

Gifts from the Miss North Carolina Pageant Contestants

If you've been in Alamance County long, you've probably heard of Jeanne Robertson. She's one of our hometown success stories – a Graham girl who won the title of Miss North Carolina in 1963 and parlayed her crown into a wonderful speaking career.

This past Wednesday, Graham Public Library received over 160 children's books in honor of Robertson. The 2010 Miss North Carolina Pageant contestants and the younger pageant participants each selected a book to donate to Graham Public Library. Library Director MJ Goodrum and I went to Peace College in Raleigh on Wednesday to receive the books on behalf of the library. Getting to hear Jeanne Robertson's speech was an extra perk. I laughed along with the crowd, proud to know that this funny, smart woman calls Alamance County home!

The younger pageant participants presented their books to Robertson Wednesday morning, so when MJ and I arrived, there were 126 beautiful new books stacked on a table in the dining hall. We were thrilled to see such a great variety of titles. We got classics, new favorites and all sorts of fun picture books. *Fancy Nancy* (a popular series of picture books by Jane O'Connor) was well-represented, since the girls were encouraged to select a personal favorite. Dr. Seuss, Shel Silverstein and Maurice Sendak were in the stacks as well. There was a good variety of board books for toddlers and books for beginning readers.

After brunch and Robertson's speech, each contestant presented her book to Robertson personally. Some of young women spoke of their reasons for selecting the book they purchased. Some of them weren't able to limit themselves to just one book – they had too many favorites. It was clear that they gave careful thought and consideration to the books they selected for the children of Alamance County.

The books were as varied as the young women presenting them. One of the contestants gave us three of Rick Riordan's *Percy Jackson* books and a copy of *Ralph S. Mouse* by Beverly Cleary. She is a college student, and said that she sometimes likes to take a break from her required reading and delve into something fun. She wanted to share her favorites with us.

We received E.B White's *Charlotte's Web*, J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*, Liz Kessler's *The Tail of Emily Windsnap*, Jeff Kinney's *Diary of a Wimpy Kid: Rodrick Rules*, and several of Barbara Park's *Junie B. Jones* series. We got picture books such as Laura Numeroff's *If You Give a Moose a Muffin*, Arnold Lobel's *Frog and Toad all Year*, and Katharine Holabird's *Angelina and the Princess*. We're working to get these books ready for checkout, and we're planning a special display to introduce them to the community later this summer.

Graham Public Library is fortunate to be the recipient of such a wonderful gift. We are grateful to the organizers of the Miss North Carolina Pageant for choosing donations to Graham Public Library as a way to honor Jeanne Robertson.

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