Mission Accomplished
By Dr. Lynn L. Remly, President

It was ages ago—2020—when I proudly announced that the Friends had had a banner year: we were able to contribute $35,000 to the library, and our 50 volunteers had themselves contributed 1932 working hours to the cause. We were on a roll, with nothing but better things in view.

Then came COVID: the library closed, and the volunteers dispersed to tend to their families and try to continue their lives. It was a dark and empty year for everyone.

Fast forward to 2023, when I can once again announce that we were able to donate $35,000 to the library—pretty remarkable comeback in just 3 short years. Here’s how it happened.

As the vaccine became available and controls were slowly loosened, we were permitted once again to open our bookstore. Volunteers stood in the library parking lot in the February cold, accepting book donations from a relieved public. Sorters came in to shelve the books and prepare the sale room, and patrons returned—in limited numbers at first, but then in larger numbers as the threat of contagion seemed to lessen.

Over the months, we were gradually allowed a second and a third weekly sale to boost our intake, but still short of our five-sales per week schedule in 2019. We reinstituted our popular Educators’ Sale to help returning teachers fill their classroom shelves.

Our Holiday Sale in November was the best ever.

Still, the ground has shifted. Our foot traffic is down, possibly for good, and it has become our online sales that provided the heavy lifting in bringing up our totals. What started as one loyal volunteer’s effort is now a streamlined operation occupying the entire back room of the bookstore. Currently, we have listed 1330 books for sale on Amazon.com, most of which could not be sold from our small store, such as a Black’s Law Dictionary that sold for $225.

As always, it’s the people behind the numbers that tell the real story, an ongoing tale of loyalty and dedication to a worthwhile endeavor, of people stepping up when needed or asked. While our pre-COVID 50-volunteer core has dwindled to 30, the smaller group has worked even harder than before to make regular sales possible. As of year’s end, we took in over 1500 donations, many comprising several boxes of books, and our volunteers logged 2500 hours, far more than even 2019.

Change affected our Board too, as our longtime Vice-President retired after almost 50 years of service. But another loyal Friends member agreed to fill the gap, and the Board is back at full strength.

At the end of the day, our book sales for 2022 totaled almost $34,000, with Amazon sales alone around $8000, or about a quarter of our efforts. Membership and donations made up the rest. With our 2022 gift to the library of $35,000, I can say with certainty that we’re back and ready to meet this year’s challenges. For 2022, Mission Accomplished.

Please consider joining the Friends in supporting the library, either as a working or a contributing member (or both). Membership starts at only $15. Forms are available in the Friends bookstore, or online at Friends-Hud-Lib-Become-a-friend-revised-2021-1.pdf (Hudsonlibrary.org). For membership questions, please contact Dr. Denise Gibson at gibsond3@ucmail.uc.edu. To volunteer, please contact Mrs. Beverly Dorson at dorsonb@gmail.com.