



Library Board Meeting

February 18, 2026

Board President Report

I want to take a few moments today to honor the memory and legacy of Yvonne Davis, whose leadership continues to shape this institution and this community in ways that still matter.

In July of 1974, Yvonne Davis was elected President of the Board of Trustees of the Evanston Public Library. In doing so, she became the first woman president in the library's 101-year history. That moment was not symbolic alone—it was consequential. It represented a shift in who was seen as capable of stewarding one of Evanston's most important public institutions.

Her service to this library began years earlier. She joined the board in 1969 and also served on the board of the North Suburban Library System, demonstrating an understanding that libraries are not just buildings, but connective civic spaces—places where access, learning, and democracy intersect.

Yvonne Davis also understood leadership as something rooted deeply in community. She was a charter member of the Evanston North Shore Alumni Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated, grounding her work in a tradition of scholarship, service, and collective responsibility. Her leadership was never just positional; it was relational.

And for me, this story is also personal. Yvonne Davis was my husband's fourth-grade teacher. That matters. It reminds us that leaders shape institutions, yes—but they also shape people, often in ways that ripple forward long after titles change and terms end.

What I find most inspiring about Yvonne Davis is that she built a legacy in spaces that were not designed to preserve it. Legacy is especially fragile in institutions that speak the language of tradition while remaining deeply committed to long-standing norms of power—norms that often interrupt, minimize, or move past the leadership of Black women. Building legacy in such spaces requires more than excellence; it requires endurance, clarity, and a refusal to disappear.

It also requires the precision of truth. Recently, I've been struck by how easily the complexities of our work can be flattened by imprecise language—where the systemic, 'racialized' realities we navigate are mischaracterized or reduced to simpler, louder terms. But if we cannot name a thing correctly, we cannot honor it fully. Yvonne Davis didn't just 'succeed' in spite of difficulty; she navigated a racialized system with a clarity of purpose that we are still learning from today.

As her Soror, I understand my leadership here not as coincidence, but as continuity. Honoring Yvonne Davis means not only remembering what she did, but recommitting ourselves to the



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responsibility of protecting the legacies we claim to value—by noticing them, naming them, and allowing them to guide how we lead today.

May we do that work with the same courage and care she showed us.

Tracy Fulce

She/Her/Hers

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