

WOMEN AND POWER

Women are shaping Oklahoma's future. We highlight a handful of the thousands of female leaders vying for change and fighting to make the state - and the world - a better place to live and work. From a philanthropic doctor and a nationally recognized banker to a tribal chief and a civil-rights lawyer, these women are the state's brave pioneers.

By Tara Malone and Tracy LeGrand

Keeping Libraries Relevant Kimberly Johnson CEO, Tulsa City-County Library

As leader of one of the United States' best programs in the field, Kim Johnson intends to keep the Tulsa City-County Library stellar, relevant and rocking that "cool factor."

Johnson has had a great start since beginning her tenure in 2017 by opening the nation's only public library Starbucks coffee shop in downtown's renovated, \$55 million Central Library.

After nearly 21 years working for the library system, most notably as its first coordinator of the African-American Resource Center, Johnson is the first African-American to hold the top job. Since arriving in Tulsa from Bronx, New York, Johnson started the library's annual public tour of Oklahoma's historic all-black towns and the first countywide reading initiative, Tulsa Metro Reads, nationally televised on C-SPAN/Book TV.

"We're considered one of the best library systems in the country because of continuing hard work," Johnson says. "It's a very intentional vision to be a 21st-century library by removing barriers to service and providing convenience. Libraries around the country are working to remain relevant, which we do by listening and being nimble in our responses."

"In this day and age, if you don't innovate and remain relevant, people go elsewhere. So ... we'll be looking at all of our locations, reviewing services and expanding where it makes sense, like with a children's satellite library to debut soon at the Gathering Place. We've also started curbside delivery of materials at some locations ... and that shows you how we'll keep showing up in places you don't expect us to be."

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