



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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NATIONAL LIBRARY LEADER NAMED TO HEAD HISTORIC ACADEMY LIBRARY

PHILADELPHIA—The Academy of Natural Sciences has named the head of the nation’s oldest library consortium to head the library and archives of the nation’s oldest natural history museum.

Cathy Wilt of Drexel Hill started in November as the new director of the Academy’s Ewell Sale Stewart Library and the Academy Archives. Previously she was president of LYRASIS, the nation’s oldest and largest library consortium, serving 2,000 libraries. She oversaw the formation of LYRASIS that resulted from the 2009 merger of the nation’s two most successful library consortia: PALINET and SOLINET (Southeastern Library Network).

A native Virginian, Wilt has deep roots in Pennsylvania and in Philadelphia, where she served as executive director and chief executive officer of PALINET and Union Library Catalogue of Pennsylvania, Inc. from 2002 to 2009. Her 30-year career in libraries has included positions at Drexel University and Ursinus College and with international and national library organizations in Columbus, Ohio, and Dallas, Texas. Wilt is a frequent speaker and author on current topics in library and information sciences, including strategic thinking, future studies, technology, and innovation. She is a graduate of James Madison University, the University of Pittsburgh, and Temple University.

“Cathy has a wealth of practical knowledge and experience gained in library trenches, is highly regarded for her vision of the future for libraries and cultural heritage organizations, and has a proven track record bringing that vision to fruition.” said Academy President and CEO George Gephart. “We are very pleased she has joined our Academy team.”

At the Academy, Wilt will oversee one of the nation’s oldest and best natural history libraries. The Ewell Sale Stewart Library and the Academy Archives are unique in their holdings of rare, often priceless historic works in every discipline of natural science. From its modest beginnings—eight books and a map of Switzerland—in 1812 at the founding of the Academy itself, the library now holds more than 200,000 books and serials dating back to the 1500s; more than one million manuscripts including field notes, diaries, drawings and letters; and thousands of photographs, maps, art and artifacts.

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“I am honored to have the great privilege to ensure continued access to these world-class collections in support of the important, often groundbreaking, work of the Academy,” said Wilt. “I look forward to the promise that new technologies will allow us to extend that access even further virtually and worldwide.”

The library primarily serves the Academy scientists and researchers from around the world. The reading room, rich with oil portraits, sculpture and exhibits of historic items from the collections, is open to the public by appointment Tuesday through Friday from 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

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The Academy of Natural Sciences, founded in 1812, is the oldest natural science research institution and museum in the Americas and a world leader in biodiversity and environmental research. The mission of the Academy is the encouragement and cultivation of the sciences.

HOURS: Monday–Friday, 10 a.m.-4:30 p.m., Saturday–Sunday, 10 a.m.-5 p.m. ADMISSION: \$12 adults; \$10 children 3-12, seniors, college students, military personnel; free for members and children under 3. \$2 fee for Butterflies!