

CRUCIBLE MOMENTS

INSPIRING
LIBRARY
LEADERSHIP

STEVEN J. BELL
EDITOR

M B M
PEAK
SERIES 



MISSION BELL MEDIA

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FIRST EDITION

Library of Congress Preassigned Control Number
2015917380

ISBN 978-0-9907300-5-7



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Produced by Firefly Media Arts, LLC

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— About the Editor —



Steven J. Bell is the Associate University Librarian for Research and Instructional Services at Temple University. Prior to that he was Director of the Paul J. Gutman Library at Philadelphia University from 1997 to 2006 and the Assistant Director at the Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania from 1993 to 1996. While at the University of Pennsylvania, Steven earned his Ed.D. with a concentration in Higher Education Leadership. This is the source of his dual passion for leadership and higher education.

As the author of two weekly columns for *Library Journal Academic Newswire*, “From the Bell Tower” and “Leading From the Library,” he has written hundreds of columns about these two subjects, dating back to 2009. He also writes and speaks about academic librarianship, technology change, educational technology, design thinking, and user experience. Steven has keynoted over 40 professional physical and virtual conferences. In addition to numerous published articles, he is a coauthor of the book *Academic Librarianship by Design*. Other accomplishments include cofounding the Blended Librarians Online Learning Community, being a founding blogger of ACRLog, and being a member of the inaugural class of *Library Journal’s* Movers & Shakers (2002). Steven also maintains a blog about design and user experience, “Designing Better Libraries.” For additional information about Steven J. Bell or links to his projects, see <http://stevenbell.info>.

What’s most exciting for Steven about leadership, at any level, is having the opportunity to take a vision, or even a project, and to try to take it from idea to implementation. He finds excitement in encouraging his colleagues to rally around that idea and bring it to fruition. Although taking the risk to come forward with ideas and influencing others can be a bit terrifying, Steven has learned

that it's worth taking the chance. He takes encouragement from many different leaders, rather than having a single favorite, and is always looking for great leadership stories that offer inspiration or lessons from which to learn.

One of the things Steven enjoys about having a library career is the many opportunities to share ideas through articles and speaking engagements. Steven states, "We have a great professional community and I've been fortunate to get to meet many librarians and visit their libraries." What he often hears from his family is to "slow down." To do so, he finds relaxation in activity, whether it's going to the gym or taking a walk or a bike ride. When he is truly motivated to slow down, he will usually garden or just read magazines, which is a favorite pastime and an occupational hazard.

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Char Booth	<i>California State University, San Marcos</i>
Peter Bromberg	<i>Salt Lake County Library Services</i>
Jon E. Cawthorne	<i>West Virginia University</i>
Trevor A. Dawes	<i>Washington University in St. Louis</i>
Patrick José Dawson	<i>Northern Illinois University</i>
Irene M. H. Herold	<i>University of Hawaii at Mānoa</i>
Eboni A. Johnson	<i>Oberlin College</i>
Joshua Kim	<i>Dartmouth College</i>
Brian Mathews	<i>Virginia Tech Libraries</i>
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— About the Contributors —

José Aguiñaga, Ed.D., Library Faculty and Faculty Senate President at Glendale Community College, Arizona, began his educational journey with his undergraduate degree from the University of San Diego. After graduation, José completed his MLS at the University of Arizona. After 10 years as an academic librarian he decided to complete his MPA at California State University, Long Beach. Eight years later he earned his Ed.D. from Northern Arizona University. José states, “We live in an age of constant change, this is what excites and invigorates my pursuit for library leadership opportunities.” Besides being a librarian, José is an avid San Diego Chargers and Padres fan. When asked to name his favorite leader, José replies decidedly, “That would be my mom.”

Char Booth is Associate Dean of the Library at California State University, San Marcos and a faculty member of the ACRL Information Literacy Immersion Institute. Early riser, devoted oceanite, and advocate of radical neutrality, Char Booth explores the integration of pedagogy, research, technology, and design in libraries. Char presents and writes on topics related to the integration of pedagogy, assessment, technology, and design in libraries—she blogs at info-mational, tweets @charbooth, and her publications include the Ilene F. Rockman Instruction Publication of the Year–winning *Reflective Teaching, Effective Learning: Instructional Literacy for Library Educators* (ALA Editions, 2011) and *Informing Innovation: Tracking Student Interest in Emerging Library Technologies* (ACRL, 2009).

Peter Bromberg is currently learning in his role as Associate Director for Public Services at the Salt Lake County Library, and in his role as a board member for EveryLibrary. When asked to provide a bio, he often jokes that, “I’m just a simple librarian trying to make it in this crazy world.” Beneath the joke, though, Peter maintains a deeply held belief—“That we’re all doing our best each day to

navigate our way through a complex world. The choices we make and the actions we take moment after moment either enrich our own lives and those around us or they don't." Peter feels that leadership is about being increasingly mindful and intentional in our exertion of positive influence and continually learning from our experiences as well as from the perspective and wisdom of others.

Jon E. Cawthorne, Dean of Libraries, West Virginia University, entered the profession in 1993, and since that time, library leadership positions have remained a North Star for his career. He is excited about the opportunities to create an academic library that inspires everyone to participate in a brighter future. Jon states, "Each library position I have held, both in the academic and public spheres, prepared me for my current role, and I couldn't be more grateful." Learning from numerous job changes and uncertain times along his professional path, Jon encourages everyone to persevere through challenges, self-doubt, and any limiting thinking they may encounter. Two leaders that Jon admires are Mahatma Gandhi and Maya Angelou. Gandhi said, "Leaders don't create followers. They create more leaders." And Angelou said, "People will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel." Jon finds his personal inspiration in his friendships, reading, cycling, making pottery, and traveling to new cities and foreign lands. He and his wife enjoy living in Morgantown, West Virginia, with two dogs, and watching their three children grow and make their way in the world.

Trevor A. Dawes is an Associate University Librarian at Washington University in St. Louis. In this role he leads many of the libraries' public services operations. He was previously the Circulation Services Director at the Princeton University Library, and prior to that held several positions at the Columbia University Libraries in New York City. Trevor states, "The nature of the work that our faculty and students are doing is changing (ever more interdisciplinary, data and technology driven) and we need to continue enhancing our skills in order to meet ever-changing needs." He feels that one of the most exciting parts of being a leader is being able to continue developing yourself and also encouraging others to have a positive impact on those with whom they work. Trevor feels that being a leader can be challenging, as leaders need to constantly reinvent themselves.

When thinking about a favorite leader, Trevor looks for the qualities in people that he personally admires. His favorite leader, therefore, is an amalgamation of several people, each of whom has traits that he tries to emulate, and therein he finds great motivation.

Patrick José Dawson, Dean, University Libraries, Northern Illinois University, grew up in New Mexico in a bilingual, bicultural family. Somewhere along the path to earn a Ph.D. in Latin American Studies, librarianship was discovered as a career option. He has no regrets about this change in focus. Patrick feels the exciting thing about leadership is to take an idea, regardless of origin, and help to move this idea into a new program or service that is beneficial to the library user and information seeker. Patrick finds it exciting to see people in the library develop and grow as new leaders. He states, “The terrifying aspect of leadership is fear of failing to make your library relevant and people in the library successful.” The people who have most influenced Patrick as leaders from their style of leadership to their commitment to social justice are Mahatma Gandhi, Mother Teresa, and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. When Patrick needs a way to release creative energy and find relaxation, he finds this opportunity in his motorcycle, having been a rider since the ripe old age of 13.

Irene M.H. Herold is the University Librarian for Library Services, University of Hawaii at Mānoa. Her Ph.D. is in Managerial Leadership in the Information Professions from Simmons College. In addition to attending three leadership development programs, she was the program director of the College Library Directors’ Mentor Program from 2012 to 2013. She was elected the Association of College and Research Libraries vice president/president elect in 2015. Her other publications include a 2015 book on leadership development programs, *Creating Leaders: An Examination of Academic and Research Library Leadership Institutes*, and a coauthored 2014 chapter in *Advances in Librarianship*, called “Mindful Leadership Defined and Explained.”

Eboni A. Johnson is a Reference & Instruction Librarian at Oberlin College, where she also earned her B.A. in Africana Studies and English in 1997, “way back when the Internet as we know it today was barely a thing,” she jokes. She

went on to earn her MLIS from Kent State University in 2003. Eboni feels that leadership can be as terrifying as it is deeply rewarding. She states, “Leadership requires using all kinds of skill sets and both sides of your brain at the same time.” She likes to approach leadership from a place of compassion and authenticity, like Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. When she’s not leading or librarian-ing, you can find her playing with wool—turning fluff into yarn, and then knitting the yarn into sweaters or socks. And when she’s not doing that, you’ll find her training for triathlon. Sometimes she sleeps.

Joshua Kim, Ph.D., is the Director of Digital Learning Initiatives at the Dartmouth Center for the Advancement of Learning. He considers himself an academic library groupie and states, “If the world ran the way it should then the librarians would be running the place.” Joshua would rather read books than do anything else and is fortunate to have academic library friends who provide a constant stream of book recommendations and book conversations. He says, “If ‘friend of the academic library’ were an official job title, then that would be the job I’d want.” Joshua is proud to work in a field that has shifted and changed with the fluctuating technological, economic, labor market, and demographic landscape. He is inspired by all the people at colleges and universities whose efforts actually make the place run, but who seldom receive enough credit or appreciation for their work.

Brian Mathews is Associate Dean at the Virginia Tech Libraries. He has also served in leadership positions at the University of California, Santa Barbara and Georgia Tech. Brian was initially drawn to librarianship during the emergence of the Web and the inherent challenges with information evolving into digital formats. While working at Georgia Tech he became fascinated with architecture and empathic design and has since aspired to create inspiring learning environments for students and faculty. Brian views each day as an experiment with the goal of constantly improving. His focus is now shifted to considering how librarians and library engagement can become more seamlessly integrated into the campus infrastructure and embedded across the entire learning enterprise.

Kenley Neufeld is the Dean of Educational Programs at Santa Barbara City College and also a mindfulness teacher in the Plum Village tradition of Thich Nhat

Hanh. Prior to serving as dean, Kenley was the Library Director at SBCC for eight years. Kenley loves playing with technology, experimenting with new ideas, and breaking down barriers. He says, “Being a library leader has been exciting because I have been able to support change and innovation in my library as well as the professional organizations I’ve worked with along the way.” Kenley is a lifelong pacifist, a vegetarian, a music connoisseur, and has a passion for politics, reading, travel, and motorcycles. Kenley has been with his partner for 26 years and together, have two sweet children. The two public leaders who have inspired him the most have been Mahatma Gandhi and the Venerable Zen Master Thich Nhat Hanh.

Erin T. Smith has had the pleasure of working with the students, faculty, and staff of Westminster College in New Wilmington, Pennsylvania, for over a decade. She currently serves as the Associate Dean for Library and Information Services, where she has been hard at work developing a portfolio of elevator speeches that range from \$100 to \$1 million. She jokes, “I am occasionally terrified of getting stuck in an elevator with a donor and being so traumatized I forget all of them.” But every day she marvels at her luck to be a library leader at a small liberal arts college when the changing technological landscape has opened up possibilities for her students and faculty that could not have been imagined in a print-based scholarly communication system.

Maureen Sullivan is a widely recognized leader and educator in the library profession. She has designed and presented a number of annual leadership development programs including the Texas Accelerated Library Leaders (TALL Texans) Institute, the New England Library Leadership Symposium (NELLS), and the Mountain Plains Leadership Institute. She is the 2012–13 president of the American Library Association (ALA). During her term, ALA created its first national leadership institute, *Leading to the Future*, and she worked with the Harvard Graduate School of Education to establish *Library Leadership in a Digital Age*. In 1999, during her term as president of the Association of College and Research Libraries, she helped to create the Leadership Institute for Academic Librarians at the Harvard Graduate School of Education.

Rosalind Tedford is the Director for Research and Instruction at the Z. Smith Reynolds Library at Wake Forest University. She earned her B.A. in English and Psychology as well as her M.A. in English from Wake Forest and an MLIS from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. In addition to managing the research and instruction programs at Wake Forest, she teaches for-credit information literacy courses and is the liaison to the Politics and Psychology departments. She finds the unknowns of starting a big new project to be both the most exciting and terrifying aspects of leadership but loves being part of big conversations and big decisions both inside the library and out on campus. In her free time, she can be found with her two kids, attending plays, visiting Frank Lloyd Wright buildings, watching ACC basketball and reading. She admires many leaders for many things, but perhaps none more than Lynn Sutton, former Dean of the ZSR Library, for her transformative leadership and expert mentorship.

— Preface —

OUR CRUCIBLE MOMENTS

Our lives are composed of thousands of moments. Most slip by with little consequence or notice by others. For leaders, a single moment, perhaps just 60 seconds, can define the course of their leadership path, or in unfortunate cases, bring it to an end. Difficult as it may seem to believe, any crucible moment for leaders can serve as the test that becomes their pivotal swing toward success or failure. We see examples with some regularity. A politician publicly states something completely inappropriate or fails to respond to a situation that calls for strong leadership. A business executive has the opportunity to do good for the community but makes a bad decision that results in the exploitation of workers or customers. A little-known community leader stands up to an injustice and earns the trust and support of many followers. Some of these crucible events happen with high levels of media attention while others go mostly unnoticed.

Future generations of aspiring leaders will read about some of these crucible moments as case studies for learning to realize that almost any moment, even one that may seem mundane, has the capacity to test our leadership ability. Whether our response to the test is right or wrong, what is more crucial is how we emerge from it, what we learn, and how we use the experience to shape ourselves as leaders. While there is little we can do to prepare ourselves for crucible moments, we can work to develop the leadership qualities that will guide our actions so that we are hopefully ready when faced with a crucible moment. One way to develop the right qualities is to study and learn from the stories of leaders who have experienced crucible moments, survived them, and gone on to lead their organizations and colleagues to great achievements.

Where are these stories? One can often find them in business literature among the case studies of leaders, the ones who overcame the odds to achieve greatness as well as the ones who did get to the top but managed to fall from grace. We also

find these stories about politicians, religious leaders, or even everyday people who rose above the odds to perform some great act of leadership. These stories should both influence and inspire us to be great leaders. But what about library leadership stories? Where are they found? The answer provides insight into the origins of the book *Crucible Moments*. Why do librarians need another book about leadership? Not only is there an endless stream of general literature about how to lead but there are many books that will help managers, leaders, and those who aspire to lead explore the mechanics of the kind of work and skills, including supervision, budgeting, and communication, that we typically associate with leadership.

Crucible Moments is a different kind of leadership book. It neither claims to teach the reader how to be a leader nor what leaders do. It is a book about why librarians become leaders and it offers the lessons of leadership through the stories of leaders at different phases of their careers. It is a book about the passion that motivates ordinary librarians, which is where we begin to choose the leadership path. Sometimes the choice is intentional but for some it comes as somewhat of an accident—or the result of a crucible moment. What the stories have in common are two things: inspiration and influence. Readers will be both inspired by the stories of these librarian leaders and will hopefully be encouraged to seek their own leadership path. Other leadership books can give librarians information about skills for leading library organizations. *Crucible Moments* gives librarians a reason and a purpose for choosing to lead. It does so by sharing the moments that forged librarians as leaders.

The stories start with my own tale of moving through a series of leadership positions but not really developing a passion for leadership and higher education until I found myself in the right position to be influenced by other leaders, and learned about leadership in a formal education program for future higher education leaders. No two library leaders are alike due to the different ways they come into positions of leadership. In my chapter I explain how my experience as a business librarian brought me into contact with leadership in the corporate world, and how that ignited my interest. It also made me more aware of librarians' general aversion to business. Thus, in the chapter, I encourage librarians to look to business for more stories about leadership, as well as encourage them to use those stories and the lessons learned to craft a personal mission statement that will help articulate a philosophy or outlook on what it means to be a leader and what differentiates us personally as leaders.

The first section is composed of two chapters on what it means to be a leader. These chapters differ slightly from the others in that what they communicate is not so much leadership stories but rather what aspiring and even current leaders need to be thinking about to establish themselves as leaders. The first is authored by a librarian who is synonymous with leadership, not only because of decades of strategic consulting and delivering leadership workshops, but also for “walking the walk” as the leader of librarianship’s most prominent associations. In her chapter, Maureen Sullivan shares what leaders need to know to succeed in a VUCA (volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity) world. By incorporating mindfulness, hope, and compassion into their practice, the library leaders can cope with crucible moments and turn their challenges into opportunities. Sullivan offers readers the leadership advice she has accumulated over a long career of teaching leaders to excel. Well-known educational technologist Joshua Kim completes the section with a chapter filled with ideas and advice for those who wish to lead in the tumultuous landscape of tomorrow’s higher education institution. Kim brings a non-librarian’s perspective to what it takes to lead in libraries with one foot in the past and the other in the future. For Kim, successful leadership is about adapting to change and driving libraries to be campus technology leaders when their institutions are facing greater competition with fewer resources. With his vast experience in the fast-paced world of educational technology, Kim’s advice is perfect for leaders from any sphere of librarianship, where leading staff to leverage new technology to serve communities is a requisite skill.

The next section features library leaders who share their stories to inspire us to start from humble beginnings and follow our own path to leadership. It is said that three things impact a leader’s chances for success: education, career experience, and behavior. Irene M.H. Herold is an expert on leadership programs, having written a doctoral dissertation about her studies of many library leadership development programs. She shares how her education and career experience influenced her leadership path and eventually led her to delve deeply into leadership development. A lifelong educator, Herold’s career trajectory moves from middle school teacher to dean of a major research library. She relates how different people and events along the way influenced her career moves, taking advantage of opportunities along the way. One constant for Herold is the value of being a student of leadership, a practice she recommends to readers at all levels of leading.

While many of the chapters in *Crucible Moments* speak to the importance of mentors in shaping careers, Patrick Dawson offers the most in-depth discussion of how mentors influenced him, and, in turn, inspired him to lead at every opportunity. Through the story of his experience, Dawson covers how mentors impact aspiring leaders in both formal and informal relationships. He emphasizes the role of mentoring as a way to increase diversity in librarianship. Though he came to mentoring accidentally, Dawson makes it clear that librarians who want to lead should take advantage of mentors and give back to other aspiring leaders by mentoring them. Well-known for his leadership within many different library associations, Trevor A. Dawes is highly regarded among peers for his mentoring of newer-to-the-profession librarians. Dawes weaves a story that blends his knowledge of leadership theory and practice with the inside story of how he overcame his initial doubts about his ability to lead. Helped by a supportive family, caring coworkers, and library leaders who encouraged him to become professionally active, Dawes eventually finds his path to library leadership. The key to making it happen, shares Dawes, is having a leadership plan—a strategy that can help aspiring leaders by laying out a personal mission for leadership success.

Few of the leaders who contribute to *Crucible Moments* would be where they are now without the passion to lead and improve their libraries for the benefit of the community. The next section features two contributors whose passion for leading and taking risks to do so clearly emerges in their stories. Working primarily at only one institution, it was a passion for accepting new responsibilities and taking on tasks from which others shied away that put Rosalind Tedford on a tried and true path to leadership. Though she describes herself as a reluctant leader, Tedford demonstrates again and again how leadership happens everywhere in the library organization, not just in the administrative office. One of her finest observations is that crucible moments are both where we ourselves are shaped as leaders and where we learn to lead by observing how other leaders work their way through their crucibles. Aspiring library leaders often ask how one ascends to a significant leadership position in librarianship. In his chapter, Jon E. Cawthorne unravels some of those mysteries. It starts as a long journey, one that requires many hours of commitment to personal development and learning how to serve others. What nurtures Cawthorne through his long journey is his passion to explore the possibilities, learn from excellent mentors, and take advantage of opportunities to lead. No leader's development is complete without

regular personal reflection, and this chapter inspires readers to believe they are capable of the same long journey, fueled by the kind of positive vision that sustained Cawthorne along the way.

One frustration for community college librarians is that books about leadership and management often tend to overlook the unique environment in which they work. *Crucible Moments* offers a section containing the leadership perspective from two librarians who are community college leaders: José Aguiñaga and Kenley Neufeld. Both share that their leadership happened within and outside the library at their institutions, primarily in a role as a leader among faculty with whom they experience labor solidarity. As a first-generation Latino who earns a doctoral degree, Aguiñaga establishes a challenging path for himself. What helps him succeed as a leader is pushing himself to lead in the library by taking on positions of increasing responsibility. He seeks leadership lessons throughout every phase of his career, whether it's learning to work with library product vendors, being professionally active as an association leader, or participating in shared governance. Aguiñaga's leadership story is largely about serving others, which he believes is the path to being a true collaborator. Another path to leadership starts by finding a space in which to excel in order to take others on difficult journeys of change. For Kenley Neufeld that space is information technology. His story is one of a diligent and lifelong pursuit of technology experimentation and learning, and it is a path that led Neufeld to the leadership fast track at a community college. However, it is a path with hurdles, because leading librarians through technology change is among the greatest of leadership challenges. Along the way, Neufeld discovers there is more to life than having a successful technology leadership role, and this pushes him to discover that mindfulness and spirituality are essential to his unique leadership style. Though he started out as an accidental leader, as did some of the other contributors, Neufeld is most intentional in his new role as a non-library academic administrator in a different yet related leadership path at this community college.

Not every leadership story fits into a neat category, and those from Char Booth, Brian Mathews, Erin Smith, and Eboni Johnson are less easy to fit into a neat container. Though they contain some elements of leadership stories about career paths taken, the contributors in this section offer unique insights into how they are intentional about wanting to lead, despite the fears and uncertainties that all leaders face. For Char Booth, leadership is something she does not

come to naturally and in her chapter she is at her introspective best in reflecting on what leadership means to her. Char shares the four factors—conviction, vision, support, and elasticity—that enabled her to stop mishearing, suppressing, or questioning her own voice. For many leaders, as Char describes, becoming empowered to lead is a process of finding one’s voice and articulating a vision in which others believe and support. Becoming a leader is less about the position and more about the project for Brian Mathews. His opportunities to lead are often characterized by becoming a member of the community and then making connections that lead to engagement with the library. That means being creative, innovative, and intentional about designing programs that meet the users where they are. Making progress often means contending with resistance, and readers can learn how Mathews managed to overcome this barrier, which leads to some engaging leadership stories. Leaders may learn best when things are kept simple, and that’s what Erin Smith likes to do. Her leadership philosophy is to “start with a ‘Yes.’” Her stories provide examples of how to do that by being intentional about getting to “yes” and making things happen even when the odds are against your success. Smith has few rules, other than no nudity, no fire, and good grammar. That means her methods involve some unorthodox approaches, but that is what it sometimes takes for great leaders to take a “yes” from start to finish. Facing our crucible moments requires courage and self-confidence. Eboni Johnson, in her chapter, likens this passage through the crucible as a process of navigating choppy waters. She reminds us that sometimes our failures become catalysts to help us achieve our potential as leaders. With the help of others and a belief in oneself, Johnson finds it is possible to move beyond self-doubt and the fear of failure to arrive at a point of smoother sailing, where she can be intentional about navigating her future leadership path.

Crucible Moments concludes with a gut-wrenching tale from Peter Bromberg that serves as a case study of a protracted crucible situation. For Bromberg, leadership is about one’s ability to influence others to adopt a cause and follow a course of action. His chapter illustrates how taking on a personal mission to right a wrong requires leaders to harness all that they have learned about leadership in order to leverage their influence to mobilize people to take action. Using his training as an executive coach allowed Bromberg to adopt strategies that energized him through a difficult public dispute. What this case study has in common with many of the

other leadership stories is the self-discovery that our crucible moments are opportunities to learn and improve as leaders.

Being a leader involves making tough decisions and asking people to take on challenging responsibilities. In that respect, serving as a book editor requires leadership skill. I asked these contributors to take on a difficult task and to complete it on a tight deadline. Sharing a story seems like it should be easy, and a personal story even easier. But the truth is that it can be rather difficult to choose what to say and how to say it. For many librarians it would be far easier to write a scholarly essay in which one could quote many sources or share the results of a research study. To deliver on what makes this book special, in sharing stories about inspiration and influence, requires that these authors dig into their roots to relate what they've learned about leadership in order to share their experiences and knowledge with you. We all hope that *Crucible Moments* delivers a powerful, thought-provoking learning experience for readers so that it will inspire and influence them to choose and shape a future in which leadership is at the core of their library practice.

DEDICATION

Many thanks to all the leaders who laid the groundwork for this project—for their inspiration, their influence, and helping me get through my crucible moments.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To Rolf Janke for taking a chance on me . . . for believing in my vision . . . for encouraging me to pursue it.

Many thanks to Sara Tauber for keeping this project on the tracks—and reminding me about the light at the end of the tunnel.

Thanks to the Mission Bell Media team, Leah Watson and Mary Jo Scibetta, for their contributions, support, and help in bringing this project to fruition.

Special thanks to the 14 amazing colleagues who made this book possible. When I asked, you said “yes” and that will always mean a great deal to me.

Steven J. Bell
Editor