



## **Search for the President of the Linda Hall Library**

*Kansas City, Missouri*

### **The Search**

The Linda Hall Library seeks a dynamic, collaborative, strategic, and accomplished leader to serve as its President at an important juncture in the library's history. Reporting to the Board of Directors, the President will provide strategic oversight of collections, programming, and outreach at one of the world's leading independent science research libraries. The President will be an integral part of the library "Where Science Lives."

Recognized as one of the world's foremost research libraries devoted to science, engineering, and technology, the Linda Hall Library was established 80 years ago through a bequest from the estates of Herbert and Linda Hall for "the use of the people of Kansas City and the public generally." Through careful stewardship, valuable acquisitions, and meticulous collection management, the Halls' bequest now supports a thriving institution containing more than one million volumes published in 82 languages and dating back to 1472, devoted to a wide range of scientific subjects.

Over the years, the Library's collection and its reputation among scholars and researchers have greatly surpassed its local recognition. The Library is generally not well-known in Kansas City and is sometimes referred to as a "hidden jewel." In the last few years, Library Trustees and staff have made greater community connections a priority. They have now chosen to intensify and enhance their efforts to increase Linda Hall's impact in the community and beyond Kansas City. In doing so, they recognize that increased impact requires innovation and new ideas. The next President will need to embrace this transformation and provide a pathway for the Library to build on its historic strengths while advancing its contemporary relevance as it engages and informs an expanded public.

The successful candidate will need to be a strategic intellectual who is a skillful communicator and relationship builder as well as a successful fundraiser and institutional manager. They should have a great understanding of cultural and educational institutions and the quality and importance of the Linda Hall's collections; these will be the basis for the development of new programming and collaborative initiatives designed to broaden the Library's impact and engage new and old audiences alike. The successful candidate should shepherd the Library toward becoming a more welcoming and useful space for Kansas City and an engaging intellectual center for the broader public.

Isaacson, Miller, a national executive search firm, has been retained to support the Library's search committee in this effort. Confidential inquiries, nominations, and applications may be directed to the firm as noted at the end of this document.

## The Linda Hall Library

The [Linda Hall Library](#), the world's largest privately owned library of science, engineering, and technology, is recognized internationally for the breadth and depth of its holdings and its renowned History of Science Collection. The library was created by a bequest from Herbert Freeland Hall and his wife, Linda Southall Hall, who left their estate and six-million-dollars to establish a "free public library for the use of the people of Kansas City and the public generally." Since it opened in 1946, students, researchers, academic institutions, and businesses have used the Linda Hall Library collections to learn, invent, explore, and be inspired.

### The Core Collection

What began as a magnificent act of civic philanthropy has developed into one of the finest print collections of science, technology, engineering, and rare scientific works in the world. The library of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences was acquired at the end of World War II. This collection of monographs, periodicals, and rare books laid the base for future collecting, and in the ensuing decades, the Linda Hall has pursued a policy of developing both the depth and breadth of its holdings. The Library is noted for its strong collections in astronomy, geology and paleontology, natural history, chemistry, physics, mathematics, life sciences, infrastructure studies, aeronautics, and their histories. Other scientific publications, such as star atlases and encyclopedic works of early natural history, are also well represented. In addition, the Library houses more than 250,000 industrial standards and is a [patent and trademark resource center](#).

The core collection has been augmented by special donations and acquisitions. An exchange program supporting the interchange of materials with scientific academies and societies in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union enabled the Linda Hall to add to a unique and important Cyrillic collection during the years of the Cold War, which was remarkable in the United States at the time. In 1985, part of the library of the Franklin Institute in Philadelphia was transferred to the Linda Hall, and in 1995, the Engineering Societies of America donated their libraries. These transfers provided the Library with hundreds of additional early books on engineering, mathematics, physics, geology, and related sciences, as well as the Ball Collection of Gemology and the A.B. Nichols Panama Canal Collection. Recent additions of note include the observation logs and journals of astronomer David Levy.

### The History of Science Collection

The distinguished [History of Science](#) collection contains over 50,000 volumes of essential works documenting the histories of science and of early modern intellectual thought. The 1472 printing of Pliny the Elder's *Naturalis Historia* is the collection's oldest title. Other notable volumes include Rheticus *Narratio Prima* (1540), Copernicus *De revolutionibus orbium coelestium* (1543), and one of the few extant copies of Galileo's *Siderius Nuncius* (1610). This collection also includes a complete run of the Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society, beginning in 1665, and the Acta Eruditorum, beginning in 1682. Recent acquisitions have emphasized works by or about women in science including *I Secreti della Signora Isabella Cortese* (1635), and the seventeenth-century manuscript volume documenting the highly unusual for its time scientific education of a French adolescent, Susanne-Victoire Auvray.

### The Digital Collections

Since the early 2000s, the Library has created vast [Digital Collections](#) from books, journals, conference proceedings, technical reports, and other materials in the Linda Hall Library collections. These digitized materials are freely available to the public. Over the last two decades, the Digital Initiatives Unit has

scanned over 10 million pages. The Library has 7000+ books, journals, and government documents available in its catalog with over 21000 individual files.

In addition to in-house digitization projects, the Library works closely with the Center for Research Libraries (CRL) to digitize bound journals that are held by both institutions in order to make materials available to the public. In recent years, the Library has worked with CRL leaders to identify materials that can highlight the contributions of traditionally underrepresented groups. In the last three years, the Library has digitized its Latin American Scientific Journal Holdings, and it is working on a project to digitize all Asian language journals as well.

In 2020, the Library migrated its digital images from ContentDM to Alma Digital which allows one source for all library materials regardless of format. Thanks to this migration, the Library is able to digitize material for patrons and fellows on demand for free. A recent successful pilot project for Controlled Digital Lending, which utilizes login and use restrictions, allows patrons to use Library materials like conference publications, technical standards, and industry papers, while still complying with copyright laws. Future digitization projects will focus on highlighting the work of women and African Americans in STEM, digitization of the Linda Hall's microfilm/microfiche collections and maps, and reformatting outdated digitized materials.

### Programming

The Library is building on the Hall's powerful philanthropic vision of acquiring and sharing significant intellectual resources with the people of Kansas City to create an institution that will resonate with the next generation of learners. Using the power of modern technology, the Library's programming is designed to bring science to life for lay audiences in Kansas City and around the world. These programs build on the Library's collections and focus on subjects of contemporary relevance to create a venue "Where Science Lives." They attract audiences ranging from advanced high school students to educated, curious adults, utilize multiple formats and venues to reach new audiences, and leverage the distinctive strengths of the Library's building and grounds. Programming includes lectures, symposia, and online and in-person interviews, including the YouTube channel [Paper Cuts](#) and the upcoming [Adult Learner Seminars](#). Recent larger event programming includes the annual Kansas City Invention Convention (KCIC) and the "How Do I Become a..." Series. The KCIC, conducted in association with the Henry Ford Museum, encourages students to design their own inventions aimed at solving real-world problems and offers STEM teachers throughout the Kansas City area the opportunity to teach an innovation-based curriculum to students in grades 4-12. The "How Do I Become a ..." series is a career-oriented series of talks that was created at the Linda Hall and is spreading beyond Kansas City.

### Fellowships

Linda Hall provides a research fellowship program that has made Kansas City a destination for an international community of scholars wishing to explore the Library's rich holdings. The Library has welcomed over one hundred research fellows since 2011, including scholars from nineteen countries on six continents. The fellows come from a variety of professional backgrounds, but they all used the Library's collections to explore the ways science, technology, and engineering have transformed our world. The [twenty fellows in this year's cohort](#) have a wide range of research interests including investigations of climate science in colonial Calcutta, railways and mines in Central Africa, and indigenous agricultural practices in the Andes.

### International Advisory Committee

The [International Advisory Committee](#), composed of scholars from across this country and in Europe, was created in 2020 to offer insights that inform the Library's public programs and expand the Library's reach with national and international organizations.

### Governance

The Library's original Board of Trustees consisted of five of Kansas City's leading businessmen who were named in the Halls' wills. Paul D. Bartlett, Sr. was designated the board's first chairman, and since 1941, four generations of the Bartlett Family have been represented on the board. The first trustees established a tradition of stewardship that has seen both the Library's collections and its endowment grow impressively through the decades, assuring the Linda Hall Library's ability to become and remain the library of record for printed materials devoted to science, engineering, technology, and their histories.

Today, the Linda Hall Library's [Board of Trustees](#) numbers twelve and is chaired by Marilyn Bartlett Hebenstreit, a granddaughter of Paul D. Bartlett, Sr. The trustees bring a wealth of expertise to their roles including science, learning, finance, philanthropy, marketing and communications, engineering, and construction. Together, they carry forward the Library's legacy of excellence and service in ways that respond to contemporary information needs and learning objectives. Their commitment to the Linda Hall Library's future will assure that it will be one of increasing learning opportunities for all who wish to enhance their understanding of the world around them.

### Current Context

After serving as the Linda Hall Library's president for 15 years, Lisa Browar will retire on September 1, 2023. Under Browar's leadership, the Linda Hall Library embraced a deep and continuing journey of institutional transformation. Browar worked with the Library's board of trustees and senior leadership to launch a comprehensive strategic plan to make the Library more accessible to intellectually curious learners in the Kansas City community and beyond. Once known as Kansas City's "hidden jewel," the Library is now widely celebrated as the place "Where Science Lives." Its vastly expanded programming emphasizes the many ways in which science and technology intersect with contemporary life. Notable acquisitions during Browar's tenure include rare volumes written by Marie Curie and Dmitry Mendeleev, and a copy of "An Illustrated Book on Japanese Medicinal Plants," (1830), thought to be the only copy in North America.

The KCIC is just one example of the strategic partnerships that Browar organized. Another is the Linda Hall Library's participation in the UK-Ukraine Twinning Initiative, an institution-to-institution collaborative model supported by Universities UK International and coordinated by the Cormack Consultancy Group that allows universities, as well as other intellectual organizations and consortia around the world, to support their Ukrainian counterparts.

Recently, the Library received a National Endowment for the Humanities grant to support its fellows. The Fellowship Programs at Independent Research Institutions ([FPIRI](#)) program supports institutions that provide fellowships for advanced humanities research in the U.S. and abroad, fosters communities of intellectual exchange among participating scholars, and provides access to resources that might otherwise not be available to the participating scholars. The Library was awarded \$156,000 over three years in recognition of the value its collections for historians of science as well as other disciplines that intersect with science and/or science history.

As a result of Browar's leadership, the Linda Hall Library now promotes a broader understanding of the relationships between science, technology, and other disciplines, while at the same time building collections that support research and scholarship at all levels.

### **Strategic Plan**

A strategic plan was completed in January 2019, with a significant focus on the extensive and interrelated elements of the Library's public-facing activities. These activities reflect the Library's desire to become a center for science and society, leveraging the Library's celebrated strengths to connect robustly with scientific progress and issues and bring them alive for audiences in Kansas City and beyond. In addition to public programming, the strategic plan addresses outreach and communications, development, governance, staffing, and organization. An update to the plan is currently underway that will inform the expansion of audiences and diversification of revenue streams. The new President will help see this new version of the plan to its completion and help operationalize its goals.

### **The Role of The President**

The President will guide an expansive and clear vision for the future of the Library, with a recognition that libraries, like other cultural institutions, must evolve to anticipate and respond to the interests and needs of an informed public. The President will respect and promote the excellence of the Library's collections and, in concert with its staff, grow the collections in a responsible and thoughtful way. The President will have both strategic leadership and exceptional culture-building skills, capable of respecting past traditions while simultaneously channeling collective energies to focus on the future of this storied cultural institution.

Reporting to the Board of Trustees, the President will oversee a budget of \$12 million and a senior leadership team of five including the Chief Financial Officer, the Senior Vice President for Engagement, the Vice President for Research and Scholarship, the Vice President for Access and Digital Services, and the Vice President for Special Collections. In collaboration with the staff, senior leadership and the Board, the President will ensure that the Library continues to educate and inspire the public and engage new generations of researchers and learners in the years to come.

### **Opportunities and Challenges**

The key opportunities and challenges for the President of the LHL include:

#### ***Lead an evolving strategic vision***

The Library's strategic plan was put into place in January 2019 and has shaped the trajectory of the Library over the past few years. A new iteration of the strategic plan is expected at the end of the calendar year; it will continue to be a guide for the next President to build upon and evolve. The President will be tasked with providing clear key performance indicators and metrics to provide specific guide points for the Library as they carry its vision forward. Some key strategic efforts may include providing new spaces for programming, addressing infrastructure issues, considering access to collections, and increasing digital collections. The President will need to think about future growth of the Library in terms of acquisitions and staffing as well as how to attract and engage the public to explore and utilize the Library in new and innovative ways.

### ***Expand development efforts and diversify donor base***

While the Library has a significant endowment, the use of the funds from the endowment is specifically earmarked for collections. Significant development efforts are needed to sustain the programming and staffing of the Library. The President must be a creative, strategic, and successful fundraiser who understands the need for diverse forms of funding. They will play a critical role in creating and implementing a comprehensive development plan with specific fundraising goals and supporting strategies that will increase giving by current donors, identify and attract new supporters and sources of funds, and promote deeper affiliation with the Library.

### ***Define, strengthen, and coalesce programming and outreach efforts***

In order to position the Library as a center for science and society in Kansas City and beyond, the President will need to define what success looks like when it comes to the Library's programming and outreach efforts. They will need to continue to creatively enhance public programming to engage and cultivate new audiences, develop programs for STEM educators, and build collaborations with cultural, educational, and research institutions locally and around the world.

### ***Provide cohesive leadership across the institution***

The Trustees, leadership, and staff of the Library bring vast institutional knowledge and subject matter expertise and are strongly committed to the Library's vision and goals. A superb leader and manager, the President will work with the Library staff to build a unified culture, strong working relationships, and trust. The President will work to break down silos, encourage engagement across different departments, and work with staff leaders to integrate the Library collections more fully in all activities. The President will foster a culture of open, inclusive communication and promote a strong sense of community, ensuring that all stakeholders, including Trustees and staff, feel heard and are aligned in their shared goals.

### ***Develop strategic relationships in the community***

In the last few years, Library Trustees and staff have made greater community connections a priority. The President must envision a pathway for the Library to build on its historic strengths while advancing its contemporary relevance as it engages and informs an expanded public. The President will develop and maintain vigorous strategic relationships with other leading civic, cultural, scientific, and educational organizations in the Kansas City area that will encourage more understanding of science and its salience, promote public interest in and curiosity about science and technology, and provide greater visibility for the Library.

### **Qualifications and Characteristics**

While no one person may embody all, the successful candidate will bring many of the following professional qualifications and personal qualities:

- A strategic intellectual with excellent communication skills who enjoys connecting with people and entities locally and beyond
- Broad and successful fundraising experience
- Deep appreciation and understanding of what the libraries have to offer to the public
- Success in bringing compelling and thoughtful programming to a broad audience
- Demonstrated strong administrative leadership

- Generalist who is skilled at connecting with and talking to specialists
- Effective convener
- Optimistic realist

## Kansas City

A metropolitan city with a population of about two million people, Kansas City is an intersection of arts, culture, innovation, and imagination. The city's ideal location in the heart of the country makes it a thriving national hub for arts and culture. The city is composed of several neighborhoods, including the River Market District in the north, the 18<sup>th</sup> and Vine District in the east, and the Country Club Plaza in the south. Celebrated cultural traditions include Kansas City jazz; theater, as a center of the Vaudevillian Orpheum circuit in the 1920s; the Chiefs and Royals sports franchises; and famous cuisine based on Kansas City-style barbeque, Kansas City strip steak and craft breweries. The Huffington Post ranked Kansas City as the most exciting "it" city in the United States, and it is often described as one of America's most "livable" cities, thanks to its parks, fountains, attractive neighborhoods, and affordable cost of living. Some of the major companies headquartered in the Kansas City region include AMC, American Century, Cerner Corp, Garmin International, H&R Block, Hallmark Cards, Russell Stover, and T-Mobile.

## Applications, Inquiries, and Nominations

Review of applications, nominations, and expressions of interest will begin immediately and continue on a confidential basis until an appointment is made. All inquiries, nominations/referrals, and applications (including resumes and letters of interest responding to the position priorities outlined above) should be submitted electronically via Isaacson, Miller's website: <https://www.imsearch.com/8761>.

Andrew Lee, Managing Partner  
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