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Patricia “Pat” Sari, Library Technical Services Manager at Joseph T. Simpson Public Library, Named July 2026 Employee of the Month

Mechanicsburg, Pa. – Pat Sari, Technical Services Manager at Joseph T. Simpson Public Library, has been named Employee of the Month for July 2026 by the Cumberland County Library System Foundation.

Employee of the Month nominations are open to the public and celebrate outstanding customer service. Exemplary Library System employees are nominated by patrons, peers, and co-workers. Pat was nominated by Simpson’s former executive director, now library patron Sue Erdman.

Sue’s nomination starts with, “Forty-three years ago, Pat joined the Joseph T. Simpson Public Library staff on July 15, 1983. On July 23, 2026, Pat closes this chapter of her life with fond memories of her time at Simpson Library.”

In her current role as Technical Services Manager, Pat oversees ordering, processing, and collection maintenance. Patron access has always been a priority for Pat. What will a patron type in the online catalog to find the book? Will the book they want come up in their search? Classification is an art and a science, something a regular patron never thinks about. But the behind-the-scenes work in cataloging is very exact and specific, following pre-established rules. Former executive director Christine Metcalfe taught Pat the ins and outs of collection management, and Pat has continued to enhance her skills in this area over four decades.

Inventory control is a big part of Pat's patron-access philosophy. She has always embraced the opportunity to conduct inventories of the collection starting with pre-computer inventories when she used the printed shelf list to match items on the shelf, flagging missing items on the cards. When the library system adopted computerized inventories using inventory wands, Pat became a skilled user of the new technology. If the item was missing, Pat wanted the computer record to reflect this, so patrons don't look for something that can't be found. Pat would ensure that after a period of time, those missing records would be deleted from the catalog.

Pat also embraced call number changes and when those were implemented system wide, she went back through Simpson's collection and printed new spine labels. Staff worked diligently to affix the new labels. At one time the Teen books (T) were changed to YA for young adult as that was the library trend. Years later, they were changed back to T for Teen. Fiction (F) and Mysteries (M) used to contain only the first three letters of the author's last name but were changed to provide more information on the spine label to improve shelving and finding of the items. She has overseen many moves, changes, and shifts to collections with various buildings and building projects, each requiring edits to records and new spine labels.

Pat has worked to classify vinyl records, video cassettes, and audio cassettes, all of which are no longer part of Simpson's collection.

She has used four circulation systems (Winnebago, Dynix, Horizon, and Sierra). She has learned how to use computers, the Internet, Dynix command-line email, Outlook email in Windows, and downloadable media through OverDrive. She saw the retiring of the paper card catalog and the shelf list and assisted in converting to electronic data records for the shared online catalog. She has worked through multiple iterations of online catalogs and library websites. Pat constantly adapts and is a highly skilled user of the library's connected network of computerized records and systems.

In all this change, Pat still fondly recalls the Gaylord machines used for checking out materials and the “thunking” sound it emitted every time a card was inserted in the machine.

Pat has seen the Friends of Simpson Library in their infancy in the early 1980s, holding a single book sale on Jubilee Day using books stored in a one-car garage, to now having a dedicated off-site space of more than 4000 square feet for their book sale operations.

Today, Pat spends some of her time at various services desks assisting customers, but the bulk of her time is spent with behind-the-scenes work keeping the collection up to date.

Pat has experienced incredible growth and change at the Simpson Library during her tenure and is proud of the staff for the great service they provide to our community.

“Pat has been a joy to work with during my 29 years at Simpson Library. Her commitment to quality library service and meeting patron needs through collection development has been outstanding,” said her nominator, Sue Erdman, library patron and former Executive Director of the Joseph T. Simpson Public Library.

Carolyn Blatchley, Executive Director of the Cumberland County Library System, credits Pat with playing a huge role in her early learning about CCLS computers and classification specifics in CCLS. “Pat has always had an insightful approach to library management, and her ability to provide historical context while advancing libraries into the future is admirable,” said Blatchley upon reading this nomination. “Pat was a driving force in a crucial time of change for libraries, and her impact will be felt beyond her retirement.”

To nominate a Cumberland County Library System staffer for Employee of the Month, click on the scrolling banner on the www.cumberlandcountylibraries.org homepage or send an email to libraryfoundation@cumberlandcountylibraries.org. Include your contact

information, your nominee's name and library, and a couple of paragraphs illustrating your nominee's qualities and accomplishments.

The Cumberland County Library System, an agency of Cumberland County Pennsylvania, provides technical, financial, administrative, and training support to the public libraries in Cumberland County. The Library Foundation is a registered 501(c)(3) tax exempt organization committed to supporting the Cumberland County Library System and public libraries in Cumberland County, Pennsylvania. Governed by a volunteer board of directors representing the member libraries and the community at large, the Library Foundation is also an Educational Improvement Organization (EIO), approved to receive Educational Improvement Tax Credit (EITC) program contributions for the Summer Learning and School-Year STEM programs.

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