor was marked by a forward-thinking commitment to education, innovation, and community partnership. One of his most enduring contributions was his pivotal role in the creation of L&N STEM Academy. Through a collaborative partnership with then-Knoxville Mayor Bill Haslam, Mayor Ragsdale helped bring to life a visionary school designed to prepare students for the demands of a rapidly evolving, technology-driven world.

This collaboration between city and county leadership demonstrated a shared belief in the power of public education to transform lives and strengthen the region's future workforce. L&N STEM Academy stands today as a testament to that vision—an institution rooted in innovation, rigor, and opportunity.

Commitment to Education in Knox County

During his time in office, Mayor Ragsdale consistently championed initiatives that enhanced educational opportunities across Knox County. His administration supported investments in school infrastructure, fostered partnerships between government and educational institutions, and promoted programs that emphasized college and career readiness.

His leadership helped lay the groundwork for schools like L&N STEM Academy to thrive—schools that push boundaries and redefine what public education can achieve.

Continued Service to L&N STEM Academy

Mayor Ragsdale's connection to L&N STEM Academy did not end with its founding. He went on to serve as the founding president of the L&N Foundation, where he played a critical role in building support, securing resources, and advancing the school's mission.

In addition, his commitment was deeply personal. Alongside his wife, Allison, he was an engaged and supportive parent, as his stepdaughters attended and graduated from the L&N STEM Academy. His involvement reflects a genuine belief in the school's mission and a personal investment in its success.

A Lasting Legacy

Naming the library in honor of Mike Ragsdale is a fitting tribute to a leader whose vision, dedication, and service helped shape L&N STEM Academy into what it is today. A library represents knowledge, curiosity, and lifelong learning—values that align closely with Mayor Ragsdale's contributions to education and the community.

This recognition would not only honor his legacy but also serve as an inspiration to current and future students, reminding them of the impact that leadership, collaboration, and commitment can have on a community.

Conclusion

For his instrumental role in the founding of L&N STEM Academy, his significant contributions to education in Knox County, his leadership as founding president of the L&N STEM Academy Foundation, and his personal connection to the school as a parent, it is both appropriate and meaningful to name the L&N STEM Academy Library in honor of former Mayor Mike Ragsdale.

Respectfully submitted,

Jimm Allen

Jimm Allen
Executive Principal
L&N STEM Academy



OFFICE OF COUNTY MAYOR GLENN JACOBS

March 25, 2026

Dr. Jon Rysewk, Superintendent
Knox County Schools
400 W. Summer Place
Knoxville, TN 37902

RE: L&N Stem Library

Dear Jon,

I am writing to formally request that the library at L&N Stem Academy be renamed in honor of former Knox County Mayor Mike Ragsdale. Mayor Ragsdale's contributions to education and literacy in our community have been profound, and it is fitting that we recognize his lasting impact by dedicating this space in his name.

Throughout his tenure, Mayor Ragsdale was a steadfast advocate for education, playing a pivotal role in initiatives that continue to shape the academic landscape of Knox County. Notably, he was a driving force behind the establishment of the Great Schools Partnership, now known as the Knox Education Foundation, an organization dedicated to enhancing and supporting public education. Significantly, the foundation's very first meeting was held at the L&N Stem Academy, making it the beginning of a legacy that continues to benefit students and educators alike.

In addition, Mayor Ragsdale's passion for literacy was exemplified through his "Read With Me" program, which fostered a love of reading among young learners and underscored the importance of literacy from an early age. His visionary leadership also led to the creation of Knox Achieves, a groundbreaking initiative that later evolved into Tennessee Achieves. This program has provided mentorship and financial assistance to thousands of students across the state, empowering them to pursue higher education and achieve their academic aspirations.

Given Mayor Ragsdale's profound and lasting impact on education in Knox County and beyond, I believe that renaming the L&N Stem Academy library in his honor would be a meaningful tribute to his legacy. I sincerely appreciate your consideration of this request and would welcome the opportunity to collaborate on the next steps to make this recognition a reality.

Thank you for your leadership and dedication to Knox County Schools. Please let me know how we may proceed with this initiative.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Glenn Jacobs".

Glenn Jacobs
Knox County Mayor

Cc: Files



Dear Members of the Knox County Board of Education,

I am writing to respectfully recommend that the library at L&N STEM Academy be named in honor of former Knox County Mayor Mike Ragsdale in recognition of his extraordinary contributions to education, leadership, and our community.

During his tenure as mayor, Mr. Ragsdale demonstrated visionary leadership and a deep commitment to education. He played a pivotal role in the creation of L&N STEM Academy through a collaborative partnership that brought together city and county leadership to establish a school centered on innovation, rigor, and opportunity. His efforts helped lay the foundation for a learning environment that continues to prepare students for success in a rapidly evolving world.

Beyond his time in office, Mr. Ragsdale's dedication to L&N STEM Academy has remained strong. As the founding president of the L&N STEM Academy Foundation, he worked tirelessly to support the school's mission, build community partnerships, and secure resources that benefit students and staff. His commitment is also personal, as he and his wife, Allison, were actively involved parents while his stepdaughters attended the school.

Mr. Ragsdale's name reflects the core values of Knox County Schools by embodying a commitment to educational excellence, innovation, and strong community partnerships. His legacy of public service and continued investment in students and families aligns with the broader Knox County community's dedication to opportunity, collaboration, and lifelong learning.

Naming the library in his honor would serve as a lasting tribute to his impact and as an inspiration to future generations of students. A library represents knowledge, curiosity, and growth—values that mirror Mr. Ragsdale's contributions to both L&N STEM Academy and Knox County as a whole.

Thank you for your consideration of this recommendation and for your continued support of our students and schools.

Respectfully,
Jimm Allen
Executive Principal
L&N STEM Academy



April 7, 2026

To Members of the Knox County School Board,

I am writing to wholeheartedly endorse and recommend the motion to name the school library at L&N STEM Academy in honor of former Knox County Mayor Mike Ragsdale. It is a gesture aligned to similar naming spaces at this unique school that provides recognition to the visionary leadership, foresight and investment made by the people who turned a dream into three-dimensional reality that continues to impact young Knoxvilleians and their futures.

I was not only the founding principal but also co-leader of the design team that created the school that would become the L&N STEM Academy. Mr. Ragsdale was our county mayor at that time and joined school district leadership on tours of some of the potential spaces available to house this fantastical notion of locating a school in a non-traditional space within the city. I remember walking into what is now the library of the school and Mr. Ragsdale commenting on the inspirational quality of the space saying something along the lines of “that’s what education is for, isn’t it, to inspire dreams of the future” – I’m paraphrasing, of course, because that was 19 years ago! But the visionary quality of an elected official to see potential in how the environment can drive the desired outcome is what made the school possible.

Mayor Ragsdale worked with county and district finance, the city mayor and the building’s owner to secure the unique leasing agreement that allowed the space to be attained and updated at a cost that was a fraction of what new construction would have been. All while preserving a piece of Knoxville history to house a school that continues to impact Knoxville’s future workforce. Once the school was established, he continued his service by leading the efforts and serving as the first president of the school’s non-profit foundation which continues to support innovative and amazing programs and facility modifications to the space.

Because of the vision and leadership of former county mayor Ragsdale, Knoxville is home to the crown jewel in the statewide network of STEM schools which serves as a model for innovative education efforts made possible through public-private partnerships. As a Knoxville community member and employee of the statewide STEM education network I see other districts trying to figure out how to replicate the magical confluence of opportunity and vision. What I always share is that the magic was in the people in leadership that made dreams become reality. It is fitting and proper to recognize the contributions of one of those leaders, Mike Ragsdale, by naming one of the most inspirational spaces in the building in his honor.

Sincerely,

Becky Ashe

Dear Members of the Naming Committee,

My name is Katie Rosenberg, and I serve as the librarian at L&N STEM Academy. I am writing in strong support of the proposal to rename our school library the Mike Ragsdale Library.

Over the years, I have had the opportunity to observe Mike's lasting impact both within Knox County and here at L&N STEM Academy. His commitment to education, student opportunity, and community growth has been evident in the many ways he has supported our school and others across the district. His work has consistently reflected a belief in access—ensuring that students and educators alike have the resources they need to succeed.

At L&N STEM Academy, the library is a central hub for all students, and Mike's influence is reflected in how fully it is used and valued by our community. Students from every grade level rely on the library not only for research and academic support, but also as a collaborative and creative space. That culture of engagement has been strengthened over time through sustained support and advocacy for learning spaces like ours.

On a more personal note, Mike's stepdaughters, Anne and Ruby Kate, were frequent and enthusiastic users of the library during their time at L&N STEM Academy. They spent countless hours here working, studying, and contributing to the positive energy that makes the space what it is today. Their consistent presence and engagement are a meaningful reflection of Mike's own connection to our school community, and both Anne and Ruby Kate also played a role in helping the library thrive as a welcoming and productive environment for their peers.

For these reasons and many more, I can think of no more fitting tribute than renaming our library in Mike Ragsdale's honor. It would serve as a lasting recognition of his contributions to Knox County education and his enduring connection to the students and spaces he has helped shape.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Katie Rosenberg". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Katie Rosenberg
Librarian, L&N STEM Academy

[Mike Ragsdale](#) served as Knox County Mayor from 2002 to 2010, prioritizing education and infrastructure, including the construction of Hardin Valley Academy. While not directly credited with founding the L&N STEM Academy (opened 2011), his "Every School a Great School" initiative laid groundwork for regional education partnerships.

Key Details of Ragsdale's Tenure & Education Initiatives:

- **Education Focus:** Ragsdale, who holds an Ed.D., prioritized educational development during his two terms.
- **Capital Improvements:** His administration focused on building new schools and renovating existing ones.
- **[tnAchieves](#) Initiative:** Ragsdale was a founding board member of Knox Achieves, which merged into Tennessee Achieves and later Tennessee Promise, aiming to improve education accessibility.
- **Post-Mayor Role:** After leaving office in 2010, Ragsdale founded [Tennessee Strategies](#).

Mike Ragsdale Professional Summary



Mike Ragsdale is President of Tennessee Strategies, providing consulting services to a diverse client base statewide.

Prior to founding Tennessee Strategies, Ragsdale had successful careers in business, public service, and education. He served two terms as Knox County Mayor, from 2002 to 2010, leading a county of nearly 430,000 citizens with a budget of over \$640 million. During his administration, Ragsdale's priorities included education, economic growth, seniors, and a more efficient government.

During his second term Mayor Ragsdale served as President of the County Executives of America, an organization of more than 700 chief elected county officials. He also served two terms as president of the Tennessee Association of County Mayors.

For 16 years, Ragsdale served as Executive Vice President and Partner at Barber & McMurry Architects, Planners, and Consultants. During this time he was twice elected to the Knox County Commission.

Ragsdale's career began at Pellissippi State Community College, serving first as Director of Admissions and Records and later as Dean of Administrative Affairs.

Mayor Ragsdale is on the Board of Directors for both the Tennessee Independent Colleges and Universities Association and for TnAchieves, a state wide student scholarship program. This was a program that initially began as Knox Achieves during Mayor Ragsdale's tenure. He serves as a board member for East Tennessee Children's Hospital and Governor Bill Lee appointed him to the Tennessee Higher Education Commission.

Previously, Mayor Ragsdale served on the advisory board for the Tennessee College of Applied Technology - Knoxville and the Jefferson Cocke County Utility District Board of Directors.

During his tenure as Knox County Mayor, Ragsdale received the Vision Award from Technology 2020 and the prestigious "Courthouse Award" from the National Association of Counties. He twice received the Outstanding Service Award from the Disabled American Veterans of East Tennessee and the "Military Order of the Purple Heart."

He is a lifetime member of the Optimist Club of Knoxville, and served as the organization's president. He is also past president of the Arts Council of Greater Knoxville, American Red Cross, Junior Achievement, and East Tennessee Discovery Center. He served on the Board of Directors for the Greater Knoxville Sports Corporation, Knox Area Chamber of Commerce, and was Chairman of the Knox County Tourist Commission. Ragsdale is a 1989 graduate of Leadership Knoxville and has completed Harvard University's Mediation Program of Study.

Upon achieving his bachelor's degree, Ragsdale earned the University of Tennessee's prestigious Torchbearer Award, the highest University award given to students. He holds a Master's in Education from Auburn University and a doctorate in education from the University of Tennessee. He is a native of Cleveland, Tennessee and graduated from Cleveland High School.

Mayor Adds Thanks
County Mayor Michael Ragsdale also thanked the Friends by proclaiming October 18-24 as Friends of the Library Week in Knox County.

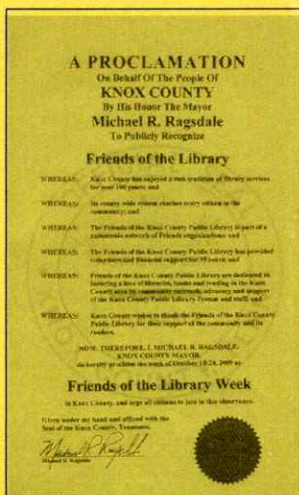
The proclamation recognizes the following:

- Knox County has enjoyed a rich tradition of library services for over 100 years.
- Its county-wide system reaches every citizen in the community.

- The Friends of Knox County Public Library have provided volunteers and financial support for 39 years.

- Friends of the Knox County Public Library are dedicated to fostering a love of libraries, books and reading in the Knox County area by community outreach, advocacy and support of the Knox County Public Library System and staff.

8



KCPL Staff Thanks Friends

By Elizabeth Abbott, KCPL Staff
Reprinted from *The Loop*,
Library Staff's Publication

With over 1,000 members, the Friends are a huge positive force for the library. We



Elizabeth Abbott

couldn't do it without the Friends. They spend endless hours volunteering—everything from working over 3,100 hours to keep the Rothrock Used Bookstore running in Lawson

McGhee to sorting books, running the annual used book sale, registering children for Imagination Library, creating and distributing staff appreciation gifts, endlessly supporting KCPL's fundraising and funds management activities, and providing volunteer support to the branch libraries. The Friends are even voluntary lobbyists; they work with our county commissioners and state representatives to promote our best interests. And they give a lot of money to KCPL. Last year, the Friends gave over \$40,000 to KCPL programs and services like Summer Library Club and Teen Read Week. This year, they were able to give over \$46,000.

Special thanks go to Bonny Naugher, outgoing president, as well as board members Maggie Carini, Gordon Clem, Paul Brown, and Ginna Mashburn for their heartfelt commitment and exceptional service over the last several years. Welcome to Suzanne Freeman as she moves into the president's chair, along with our new board members and new Friends in the coming year. And, more than anything else, thanks to all our Friends for their many kindnesses and their loving dedication to KCPL.

P.S. A special shout-out goes to Abby Wintker, FOL coordinator, without whom none of the above could take place.



Abby Wintker

Join Us Today

Would you like to be a Friend In Deed? Join the Friends of the Knox County Public Library during the month of October. You will be joining a group of 1,000+ members who are strong supporters of our local public library system. The Friends raise monies through used book sales and membership dues. Three times a year we publish a newsletter full of information and activities sponsored by the Friends. One perk of membership is attending the annual used book sale on opening day, before the general public arrives. The Friends help sponsor the library's Summer Reading Club, the Children's Festival of Reading, and the Knoxville Jazz Festival, as well as providing special items for branches that are not covered by the county budget. Help us celebrate National Friends of the Library Week from October 18-24, 2009, by joining the Friends of the Knox County Public Library. Strong libraries are indicators of the health of a community. Help us make our library system the best.

The Friends thanked Mascot librarian Jackie McSwain and all other valiant library personnel in Knox County by treating them to lunch on October 20 as part of National Friends of the Library Week.

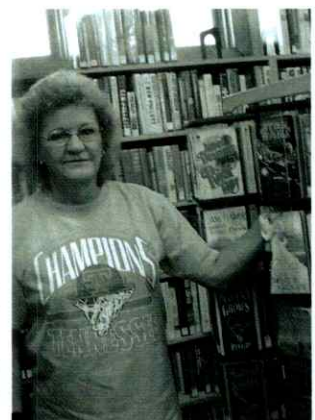


photo by Suzanne Freeman

Ragsdale to head mayors' group

Scott Coolbaugh

Knox County Mayor Mike Ragsdale was elected president of the Tennessee Association of County Mayors earlier this month.

The state's 95 county mayors elected Ragsdale to the position during the annual Tennessee County Services Association Fall Conference, and his term will run until next October.

"I am excited to be able to serve in this leadership role next year and honored by the vote of confidence Tennessee's County Mayors have given me," Ragsdale said in a statement. "I am also looking forward to hosting the TCSA annual conference in Knox County next fall."

A native of Cleveland, Tenn., Ragsdale earned a bachelor's degree from The University Tennessee.

While in college, he earned the Torchbearer award and later received a master's degree from Auburn University, before returning to UT to pursue a doctorate in education.

Ragsdale proceeded to Pellissippi State Technical Community College, where he served as director of records and admissions and dean of administrative affairs.

He was first elected to political office in 1990 as Knox County Commissioner, and according to a release Ragsdale was chosen as Knox County Mayor.

He is currently on the Board of American County Executives/Mayors and recently finished a stint on the Board of Directors for the Greater Knoxville Sports Corporation and served as president to several other community initiatives including the Arts Council of Greater Knoxville, the American Red Cross and the Optimist Club of Knoxville.

UT students weighed in on the recent appointment and recognized the advantages of having Ragsdale lead TCSA.

"It brings Knoxville to the forefront of Tennessee," Eric Horton, senior in accounting, said. "He must be doing a pretty good job if he's being honored by his peers with such a position.

"I think it's good that we've got someone representing Knox County in such a prestigious leadership role," Daniel Hamby, sophomore in psychology, said. "It's important to have someone who can have their voice heard and make a difference for Knoxville."