Eleventh Institute for School Librarians Held in Emporia

by Harry Willems, Southeast System Consultant

The Kansas Summer Institute, which is in its 11th season, was held at Emporia State University (ESU) Jones Institute for Excellence on June 14-15. Early beginnings of the SISL Institute were in response to calls from the school librarian profession to provide tools for the librarians to be effective teaching partners with other professional staff. Shannon Roy, Harry Willems, Bob Grover and Marty Hale established the first Institute held at the Kansas Teachers Hall of Fame in Emporia. It has since been held in Salina at the Highway Patrol Training Academy, Andover High School, the Wichita Hilton, and Blue Valley North High School. It has found a permanent home at the ESU Jones Institute because of logistical support. Partners and sponsors of the Institute are: Regional Library Systems, State Library of Kansas, Kansas State Department of Education, Kansas Association of School Librarians and Emporia State University, School of Library and Information Management.

Early memorable programs must include a presentation by Gary Hartzel. His book on *Building Influence for the School Librarian* was a watershed for librarians who were working with the mounting pressures on school districts to downsize professional library staff. *Learning by Design* was a popular Institute program in 2003. The 2004 Institute "You Gotta Be a Player" featured Dr. David V. Loertscher and Nancy Miller as keynote speakers on *Increasing Academic Achievement Through the Library Media Center: A Teacher's Guide*. The 2005 Institute saw the YA author Chris Crutcher inaugurate the Mike Printz Writer's Workshop.

The current program, the 11th Annual Kansas Summer Institute (the name Kansas Summer Institute was adopted last year), featured the author of *The Watsons Go To Birmingham*, 1963 by Christopher Paul Curtis. He continued the tradition of the Mike Printz Writer's Workshop. Featured with Mr. Curtis was Evester Roper. Evester is a SLIM graduate who has become an internationally-known storyteller. Also featured was Lemuel Sheppard, a musician and storyteller of national fame. Both Lem and Evester are Kansans; Evester lives in Olathe and Lem lives in Pittsburg. Lem's wife, Gail, is the children's librarian at Pittsburg Public Library.

This year's KSISL included breakout sessions on The Kansas Virtual Library, school book clubs, storytelling and book talking. For one lunch session, Traci Pruitt (from Jayhawk-Linn), Robie Martin (from Parsons), Angela Vietti-O'Kane (from Montecello Trails Middle School), Terri Snethen (from Blue Valley North), Ruth Kindall (from Parsons) and Emily Young (student at ESU), demonstrated the art and various styles of good book talks. Participants were captivated by the music of Lem Sheppard, fascinated and moved by the storytelling of Evester Roper and wowed by the life and writing of Christopher Paul Curtis.

The 2006 KSISL committee was: Robie Martin, Terry Snethen, Harry Willems, Carol Fox, Toni Harrell, Mirah Dow, Jackie Lakin and Joe Amos.