

# Librarian of Congress wants to borrow *Curious George*

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The U.S. Librarian of Congress would like to borrow and exhibit the University of Southern Mississippi's *Curious George* manuscripts and materials.

Librarian of Congress Dr. Carla Hayden asked in person Friday when she met Children's Book Festival Coordinator Karen Rowell during an early celebration of the State Law Library's Bicentennial. Rowell presented Hayden with – what else would one give the nation's top librarian? – books, including one of the children's classic *Curious George* series.

"We'd love to exhibit it in the Library of Congress," Hayden said of the extensive *Curious George* materials held by USM. "It's one of the most significant collections world-wide in children's literature."

Rowell is excited at the prospect.

USM has the literary estate of H.A. and Margret Rey, creators of the popular monkey character *Curious George*. Dr. Lena de Grummond, who taught children's literature at USM, obtained the collection in her extensive work of gathering original materials from authors and illustrators.

"The de Grummond Collection is a treasure and a jewel at the University of Southern Mississippi and it is always an honor to highlight that," said Rowell, coordinator of the Fay B. Kaigler Children's Book Festival at the School of Library and Information Science at USM.

Hayden in her early library career worked with young readers at the Chicago Public Library, where she served as young adult services coordinator from 1979 to 1982, and as a library associate and children's librarian from 1973 to 1979. She said that she came into her first job as a librarian by accident. She spent time at the library between job interviews. The library had openings. She went on to be deputy commissioner and chief librarian of the Chicago Public Library. As the fourteenth Librarian of Congress, she is the first woman and the first African American to lead the national library.

Hayden, who will observe her first anniversary on Sept. 14, said, "The biggest surprise is there is still material to be found." The Library of Congress houses 164 million items on 836 miles of shelving.

State Librarian Stephen Parks said one of state facility's treasures was rediscovered in similar fashion in 2001 when someone opened a drawer and found a folded copy of an 1845 map of the state of Mississippi. Records show that 100 copies were originally produced. The only known surviving copy had been sent to the State Law Library some time earlier from Maryland. The huge map is displayed prominently near the entrance of the Law Library.

Known officially as the State Library, the Law Library is a specialized public library which provides



**Librarian of Congress Dr. Carla Hayden, second from right, is pictured with State Librarian Stephen Parks, Children's Book Festival Coordinator Karen Rowell and Justice Jim Kitchens.**

legal research materials to the judiciary, state agencies, lawyers, students and the general public. Its mission is to collect, preserve, and make available to the public the foundation of Mississippi law. Housed at the Supreme Court, the 265,000-volume library collection includes state and federal legal sources including court decisions and rules, codes, regulations, law reviews and government documents as well as texts that explain law for laymen.

The Law Library will observe its Bicentennial in 2018. A handwritten document of the Law Library's beginnings was on display in honor of Hayden's visit. The Law Library had its inception in an act of the General Assembly of 1818, which authorized the Secretary of the Territory to purchase a set of the acts of the United States Congress and a digest of the laws of the states of the Union. The Law Library was officially established by an act of the Mississippi Legislature in 1838.

The Library of Congress began as a library for the U.S. Congress in 1800. "Over time, it has grown to be what is arguably one of the biggest legal collections in the world," Hayden said. But there's much more there than law. It's a repository of knowledge, culture and creativity, not just in books.

Each year, the Librarian of Congress names 25 movies deemed to be "culturally, historically or aesthetically significant" to the National Film Registry and 25 audio recordings to the Library of Congress National Recording Registry. The selections range from Thomas Edison's first audio recording to the 1987 movie "The Princess Bride," which was inducted into the National Film Registry in 2016. A recent showing of the movie at the Library of Congress drew adoring fans who could recite the dialogue. After singer Gloria Gaynor's 1978 hit "I Will Survive" was placed on the registry earlier this year, she performed at the Library of Congress in May in what the Library called "a celebration of disco culture, music, dance and fashion."

The Library of Congress has first edition Superman, Batman and The Avengers comic books. "The Library of Congress has the largest comic book collection in the world," Hayden said. U.S. Capitol Police closely guarded a special program displaying some of the first editions because of their value.

"It's like a kid in a candy shop," Hayden said.

Hayden's visit was in conjunction with the Mississippi Book Festival at the Capitol on Aug. 19. She and U.S. Congressman Gregg Harper, chairman of the Joint Committees on Printing and the Library of Congress, will kick off the festival at 9 a.m. Saturday, Aug. 19.