

## News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **CHARLOTTE MECKLENBURG LIBRARY RENAMES BRANCH IN HONOR OF ALLEGRA WESTBROOKS**

Ms. Westbrooks was first African American both to serve as a professional librarian at the Library and as a public library supervisor in NC

**Charlotte, NC – May 1, 2020** – Charlotte Mecklenburg Library announced the renaming of its Beatties Ford Regional Library to Allegra Westbrooks Regional Library – Beatties Ford Road. The renaming ceremony and celebration, originally planned for April 25, 2020, is postponed until a later date when the Library resumes operations. The Library Board of Trustees pursued the renaming of the branch—the first time a Library branch has been named for an individual—for Ms. Westbrooks who was the first African American librarian at the former Public Library of Charlotte and Mecklenburg County and called the Beatties Ford Road community home. On April 15, 2020, a new sign was erected outside the branch located at 2412 Beatties Ford Road, Charlotte, 28216.

The renaming provides an opportunity to celebrate the life and legacy of Ms. Westbrooks who served her community for many years. “Ms. Westbrooks was a mentor and inspiration to many library and community leaders, and was a tireless advocate for reading, libraries, and education,” says Rob Harrington, chair of the Charlotte Mecklenburg Library Board of Trustees and attorney with Robinson Bradshaw. “We’re excited to share the good news with the community about Ms. Westbrooks who was an extraordinary leader, library professional and role model, and we look forward to celebrating the renaming with the community after the Library reopens.”

Ms. Westbrooks, born in Cumberland, MD., in 1921 and raised in Fayetteville, NC, was hired by the Public Library of Charlotte & Mecklenburg County in 1947. Prior to desegregation, Ms. Westbrooks managed the only library serving African American residents in Charlotte at the time—the Brevard Street Library for Negroes. In 1957, Ms. Westbrooks was promoted to Supervisor of Branches, making her the first African American public library supervisor in North Carolina. She served in this role for many years, overseeing significant expansion of the library system, until her retirement in 1984. Ms. Westbrooks passed away in April 2017 at the age of 96.

The Allegra Westbrooks Regional Library - Beatties Ford Road opened on April 20, 1997, replacing the historic North Branch that served this neighborhood since 1957. The 19,645 sq. ft. branch is located in the heart of Charlotte’s Northwest business and residential corridor and serves a population with diverse needs.

“The Library plans to move forward with a celebration of Ms. Westbrooks, her legacy and the official renaming of the Allegra Westbrooks Regional Library at a date and time to be determined later this summer,” says Dana Eure, acting Library director for Charlotte Mecklenburg Library.

The novel COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic represents a serious public health threat for communities of all sizes. As central public spaces and trusted resources for health and wellness information, Charlotte Mecklenburg Library took the proactive measure to close all facilities on March 17, 2020 to encourage social distancing while reducing the spread of disease.

**Photo Caption:** Ms. Allegra Westbrooks in the Library

**Photo Caption:** The new sign at Allegra Westbrooks Regional Library – Beatties Ford Road

**About Charlotte Mecklenburg Library:**

Charlotte Mecklenburg Library is one of America's leading urban public libraries, serving a community of more than one million citizens in Mecklenburg County, North Carolina. Through 20 locations, targeted outreach and online resources, the Library delivers exceptional services and programs, with a mission to improve lives and build a stronger community. For more, visit [cmlibrary.org](http://cmlibrary.org).

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Charlotte Mecklenburg Library newsroom: [cmlibrary.org](http://cmlibrary.org)

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