

Meet... Lori Belongia

Lori Belongia retired as the Director of Everett Roehl Marshfield Public Library amid the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020¹. She served as a library administrator across four decades, witnessing a dramatic transformation of a field that, originally, she never intended to pursue¹. Belongia first stepped into a library role in the 1970s at Brown County Library in Green Bay as a high school student working six days a week¹. She continued working in libraries while studying for a bachelor's degree in Social Services and Human Growth & Development. After graduation, Belongia was a part-time page at the McMillan Memorial Library and eventually accepted a full-time position as an associate librarian at the information desk. This job piqued her intense curiosity and love of seeking information¹. Belongia debated then whether to go on for a master's degree in social work, the original field she'd planned, or one in library and information science.

She chose the challenge of earning an advanced degree while raising a young family and working full-time. After many drives back and forth to Madison, halfway through the program Belongia accepted a job as a circulation librarian supervisor at the Marshfield library in 1987. Two years later, she successfully completed her master's program and became the adult services supervisor. She became assistant director in the mid-90's, and then acting director after the director left on medical leave. In 2002, she formally stepped into the director's position.

During Belongia's career as a librarian and director in Marshfield, she used her early social work training to foster collaborations with many organizations to advance their missions, improving the community support network. Among those efforts, she is most gratified to have worked with various groups with an interest in history to improve the research resources. An effort with Marshfield Area United Way, established an information and referral service that later merged with the current 211 service. Seeing a need for literacy improvement opportunities, she worked with various groups over the years to see that tutoring and materials are available. After countless development and fundraising meetings Belongia saw the construction completion of the Everett Roehl Marshfield Public Library, which opened in 2016. She also celebrated the completion of the 2nd Street Community Center portion of the project.

She twice received recognition awards from Mainstreet Marshfield and was named one of the by the Marshfield News Herald's 2016 People of the Year.

Currently, Belongia is a member of the Marshfield Area Respite Care board, the Hannah Center Board, the Marshfield Area Community Foundation. She is a member of the Friends of Jurustic Park, Marshfield Area Genealogy Group, and Friends of Marshfield Public Library. Spending time with family and friends is an intense pleasure. Participating in community improvement opportunities brings satisfaction.

