



Middle East Librarians Association

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**MS. KATHERINE SYDENHAM
GEORGE N. ATIYEH AWARD WINNER FOR 2009**

(NOV. 5, 2009): The George Atiyeh Prize Committee—composed of Christine Dykgraaf, Akram Khabibullaev, and Jonathan Rogers—is pleased to announce the George N. Atiyeh Award Winner for 2009.

This year's recipient, Ms. Katherine Sydenham, is currently enrolled in the MLS program at St. John's University Department of Library & Information Science in Jamaica, New York.

Ms. Sydenham's interest in the Middle East preceded her interest in library science. While studying Religion and Women's Studies at Swarthmore College she also studied the Arabic language. This included a semester of study abroad in Damascus, Syria where her interest in the Middle East solidified. After graduation from Swarthmore, Katherine took up a position in Yemen as a program officer at the Yemen Language Center in Sana'a, arranging travel, housing and other accommodations for international students.

As for practical library experience, Ms. Sydenham worked while in college at Swarthmore's Humanities Library as a page and reserves desk employee. An Andrew W. Mellon Foundation internship and then a Mellon grant in successive summers afforded Katherine the opportunity to explore additional library tasks such as archiving, developing library friends' materials, reference work, and material reclamation and preservation after a fire in the St. Mark's Library at General Theological Seminary. Having discovered the possibility of combining her interest in both fields in the form of area librarianship, Katherine began to pursue a Library Science Master's degree and currently works part-time at New York University copy-cataloguing Arabic language

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items. Whenever possible Katherine has included projects or side work in her internships and positions that focus on Arabic materials and collections.

Katherine wishes to use her newly combined interests and eventual degrees in Yemen developing its library systems and increasing literacy among the homeless youth and adults alike. If she ends up working in the U.S., she would be happy working in a public library system that serves Middle Eastern minorities or at a university library where she could collaborate on projects jointly with Middle Eastern, and again especially Yemeni, librarians in ways that enhance and expand the use of libraries in the Middle East and cooperation with U.S. libraries as well.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT:

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