



# **Ellen Popit Awarded Prestigious Crystal Honor Award By Library Educators**

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CARBONDALE — Ellen Popit, Associate Director of Illinois Heartland Library System and resident of West Frankfort, Ill., was awarded the prestigious Crystal Honor Award by the Association of Illinois School Library Educators, also known as AISLE, at the organization's recent annual conference. AISLE is a professional organization that spans the state of Illinois and works to promote lifelong learning by the students of Illinois and to provide leadership and support for the development, promotion, and improvement of the school library media profession and programs in Illinois.

The Crystal Honor Award recognizes distinguished support of/or contribution to the school library profession, school libraries in Illinois, or the AISLE. This significant award is highly selective, initiated by a member of the AISLE board, and awarded only at the discretion of the board.

Leslie Bednar, Executive Director at Illinois Heartland Library System (IHLS) and a close colleague to Popit, said, *“As an active member of the school library community throughout her career, Ellen is a respected and sought-after voice statewide. member libraries benefit from her keen sense of direction, and she is most deserving of this honor.”* IHLS is the state agency that serves the public, school, academic, and special libraries of southern Illinois and parts of central Illinois.

Popit received a B.A. in Education from St. Mary's in Notre Dame and her Master of Library Service from Rutgers University. Popit started her career in 1975 as a school librarian. She went on to work at the Shawnee Library System, where she spent 18 years as the youth services consultant. She served as the membership director of IHLS before becoming the Associate Director.

Popit has served on the Institute for School and Public Librarians Steering Committee; as mentor for Synergy and ILEAD U, two leadership programs by the Illinois State Library; as a member of the boards of the Illinois Library Association and Rebecca Caudill Young Readers Book Awards; and as a member of the Illinois State Library Advisory Committee.

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Illinois Heartland Library System (IHLS) has over 520 member libraries in central and southern Illinois. IHLS member libraries develop partnerships and network together to share resources. Libraries can request materials for their patrons from other libraries throughout the state, saving taxpayer dollars. Funding is provided through the Illinois State Library and the Secretary of State from revenue appropriated by the Illinois General Assembly or provided by the U.S. Institute of Museum and Library Services under the provisions of the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA).