

Good morning. What a beautiful day we have for this memorial dedication to honor Diana Ruester Lasky.

I am Alisa Burch, the director of the Harrison County Public Library, and one of the luckiest people on earth because I knew and loved Diana Lasky. She was my co-worker for nearly 18 years and my cherished friend for even longer.

I believe we are all here this morning because we loved Diana and wish to celebrate the way she touched our lives and the impact she made on our community. If she were here this morning, she would say, "Today is a good day to have a good day."

As the library director, I wish to thank all of you who helped make this memorial for Diana possible. First to Andy Lasky, who thought a fitting way to honor Diana was to ask that donations be made to the library gift fund to continue her love of library work in our community. And he also matched those gifts. And thank you to everyone who made donations in Diana's memory.

Thank you to the committee, Jessica Stroud, Eden Ransdell, Ann Allen, and Savannah Wallace, who worked to come up with a project. And to Savannah, who remembered that Diana had wanted to use an image of butterfly wings as a mural at the library. Special thanks to Eden, who designed and ordered plants to go in a pollinator/sensory garden where we are standing to attract and support butterflies.

Thank you to the members of the Town of Corydon Historic Preservation Commission who granted the library an exception to the historic guidelines to allow us to paint the mural on unpainted masonry, making the painting of this mural possible.

And a huge thanks to artist Carrie Johns, who brought Diana's vision to life in the wonderful, colorful original artwork. We hope that the mural not only promotes literacy and serves as a fabulous photo backdrop, but will also be a remembrance of Diana for years to come.

Thank you to all of you for joining in this celebration of Diana this morning. I am going to ask anyone who would like to share any stories, memories or reflections on Diana's life to come forward. Then, after all the talking, if you would like to have a photo taken in front of the mural, Jessica will print it for you to take home. We will soon be launching a page on our website devoted to the story of the mural.

But first, I want to share that it was a lucky day for me and the Library when Diana told me in 2007, after almost 10 years working as the Corydon Elementary School librarian, that her sons John and Teddy would be graduating from high school and she would be looking for another job. I suggested she come work for us here at HCPL. And she did.

She did so much at HCPL. As an assistant in the youth services department, she started a teen program she called TAG, after

becoming the youth service manager, she promoted video programming during the COVID pandemic and got sponsors for the Winter Reading program she called “Read to Feed Harrison County.” But more importantly, she connected with library patrons one-to-one, remembering and calling each child by name. Kiddos in the community knew and loved her as the “library lady”.

In 2023, she became my administrative assistant. She was a loyal, hard-working servant for our community and a wonderful friend. As many of you do, I miss her every day. She was always looking out for me professionally and personally. I want to close by sharing this Metta Prayer of Loving Kindness she printed and gave me when I was going through a rough patch in my life.

May you be free from fear and harm

May you be happy just the way you are

May you be at peace with whatever comes

And may you learn to live gently in the softness of your own heart.

I believe Diana’s sister, Valerie Kursar, would like to start our sharing.