

**Welcome Speech by the Vice Chancellor
Professor Dato' Dr Mohamad Kadim Suaidi**

**The Library of America Series's Book Donation Ceremony
16 June 2014 | CAIS Lobby | 1:30pm**

BISMILLAHHIRAHMANIRRAHIM

Assalamualaikum wbt

Salam Sejahtera, Salam UNIMASku sayang

A Very Good Afternoon

Prof Dr Fatimah Abang

Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic and International)

Prof Mohd Fadzil Abdul Rahman

Deputy Vice Chancellor (Student Affairs and Alumni)

Prof Dr Kopli Bujang

Deputy Vice Chancellor (Research and Innovation)

Our distinguished guest, Ms Bonnie S Gutman,

The US Embassy's Councilor for Public Affairs

Madam Margaret Simeng, Chief Librarian, UNIMAS

Deans and Directors of UNIMAS

Friends from the Media

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen:

On behalf of Universiti Malaysia Sarawak, I would like to welcome to our guest of honor, Ms Bonnie Gutman, The US Embassy's Councilor for Public Affairs, and the Officers from US Embassy to UNIMAS, and specifically to the Centre for Academic Information Services (CAIS).

We are here for a special reason – our friends from Library of America has selected UNIMAS to receive books from their extensive collection, and we are very honored to have been chosen to receive the book donation on behalf of our learning community here on campus.

Ladies and Gentleman,

Centre for Academic Information Services (CAIS) is the heart of our university. Without CAIS, Universiti Malaysia Sarawak will not be able to afford learning to the thousands of students and staff who come here to study and work every single year. CAIS has never been established just as a library; from the very beginning, we designed it to be the an academic and information centre, a place to serve and provide learning materials and spaces for everyone to seek old and create new knowledge, a safe place to dream and envision for a better future.

We now have approximately 200,000 titles in our collections acquired through purchase, gifts and exchanges. Within these 21 years of our establishment in Sarawak, we have received three special collections; the Marvin Rogers Collection, the AJN Richards Collection and the Heidi Munan Collection. Each collection is named after the donors, who are prominent individuals and authors. These collections have proved to be very useful to our students, especially those pursuing postgraduate studies, and our researchers who deal with various fields of learning at the university.

Today UNIMAS is honored to have been selected to receive yet another prominent collection from America, and it is indeed a special honor to UNIMAS. The Library of America Series (LOA) which will be presented to us today, covers a wide range of genres in literature, including fiction, history, poetry, drama, essays, philosophy, speeches, et cetera, is an excellent channel to better understand the history, culture, society and values of the people of the United States. It is exactly what the title of the series says about itself: The Library of America! These precious books were written by renowned American authors, such as Mark Twain and Henry David Thoreau and so forth. These books are open doors for our students, staff and library members not only to understand the history, culture and values of the United States, but also a means to appreciate some of the world's best literature. These books will enable readers to appreciate American perspectives of the human condition, through writings on mystery, adventure, comedy, belief systems, world affairs, morality, and many more themes. For example, in American poetry, readers

will have the privilege to “hear” the voice of the author and enjoy the rhythms of words.

Ladies and Gentleman,

The book donation from the Library of America Series is special to us, as this is the first time we receive donations from the American Embassy in Malaysia. We would like to propose a creation of a special corner at CAIS, to house these special books. We would like to propose that the US Embassy to adopt and sustain the corner, equivalent to the Lincoln Corner at Pustaka Negeri Sarawak, with value-added features such as access to multimedia materials and resources to enable our scholars to learn more deeply about America. We also hope that the donation will not be a one-off affair, and that we also look forward to more opportunities to collaborate and learn from our American partners.

I am confident that with such strengths we build through our relationship with Library of America and the US Embassy Malaysia, this will a start of a significant milestone for UNIMAS in the development of the collections to support our strategies to expand the quality of our teaching, learning and research in UNIMAS.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Please join me in a round of applause to thank Library of America and the US Embassy Malaysia, on their wonderful goodwill initiative to reach out to Universiti Malaysia Sarawak.

Rest assured, these books which are classified as timeless classics, will be in reliable hands, and they will be read and will inspire many minds, young and old.

Wabillahitaufik Walhidayah Wassalamuaalaikum wbt

Thank you.