

## MAGAZINE

# Stark Library IT Director Brad Sayre shares favorite thing about library, current reads



**Kelsey Davis**

The Repository

Published 5:40 a.m. ET March 22, 2022

Brad Sayre is the IT Director of Stark Library. Here he shares what his job entails, his favorite thing about Stark Library and what he has been reading lately.

**Q. I understand you are the IT Director at Stark Library. Can you tell me what your job entails?**

**A.** I advise the strategic direction for the library district's technology infrastructure and provide oversight and management for the project and customer (co-worker) service activities of my department.

Examples of my focus areas would include patron service point technology, such as self-checkout or copy machines, computers for use by both staff and library patrons, internet and branch-network connectivity, and server architecture. All of this is a fancy way to say that I spend the majority of my waking moments in, or pondering about, meetings and then rely heavily on the expertise of the most high-functioning IT team I've ever had the opportunity to lead.

**Q. How did you come to work at the library in your current position?**

**A.** I began my IT career in 2003 as a network engineer consulting many different Cleveland and Columbus area clients, including the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. I transitioned to department management in 2006 and have since served in positions of department or corporate leadership for a small number of organizations in a wide breadth of industries. Most notably, I spent seven years as the Director of Technology for a large local player in the distribution industry.

Coming from the private sector, what intrigued me most about the library was their ambitious technology outlay. When I arrived in early 2018, we were piloting patron-service solutions that were rooted in robotics and automation, self-service product delivery, and RFID inventory management. These are all exciting fields with many familiarities to my experience in supply chain logistics and distribution. Many of these pilot projects remain as permanent additions to our service offering in the form of 24/7 holds pickup lockers, RFID-enabled self-checkout and many other digital platforms that uplift, enrich or merely offer a simple convenience to our patrons.

**Q. If you could tell *About* readers one thing about Stark Library, what would you want them to know?**

**A.** Everyone in the organization cares deeply about the communities in which we live and serve. We truly are living out our vision statement to “be a trusted guide in the community — inviting, inspiring and empowering all people to pursue creativity and lifelong learning.” All of our decisions are rooted in these aspirations. They are woven into our organizational culture and into the heart and soul of every employee.

The most poignant and impactful example of this for me personally has been the divergence from the concept of profitability. I’ve been blessed with the opportunity to have worked for employers who genuinely have the best interest of their employees in mind, and who strive to engage in customer service or common business practices that are ethical and decent.

It sounds trite or obvious perhaps, but it’s a completely different and refreshing dynamic to work in an environment where profitability is not just replaced as the key decision factor but removed entirely from the goal-setting structure and cultural mindset at all organizational levels. Replacing the concept of profitability with those of financial stewardship and fiscal responsibility is one example of many that permit and invoke a shift of focus from looking inward at the organization itself to considerations outward and toward our duty to enrich Stark County, our local communities and even the individual households within our service area and beyond.

**Q. What’s your favorite thing about the library?**

**A.** Speaking as both a staff member and patron, it’s just an amazing thing to be a part of. One misconception that I had as an adult and corporate professional is that “library” is just a building. I’ve come to learn that library and librarianship are a philosophy. They’re a way of life which promotes and supports equal, equitable and confidential access to knowledge, history and all manner of educational or recreational resources. It really elevates library from

being a warehouse or structural landmark to something that everyone in the world should want to take pride in.

**Q. Please share any other details about your job or Stark Library that you'd like About readers to know.**

**A.** We always have a lot of exciting things going on in our department, and that leads to constant improvements or additions to library services. Since we're involved in library infrastructure and internal customer service for staff, we don't interface directly with members of our patronage very often. However, all of our projects are geared toward delivering more convenience, greater access, better privacy and security, and a continuously improving experience for everyone who walks in our doors or browses our website, staff or otherwise.

## **On Brad's Bookshelf**

**What are you currently reading?**

I'm the type of reader who has six bookmarks in the middle of vastly different books ranging from the ergodic horror of *Mark Z. Danielewski's "House of Leaves"* to heavy reads such as *John Locke's "Two Treatises of Government."*

**Have you ever read a book that changed your life or your views on a specific topic?**

Absolutely. My parents were both chemical engineers. Very analytical. One is an atheist, and the other a devout Christian. I read a lot of philosophy, cosmological physics and apologetics. My worldview is torn down and rebuilt constantly. One book in particular that flipped me on my head was *Gerald Schroeder's "Genesis and the Big Bang."*

**What is your guilty pleasure book?**

*"Jane Eyre"* by *Charlotte Brontë*. When I break from punishing myself with philosophy and science, I escape to poetry and classic romance. I quote lines from this book to my wife on occasion.

**Do you have a go-to book for vacations?**

Whichever of the half-dozen unfinished books my hand falls on. I try to aim for *fiction* or *poetry* to keep things light, but I don't often read books twice, no matter how good they are.

## **What is your favorite book twist?**

*“Ender’s Game” by Orson Scott Card.* The entire ending took me by surprise.

## **What is the last book that made you cry?**

I don’t read a lot of books that invoke that kind of emotion, but I couldn’t keep it together when I read *“Of Mice and Men” by John Steinbeck.*

*We’ve partnered with Stark Library to bring you a fun, monthly feature, highlighting all things books and reading, plus insider’s looks at the library itself. This content is sponsored by Stark Library. To learn more about the library, visit [StarkLibrary.org](https://StarkLibrary.org).*