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Speak Out for Banned Books

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TUESDAY SEPTEMBER 18, 2018

Speak Out for Banned Books

By Tina Beis

Banned Books Week, an annual celebration of the freedom to read, will be held Sept. 23–29. The 2018 theme — “Banning Books Silences Stories” — draws attention to the negative effects of censorship. Each year, hundreds of books, materials and programs are challenged in libraries and schools across the country. Removing access to these items can limit intellectual growth and prevent individuals from connecting with diverse content.

According to the American Library Association’s Office for Intellectual Freedom, a challenge is an “attempt to remove or restrict materials, based on objections from a person/group.” Most challenges are due to the materials’ content, such as religious viewpoints, violence, profanity, racism, mental illness, and sexuality. In 2017, the ALA Office for Intellectual Freedom tracked 354 challenges, including well-known works such as *Thirteen Reasons Why* (suicide), *The Kite Runner* (sexual violence, religious themes, “may lead to terrorism”), *To Kill a Mockingbird* (violence, racial slurs) and *The Hate U Give* (drug use, profanity, “pervasively vulgar”).

Librarians, teachers, students and community members can work together to help prevent a challenge from moving forward to a ban, which removes the material from a collection or curriculum. One of the most recent bans occurred in 2017 when a parent of a student in the Katy Independent School District in Katy, Texas, complained of “inappropriate language” in Angie Thomas’ acclaimed *New York Times* best-seller *The Hate U Give*. After the superintendent removed the book from the school library shelves, a student created a petition and gathered thousands of signatures, and community members purchased copies of the book to leave in Little Free Libraries around the area. *The Hate U Give* never returned to the junior high library, though it returned to the high school library with parental consent required for checkout.

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‘Left Behind America’: Chasing the Data

Roesch Library research services librarian David Luftig dives into the data behind the “Frontline”/ProPublica episode on Dayton, Ohio.

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Dayton Sculptor Earns Place on Walk of Fame

The late Dayton sculptor Robert C. Koepnick, whose life and art were featured in a 2014 exhibit in the University Libraries, will

You can join the University Libraries in supporting the freedom to read by picking up a free Banned Books Week button or bookmark at the Access Services desk in the Roesch Library lobby Sept. 20-28.

be inducted into the Dayton region's Walk of Fame Sept. 27.

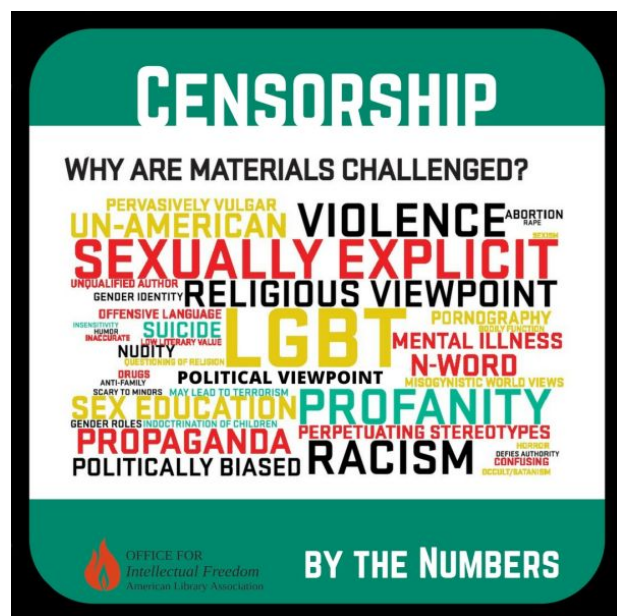
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MORE WAYS TO SUPPORT BANNED BOOKS WEEK

- Spread the word by using the hashtag [#bannedbooksweek](#) on social media.
- Stay informed by signing up for the free [Intellectual Freedom News](#) newsletter.
- Participate in the [OIF Virtual Read-Out](#).

— *Tina Beis is the discovery services librarian in the University Libraries.*

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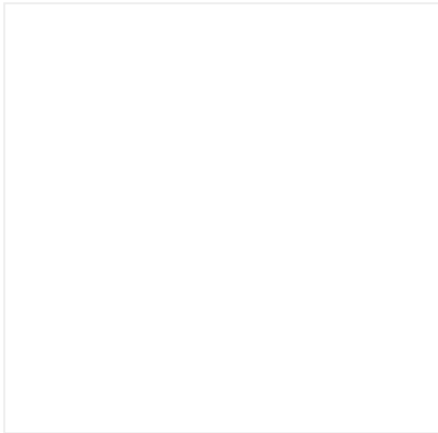
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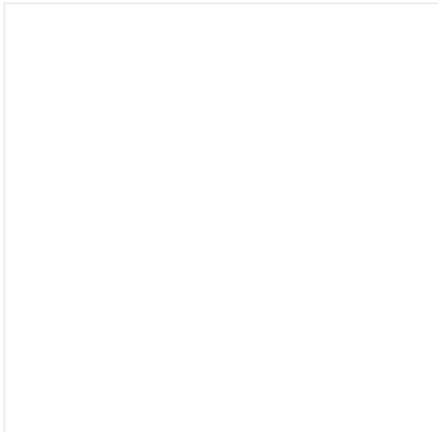
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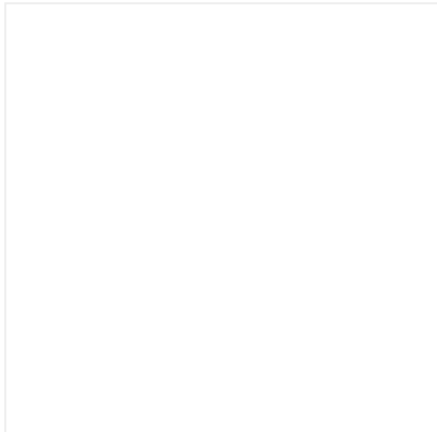
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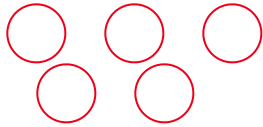
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