

News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CHARLOTTE MECKLENBURG LIBRARY HIRES NEW CEO AND CHIEF LIBRARIAN

Charlotte, NC – February 8, 2021 – Charlotte Mecklenburg Library has hired nationally recognized library leader Marcellus “MT” Turner as its next Chief Executive Officer and Chief Librarian after an extensive national search, effective April 1, 2021. Turner comes to the Library with more than 30 years of library experience, most recently serving as the Executive Director and Chief Librarian at The Seattle Public Library (SPL) in Seattle, Wash.

“Marcellus Turner is an exceptional leader whose experience and visionary approach make him the ideal person to lead the development and direction of Charlotte Mecklenburg Library,” said Joe Helweg, Charlotte Mecklenburg Library Board of Trustees Chair and head of the search committee. “A respected voice in the national conversation about the future of libraries, MT will be a strategic local leader for our region with his thought leadership on how urban libraries can become more socially conscious and more impactful in helping to solve the challenges facing our communities today.”

Turner’s three decades of experience includes 10 years at SPL, where he led and managed a system of 27 libraries, including the world-renowned and iconic Central Library, a staff of 679 and more than 500 volunteers. He brings comprehensive experience at every level of system, program and community engagement management of public libraries. Turner is also a highly regarded speaker and guest lecturer, sharing his views and vision on the future of libraries at local, state, national and international library conferences and universities. Turner earned his master’s degree in library science from the University of Tennessee and a bachelor’s degree from Mississippi University for Women.

“I am excited about joining Charlotte Mecklenburg Library at such an important time in its growth and role as a community resource,” Turner said. “There is a tremendous opportunity to better understand and serve the evolving needs of Charlotte Mecklenburg, and I am committed to ensuring the Library supports, enhances and empowers the changing ways our residents live, learn and engage.”

In addition to leading the Library’s essential mission, Turner will assume responsibilities for several important initiatives at Charlotte Mecklenburg Library: activating the Blueprint 2025 Vision Plan; advancing the Library’s commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion; and, supporting the Charlotte Mecklenburg Library Foundation’s continued fundraising while working with County leadership, architects and builders, to realize the completion of the new \$100 million, 115,000-square-foot Main Library. The new Main Library is poised to become a major destination in Uptown Charlotte, designed to be an architecturally distinctive, state-of-the-art, technologically advanced knowledge center, welcoming everyone in the community to access the resources of a 21st century library.

Turner will officially become Charlotte Mecklenburg Library’s CEO and Chief Librarian on April 1, 2021 following the retirement of Lee Keesler, who has led the library since 2012 and served as the 117-year-old public library system’s first CEO. Coleman, Lew, Canny, Bowen led the national search, along with a diverse search committee made up of members of the Board of Trustees, Library Foundation Board and County Leaders.

“The Board of Trustees unanimously approved the appointment of Marcellus Turner, and we are thrilled to have him join Charlotte Mecklenburg Library,” Helweg said. “MT’s accomplished career in governing library systems and his vision for the future of libraries ensures Charlotte Mecklenburg Library will continue to be an engaged, dynamic and invaluable resource for our entire community.”

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Photo caption: Charlotte Mecklenburg Library CEO and Chief Librarian Marcellus “MT” Turner



About Charlotte Mecklenburg Library:

Charlotte Mecklenburg Library is one of America’s leading urban public libraries, serving a community of more than one million citizens in Mecklenburg County, North Carolina. Through 20 locations, targeted outreach and online resources, the Library delivers exceptional services and programs, with a mission to improve lives and build a stronger community. For more, visit cmlibrary.org.

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