



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Thomas F. O'Mara

## Library Advocacy Day 2017!

THOMAS F. O'MARA March 1, 2017

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We are fortunate throughout the Southern Tier and Finger Lakes regions, and statewide, to benefit from an outstanding network of public libraries providing access to books and so many other activities, learning materials, and civic, cultural and economic opportunities.

Albany, N.Y., March 1--Today is the New York Library Association's (NYLA) annual "**Library Advocacy Day**" at the state capital.

Senator O'Mara, who's serving as the Legislative Sponsor for this year's Advocacy Day, has been meeting with regional library representatives, as well as the NYLA.

In the photo above, the senator is shown with NYLA Executive Director Jeremy Johannesen (l.) and NYLA Director of Government Relations & Advocacy Mike Neppl (far r.) in The Well of the Legislative Office Building.

The NYLA is recognized as the voice of the library community in New York State. The oldest state library association in America, the NYLA represents school, college, special and public libraries, library staff, trustees, and students statewide. It is the only statewide organization dedicated to advocating on behalf of all libraries and library staff.

At its 123rd Annual Conference and Trade Show last November, the NYLA honored Senator O'Mara with the association's 2016 **"Outstanding Advocate for Libraries Award."** According to NYLA, the award "recognizes and honors an individual who, or a group that, has made a far reaching, sustained contribution to the promotion and/or support of library and information services to the people of New York State or residents within a designated service area within the State."

Senator O'Mara said, "Support for libraries has always been a top priority. Fighting for our libraries is an investment in education, economic growth and civic quality for parents and families, seniors and the community at large. Our libraries play a fundamental role in local workforce development, career training and job placement. They are cherished public institutions, and we are fortunate throughout the **Southern Tier** and Finger Lakes regions to benefit from an outstanding network of public libraries providing access to books and so many other activities, learning materials, and civic, cultural and economic opportunities."

He noted that public libraries across New York State serve over 19 million patrons annually.

Throughout his tenure in the Legislature, the senator has been a strong supporter of Southern Tier and Finger Lakes public libraries, recognizing their central importance to the

civic, cultural and educational fabric of area communities. He has fought for increased state support for the Library Construction Grant Program. The 2016-17 state budget increased funding for the program by \$5 million to \$19 million, as well including \$95.6 million in state aid to public libraries, a \$4-million increase. It's important progress representing the highest aid level since 2008, according to the New York Library Association.