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For Immediate Release

Mary Frances Cooper Appointed Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh's 11th Director

Announcement follows comprehensive national search

(PITTSBURGH, PA – December 13, 2011) Last evening, after an extensive national search, Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh's Board of Trustees unanimously and enthusiastically selected Mary Frances Cooper, MLS, a nationally recognized library leader, as the 11th Director in the 116-year history of the Library. She will assume her new post as President & Director on January 1, 2012.

Ms. Cooper, who has served as the Library's Deputy Director since 2008, is uniquely qualified to provide leadership and direction to the operations of Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh (CLP). During her career she has worked in all facets of library service and has distinct experience in the operations of urban public libraries, including New York Public Library (NY), Minneapolis Public Library (MN) and the Louisville Free Public Library (KY). In her current position she oversees Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh's Main and Neighborhood Library Services, Youth Services, Teen Services, Volunteer Services and Library for the Blind & Physically Handicapped.

As Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh's Deputy Director, Ms. Cooper has built solid relationships with other library leaders in the region and across the state; has been integral in strengthening the Library's relationships with community groups, individual residents, and library Friends groups; and has led service innovations including the CLP-LYNCS (the Library in your Neighborhood, Community and School) outreach program. Ms. Cooper also has served as President of the Electronic Information Network board, leading change and improvements in library technology services throughout the county. The strengths she brings from her experiences at Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh and throughout the country include direct oversight of multi-branch library operations, collections and budgets, community interaction, strategic visioning and collaborative planning.

"This is a very exciting time for public libraries and for Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh," said Ms. Cooper. "Libraries around the country are rethinking services based upon the increasing role of technology and ever-evolving work and community environments. At the same time the people have not changed fundamentally; children still need story time and summer reading programs, teens need reading material to help them understand themselves and their world, and adults need assistance with everything from basic job search strategies to sophisticated research. I understand and embrace the challenge of balancing all these competing forces in order to best serve the people of Pittsburgh."

In her new position, Ms. Cooper will play a leadership role in championing the changing and increasingly important role of the library in society. She will lead Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh's efforts to secure new avenues for sustainable and predictable funding and continue efforts to increase philanthropic and public sector support from current and new donors, as recommended by the Public Private Task Force on Sustainable Library Funding. Ms. Cooper will lead a comprehensive and collaborative strategic planning process that defines Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh's vision and mission for the future and work to strengthen the Library's relationships with key community partners. Ms. Cooper has a two-year contract, with a third year option to serve as President and Director, with an annual salary of \$170,000.

According to Lou Testoni, Chair of the Library's Board of Trustees, Ms. Cooper was the unanimous choice of the search committee and the board. "Mary Frances is a respected library professional whose experience in urban library management will help catapult Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh into the next chapter of its history. Throughout the search process, her qualifications in community leadership, planning and facilitation stood out as skills that will benefit the Library greatly as we begin to plan strategically for the future."

During the search for its new President and Director, the Library was assisted by a national executive search firm, which networked with more than 375 professionals representing the library and business communities. A 12-person committee, comprising Library trustees and staff, recommended Ms. Cooper's selection to the full board after a comprehensive process that included conversations with staff, Friends Groups and stakeholders, the review of more than 40 formal applicants, reference and credential evaluations and an extensive interview process.

A series of informal meetings will be scheduled in January in order for the public to meet with Ms. Cooper to hear about her vision and exchange ideas.

Editor's Note: Ms. Cooper is available for 10-minute interviews this afternoon (December 13). Mr. Testoni is available for 10-minute interviews tomorrow morning (December 14). To schedule an interview, please contact Suzanne Thinnis at 412.578.2458.

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About Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh

Engaging our Community in Literacy and Learning

Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh contributes to the educational attainment, economic development, and cultural enrichment of the region. Through critical services such as early learning programs for children, job search assistance and computer and Internet access, the Library fosters lifelong learning and is a renowned leader among the nation's libraries. With more than 2 million visitors and 3.5 million items borrowed each year, Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh is the region's most visited asset and one of the largest public libraries in Pennsylvania. Established in 1895 by philanthropist Andrew Carnegie as a public trust to be funded by the community, the Library derives approximately 90% of its annual operating budget from public or government sources, including the Allegheny County Regional Asset District (RAD), the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and the City of Pittsburgh.