

This year I had the pleasure of attending the 3rd National Joint Conference of Librarians of Color (JCLC) from September 26th to September 30th in Albuquerque, New Mexico. JCLC is organized by the ALA ethnic affiliates: Black Caucus of the American Library (BCALA), American Indian Library Association (AILA), Asian Pacific American Librarians Association (APALA), and the Chinese American Librarians Association (CALA). This year's conference brought together librarians of color who were all thrilled to join in fellowship. The theme of ***Gathering All People's: Embracing Culture & Community*** was evident in the diverse topics and cultures represented. Many sessions focused on retention efforts, hiring and support; JCLC was a safe space to share personal experiences and challenges particular to librarians of color in the field of librarianship. I learned so much from the sessions I attended and met wonderful people. The conference was amazing; the sessions I describe below stuck with me the most.

One of the most fascinating sessions I attended was about tribal libraries which are located on reservations. The *History and Currency of Tribal Libraries Sovereignty, Information and Empowerment* led by Native American scholar, Dr. Sandra Littletree and Blackfeet Community College Library Director, Aaron LaFromboise. Dr. Littletree discussed the origins of tribal libraries beginning with the quote "Let me tell you about Indian libraries". Tribal libraries are planned and administered by a tribe, pueblo, village or Native group. Its purpose is to contribute to nation building. Their beginnings originated in treaties with the United States Government that outlined federal support for educational provisions; libraries are included in that description. In the 60s and 70s documents on tribal libraries were disorganized and neglected. In 1974 only 17 Native American librarians were identified in ALA. That number has since increased but there is still poor recruitment of Native librarians. In the late 1970s, modern Native leadership pushed for establishing and improving these libraries. A major victory occurred in Denver 1978 with the White House Preconference on Indian Library & Information Services on or near Reservations. This was a significant step in the development of tribal libraries and it was the first known Indian meeting concerned with library services. The National Indian Omnibus Library Bill mandated federal funding for tribal libraries. As of now 1% of IMLS funding goes to tribal libraries.

After Sandra's introduction into tribal libraries, Director Aaron LaFromboise presented her work as a librarian on Blackfeet Reservation in Browning, Montana. She discussed the role of the library as a lifeline for the community. She experienced difficulties felt in similar cultures where the library may not be a necessity. Some of the reservation residents do not trust the college institution or the library. One of her many goals is to encourage reservation students and residents to see the importance of the library for maintaining Native culture. She mentioned the reservation's tribal council slowly recognizing the library and its ability to maintain written records of Native culture. Traditionally information is shared orally or expressed through art, music and dance. Written knowledge is a less common form of maintaining information in Native culture (and many other cultural societies). LaFromboise hopes to show her students and residents the significance and longevity of this form of knowledge keeping. Her experience as director was heartwarming and inspiring.

Diversity and inclusion remain a significant part of the conversation around librarianship and this was addressed at JCLC. I attended a session entitled *Diversity and Research: Impact on*

Decision Making in Libraries and LIS Education where a panel of library directors, university professors and librarians talked about diversity leadership, implicit bias and stereotyping in workplaces. Attendees shared their experiences involving microaggressions amongst colleagues; for librarians of color, such encounters create anxiety, outrage, a sense of exclusion and workplace stress. Panelists focused on the need for more diversity programs within libraries as well as job descriptions that include diversity requirements or cultural competency components. Another session called *Mentoring the Next Generation of Librarians of Color* emphasized the importance of mentoring. As a tool, mentoring can help with retention and provide librarians of color with a sense of belonging. Speakers Mahasin Aleem and Susan Martinez from Oakland Public Library offered mentoring resources such as articles, ted talks, books and library association programs. I was able to share these resources with my colleagues.

I was grateful to learn as much as I did from the sessions I attended. The conference fostered an environment of love, respect and openness. The sessions I mentioned above are only a snapshot of the conference's robust program. I am so grateful to have had the opportunity to attend JCLC with my mentor. It was an experience I will not forget, and I thank ACRL/DVC for making this possible.