

# St. Ambrose Catholic School Renames Library for Longtime Director

by Sydney Sinks, News Reporter  
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GODFREY - On Friday morning, students and staff gathered at the St. Ambrose Catholic School library for the unveiling of their new book vending machine and a surprise ceremony to honor longtime library director Maralee Juravich.

Juravich, 92, has worked in libraries for most of her life. She has been with the St. Ambrose Catholic School for over 30 years. At the ceremony on Sept. 1, the school renamed its library to the Maralee Juravich Student Library to honor her.

“One librarian, in particular, has been the backbone and the source of inspiration and the go-getter that makes this library happen year in and year out,” Principal Bob Baird said to the students, staff members and parents who were present. “Miss Maralee has been our head librarian for some 30 years, organizing this library and ensuring that students year in and year out can check out the books and can be passionate and excited.”

The crowd cheered her on as staff members unveiled the new sign. Juravich’s grandchildren, who attend the school, greeted her with flowers and hugs. The dedication was a surprise to Juravich, who confessed later that she almost missed it entirely.

“Frankly, I’m shocked. I wasn’t going to come, because it’s so hard to get up in the morning,” she laughed. “I kept telling everybody, ‘I don’t think I’ll make it.’ Everybody kept saying, ‘You got to go. I don’t care how you feel.’”

Juravich added that the library was just a fraction of the size it is now when she first started. With the addition of the book vending machine, which also launched today, it has grown once again.

St. Ambrose students will receive tokens, which they can use to “purchase” a book from the machine to take home. The machine is stocked with books for all grade levels.

The [Alton-Godfrey Rotary Club](#) has donated book vending machines to several local schools. Former Rotary Club President Antione E. Williams and Rotary Club Officer Ron Mayhew were present, and they both expressed their excitement to provide supplies like this to St. Ambrose.





“Rotary’s motto is ‘Service Above Self,’” Williams explained. “So being able to contribute to our community and do things like this, especially for the youth, impacting their future, impacting their lives...it makes us feel good. Not only feel good, but it justifies what we do.”

At the ceremony on Sept. 1, a few students from the sixth, seventh and eighth grades were given the first tokens to test out the machine. As they chose their books, Baird explained that every staff member would give out two tokens a month to students who demonstrate good character.

“They’re setting a positive example for you,” he told the younger students. “So look at these examples, and try to follow those examples...We’re all being called to live like Jesus, and these folks are doing a tremendous job of it.”

Students and teachers returned to class and the rest of the crowd cleared as the ceremony concluded. Surrounded by her family and fellow librarians, Juravich was clearly touched and still surprised, her eyes wandering back to the sign above her as she hugged her young granddaughter.

“I’ve been in a lot of different places and libraries,” she finally said. “This is my favorite.”

