

**Subject:** Meet the 2025 WLA Conference Keynote Speakers!

We're thrilled to announce the keynote speakers for the 2025 Wisconsin Library Association Conference, happening October 28–31 at the Madison Marriott West in Middleton! This year's theme is "Be the Change," and these speakers embody that spirit through their work, ideas, and stories.

**Dr. Sandra Hirsh** – Associate Dean, San José State University

A global thought leader in library education and the future of the profession, Dr. Sandra Hirsh brings a visionary lens to libraries in the age of AI. Her work spans leadership roles in academia, publishing, and global conferences—including her newest book, *Library 2035: Imagining the Next Generation of Libraries*, released in 2024.

**Michael Hall** – Author/Illustrator

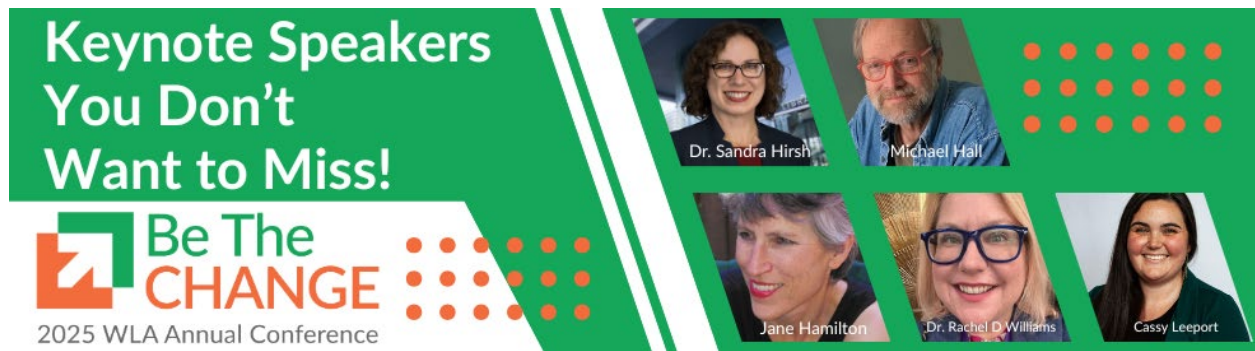
Michael Hall is the author and illustrator of the New York Times bestseller *My Heart Is Like a Zoo* and several critically acclaimed picture books including *Perfect Square*, *Red: A Crayon's Story*, and *Frankencrayon*. Before becoming a children's book creator, he was an award-winning graphic designer known for his simple yet engaging visual storytelling.

**Jane Hamilton** – Author

Celebrated novelist Jane Hamilton brings both literary insight and local library love to the stage. A former small-town library board president (for 25 years—until someone read the bylaws!), Hamilton will share how her adventures in library advocacy and colorful boardroom characters have shaped her writing and worldview.

**Dr. Rachel D. Williams** – Assistant Professor, University of South Carolina

Dr. Rachel D. Williams studies how libraries serve people in crisis and how library staff can be better supported through trauma-informed practices. Her research blends social justice, boundary work, and communication skill development—sometimes using virtual reality to train library staff to better connect with the communities they serve.



**Cassy Leeport** – Director, TLAM Program, UW–Madison

Cassy Leeport leads the Tribal Libraries, Archives, and Museums (TLAM) program at UW–Madison and brings a powerful perspective shaped by experience across tribal colleges, academic libraries, and state education. A proud direct-descendant of the Grand Portage Band of Lake Superior Ojibwe, Cassy is passionate about library equity, Indigenous knowledge, and empowering future library leaders—while always making time for arts & crafts and motherhood.

We can't wait for you to hear these inspiring voices—and hope you'll join us this fall in Middleton!

Stay tuned for more conference updates, session announcements, and opportunities to get involved.