

Kimberly Johnson Has Long-Time Love of Libraries

By **EMILY RAMSEY**
Managing Editor

Editor's Note: Tulsa City-County Library CEO Kimberly Johnson is one of Greater Tulsa Reporter's "10 People to Watch in 2017," as announced in its January 2017 issue. GTR was the first news group in Greater Tulsa to introduce "10 People to Watch," which launched in January 2009.

Look for a review of GTR's "10 People to Watch in 2017" in the December issue.

As a self-proclaimed lifetime library user, it is only fitting that Kimberly Johnson would devote her professional life to improving a library system.

"The library has always played a special role in my life," she says.

Johnson, who assumed the helm as Tulsa City-County Library chief executive officer at the beginning of the year, has been with the Tulsa library system since 1998, when she was originally hired as coordinator of the African-American Resource Center at Rudisill Regional Library.

From there, she has held various positions, including library manager, regional director and chief operating officer. Johnson also oversaw the preparation and opening of Librarium.

"Librarium was a project that allowed us to test many of our ideas of ways to address the 21st-century library user," says Johnson, a New York native.

That quality of consistently looking at ways to further the library's effectiveness in meeting community needs, Johnson feels, summariz-

es her aim with the library and the goals of her staff, many of whom have been with the organization for decades, just like Johnson.

"Our staff is passionate about our communities; they want the right books in the hands of the right people," she says.

Johnson had an early experience during her school years with a librarian named Miss Sperling, who impacted her love of books.

"She was welcoming and challenged students to read at the next level," Johnson says.

"At the Tulsa City-County Library, I feel like I'm surrounded by Miss Sperlings."

Johnson's love of books led her to earn her bachelor's degree from the University of Tulsa in secondary education and English literature with her plan being to teach literature.

Although the library was not in her original plans, after reading the description for the job opening of coordinator of the African-American Resource Center at Rudisill Regional Library, a newly created position with the library system, she felt that the position lined up well with her skills and her educational background.

Regarding her professional goals, Johnson always knew that she would pursue a career that allowed her to serve.

"I do my job in service to others: what better place to do that than here at the library?" she says.

During her time as coordinator, Johnson created the historical All-Black Towns Bus Tour, which has continued to run every summer since 1999. The tour shines a light on Oklahoma's history as hav-

ing one of the highest number of all-black towns in the country between 1865 and 1915.

Once Johnson began with the library, "I felt like I had found my place," she says. "The library was a natural fit for me."

She later earned her master's degree from the University of Oklahoma in library and information studies.

Johnson's later jobs with the library put her in management roles, which allowed her to focus on more than serving solely the community but also library employees, she says.

Since Johnson took over as CEO in January, she has made it a goal to visit each library location within the library system.

She completed all of her visits earlier in the year and is currently on her second round.

"My visits allow me to see what our staff is dealing with and how we can improve," she says.

Also, in the past six months, library staff has hosted library systems from Frisco, Texas, and Washington, D.C.

Johnson credits the library's array of cutting-edge offerings as reason for the attention.

"Our library system is something that our customers can be proud of," she says. "We are a model system for the country because of our offerings."

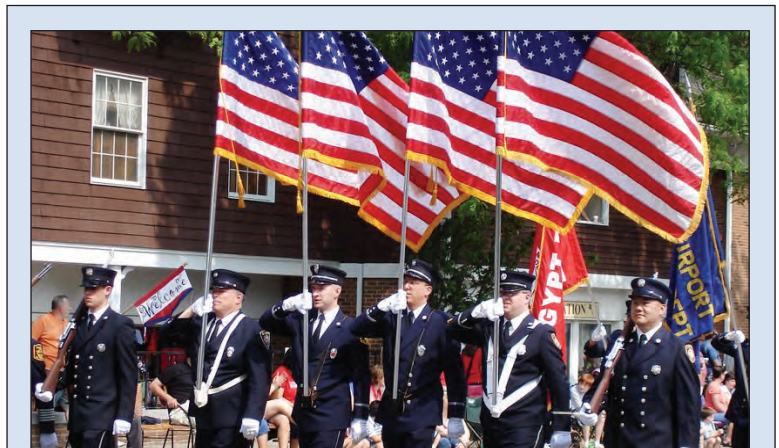
Those offerings include maker spaces, digital literacy labs, audio labs, movies, music, books, spaces for community gatherings—"Think about the value of a library card, that all of these services are free with the card," says Johnson.



Courtesy photo
LIBRARY LOYALIST: Tulsa City-County Library CEO Kimberly Johnson assumed the leadership helm in January, replacing previous CEO Gary Shaffer. Johnson, a New York native, has worked for the Tulsa library system since 1998.

Additionally, the library remains connected with the local schools to provide books for them. The library system has been a part of Books to Treasure for 15 years, a program sponsored by the Zarrow Family Foundation that gives a book to each Tulsa-area second-grader followed by a visit and book signing by the book's author. During summer 2017, the library

saw 52,000 participants in its summer reading program. "We are creating a more literate community," she says. Another benefit of reading? "Books open up new worlds. They evoke empathy and compassion and help make the world better." Spoken like a true book, and library, lover.



HONORING OUR VETERANS: U.S. Veterans will be honored in Tulsa at the Veterans Day Parade that is scheduled for Friday, Nov. 10 to begin at 11 a.m. at 300 S. Boston Ave. Anticipated attendance is 15,000. GTR Publisher Forrest Cameron is a proud veteran of the U.S. Army, where he served in the Military Police.

**Enroll now for
Spring and Summer 2018!**

Three locations. ONE FOCUS. Life changing.

NOC Tonkawa recruiter1@noc.edu 580.628.6200	NOC Enid recruiter2@noc.edu 580.242.6300	NOC Stillwater gateway@noc.edu 405.744.2246
---	--	---

www.noc.edu

We B Trees

CERTIFIED ARBORIST

ISA

- **Fall Fertilization**
- **Winterize Your Trees**
- **With a Fall Trimming**

Call We B Trees

We Care For Trees

918-446-3473

www.webtrees.com

Tim Nall
Certified Arborist
#MW-0199A

MIDTOWN NEWS

Tulsa Native Serves with U.S. Navy

A 2012 Webster High School graduate and Tulsa native is serving in the U.S. Navy as part of the nation's nuclear deterrence mission at Strategic Communications Wing ONE.

Petty Officer 2nd Class Artra Nelson credits a Navy commercial for influencing her decision to join the service.

"I saw a Navy commerial with sailors dressed in their whites and that caught my eye," she says. "When I saw the recruiter at my high school dressed in whites, he educated me on the Navy's opportunities, and I knew that the Navy would give me the job experience and adventure I was seeking."

Nelson is a yeoman assigned to Tinker Air Force Base in Oklahoma City, where the Navy command is headquartered. A Navy yeoman is like a secretary for the squadron and works on evalua-

tion reports, awards, travel and instructions for the command.

The command consists of three squadrons and a wing staff that employs more than 1,200 active-duty sailors who provide maintenance, security, operations, administration, training and logistic support for the TACAMO (Take Charge And Move Out) aircraft fleet.

The Navy's presence aboard an Air Force base in the middle of America may seem like an odd location given its distance from any ocean; however, the central location allows for the deployment of aircraft to both coasts and the Gulf of Mexico on a moment's notice. This quick response is key to the success of the nuclear deterrence mission.

"The nuclear threat is real and our mission allows us to deter danger and protect our country," says Nelson.



Courtesy Senior Chief Petty Officer Gary Ward, U.S. Navy

PROUD TO SERVE: Artra Nelson, a 2012 Webster High School graduate, currently serves at Tinker Air Force Base as a Navy yeoman.

Dairy Queen Expands in Greater Tulsa

By EMILY RAMSEY
Managing Editor

Despite the closings of two area Dairy Queens, the company is planning to further expand in the Tulsa area with its growing Grill & Chill restaurant concept.

Currently, the company has stores in the Tulsa area, with a plan to add upwards of seven additional stores in the next five years, says Dairy Queen Vice President of Development Mike Mettler.

Dairy Queen's Grill & Chill concept launched in 2002. Currently, there are more than 2,134 Grill & Chill restaurants in 46 states.

"Dairy Queen's Grill and Chill concept makes up 50 percent of the company but is currently 100 percent of company growth," he says, "making us the fastest growing burger store in the U.S. currently."

About 85 Grill & Chill restaurants are being added across the country per year.

The Grill & Chill concept endeavors to round out Dairy Queen offerings by combining its historical and nostalgic cold treats with a lunch and dinner menu, including burgers and chicken sandwiches, a \$5 lunch special, and artisan-style sandwiches.

There are various factors in the

company's decision as to where to open new store locations, Mettler says, factors such as daily traffic numbers, retail and residential developments, area income levels, and the area's proximity to families and community activities.

The company operates under a franchise model, so executives are currently working to identify local, potential franchise owners and the appropriate real estate locations with the goal to begin construction on two new stores in 2018, Mettler says.

Two stores would continue to be developed for the following five years.

CENTRAL LIBRARY BIRTHDAY



Courtesy Tulsa City-County Library

DOWNTOWN PARTY: Jessica Sanchez, Central Library teen library associate, left, and Sally Frasier, Tulsa City-County Library commissioner, celebrate Central Library's first birthday with Buddy Bookworm and Central Library readers in October.



Courtesy Tulsa City-County Library

ONE YEAR ANNIVERSARY: Central Library staff pose during the library's birthday-themed celebration on Oct. 1. Since opening last year, Central Library's daily library customer counts average nearly 2,000 per day. Library features include a maker space, digital literacy lab and glass-enclosed study rooms overlooking downtown Tulsa.

Parents with Children in School:



Looking for Part-Time Employment?

Represent the GTR Newspapers and Online Marketing Team

Enjoy flexible work • Make many new contacts



For more information, call 918-254-1515



La Chemie

Pure Botanical Skincare & Aromatherapy
Nature's Own Anti-Aging System

La Chemie is now available online at lachimie.com!

*For a limited time receive a LOVELY GIFT with purchase!

Our unique luxury skincare line produces remarkable results for your skin by harnessing the natural power of the purest therapeutic grade essential oils and origin-sourced natural ingredients from around the world.

La Chemie's skincare line is truly effective, gentle, natural and ideal for all skin types. La Chemie products also provide amazing aromatherapy benefits to soul and spirit through the enchanting, living fragrances of our premium quality essential oils.

Inspired by the natural beauty and simple living of the Provence, France, our luxury skincare line reduces the appearance of wrinkles, restores youthful radiance and provides smoothing toning and continuous hydration to keep your skin youthful and glowing with health.

La Chemie is available at select boutiques and leading 5-star hotels such as the Spa at Beverly Wilshire, Beverly Hills (A Four Seasons Hotel) and online at lachimie.com

GET NATURE'S BEST PRODUCTS FOR RADIANT YOUTHFUL SKIN AT LACHEMIE.COM



Proud to be a VIP Amenity Vendor for the Beverly Wilshire, Beverly Hills and Red Carpet VIP Gift at Beverly Wilshire, Beverly Hills pre-Academy Awards Red Carpet Event!