

D. Paul Sommerville  
November 8, 2012  
St. Helena Island Branch Library Dedication

Welcome fellow citizens, federal and state lawmakers, members of County Council, library officials, friends and neighbors. I'm Paul Sommerville, Vice Chairman of Beaufort County Council.

Thank you for being here today, as we gather together to celebrate the opening of the new St. Helena Branch Library at Penn Center. It's a day many of us have worked so hard for and it's amazing to see this great building behind you filled with knowledge providing a great gift to the Sea Island communities.

As I mentioned before today would not have been possible if it weren't for so many but I just want to quickly mention a few others who had a part in this new St. Helena Branch Library. The Jonathan Francis Sr. family whose name bears the street this Library was built on. Mr. Francis Senior was the first African American school principal in Beaufort County and last principal at the Penn Center School. To Mr. Brown thank you. He gave the County access to land in order for us to build Jonathan Francis Sr. Road. To the Cartwright family and Barnwell family thank you. Gloria and her husband John Cartwright, who have both passed – were ones that heavily advocated the community, USDA and County Council to get the funding for this Library. And Hillary Barnwell the former Asst. Director of Beaufort County Libraries who lost her battle to breast cancer in 2007 was also a driving force behind this project. There are several books in the Library now in honor of both Hillary Barnwell and Gloria Cartwright. To Clemson University who had seven teams of architecture and landscape students visit this site back in 2009. Those students were given the task to come up with a design for the Library that blended modern technology with the essence of the Penn Center and fit seamlessly with the surroundings of St. Helena Island. Liollo Architecture was ultimately given the task of final design and look what they did. Choate Construction for turning those designs into reality and to the Beaufort County engineering staff who kept the project on track and under budget. The Penn Center for their land donation and for the USDA and Department of Commerce for the grants provided to help fund this project. When I say all of those who were involved you can now see why I keep saying what a collaborative effort this really was and what amazing product this collaborative effort has done for the community.