



TO: Mayor and Council

FROM: Elaine Hart, Interim City Manager

DATE: November 15, 2016

SUBJECT: **Announcing the retirement of Brenda Branch, Director of Libraries**

It is with mixed emotions that I announce the retirement of Brenda Branch, Director of Libraries, effective December 31, 2016. It is difficult, if not impossible, to sum up her achievements throughout her almost forty years of dedicated service with Austin Public Library and the City of Austin.

Brenda began her career with the Austin Public Library in 1977, and has served as Director since 1991. During her tenure, Ms. Branch oversaw the John Henry Faulk Central Library, 20 branches, the Austin History Center and Recycled Reads bookstore. Under her outstanding leadership, the Austin Public Library was recognized as "National Library of the Year" by *Library Journal* in 1993. More recently, Brenda provided the professional guidance and expertise needed to make the New Central Library a reality. When completed, it will be an iconic landmark that all of Austin will be proud of, and on which, Ms. Branch has left her mark.

As a lasting testament to Brenda's commitment to education and fostering a strong community, she has served as the Executive Sponsor for the City's Mentor/Tutor program for the past ten years. Under her guidance, City employees have mentored, tutored, and offered support to hundreds of children and made a lasting impact on the future generation of Austin.

I am so appreciative of Brenda's efforts during her tenure. She has cultivated a staff of creative, innovative, and dedicated employees, built a library system that provides outstanding service to Austin residents, and given endlessly to the community. She has dedicated not just her career, but her life, to literacy and public service. This community could not ask more of her.

While we congratulate Brenda on this milestone in her life and career, we are certainly sad to see her go.

I will appoint an Acting Director of Libraries prior to Ms. Branch's departure at the end of the year, and will keep you apprised.

xc: CMO Executive Team
Brenda Branch, Director of Libraries
COA Department Directors/Officers
COA Assistant Directors/Officers