

## City of South Pasadena

**Date:** December 2019  
**To:** Honorable Mayor and Members of the Council  
**From:** David Uwins, President, Library Board of Trustees  
**Re:** **2019 Annual Report of the South Pasadena Public Library Board of Trustees**

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The Library Board of Trustees is pleased to present its 2019 Annual Report. The Board members are Debra Beadle, Brendan Durrett, Alan Jutzi, Bianca Richards and Dave Uwins.

2019 has been a year of significant growth and change for our Library. The entrance to the Library was enhanced by installing a single point-of-service desk where patrons can both check in/out materials and interact with a reference services librarian. The removal of the old check in/out enclosure from the entry way has made the library entrance more open and appealing, in addition to revealing the stained glass windows. This consolidation also opened up space to be able to double the number of computer workstations for the public. In the new location, those staffing the service desk are more accessible and have greatly contributed to its success.

On the technology front, the Library's Integrated Library System, which includes the patron and collection database, was migrated to a secure offsite location managed by library software vendor SirsiDynix. This improvement eliminated the need for on-site hardware, ensures timely upgrades to the system, and frees up staff time previously spent in applying software upgrades.

Once again the library staff, with a significant financial assist from the Friends of the South Pasadena Library, staged an exemplary Summer Reading program. The support materials developed by staff were eye catching and informative with the programs being engaging and motivational. This year the Summer Reading program included new software which made it fun to track progress and provided goals and challenges. Over 2,000 readers were registered and approximately 18,400 hours of reading were recorded. Kudos to all the staff involved in this inspiring program.

Also this year, the library took the initial steps towards fulfilling the city's strategic objective to provide a "Library of Things". A survey was conducted to determine items that the community wanted to have included in the catalogue. Some of these have now been acquired and the processes for loaning are being developed.

Library patronage remained consistently high with the library being open 7 days/week for a total of 57 hours per week. There were approximately 240,000 visits and 350,000 items checked out

in 2019, over 3,000 new library cards issued and over 20,000 internet sessions with over 10,000 hours of usage.

The Library staged many events with some being in collaboration with other entities or organizations. Event funding has been from many outside sources and the Friends of the Library. These events included:

- A screening of “The Jackie Robinson Story” on his centennial, which included a Q & A with members of the Jackie Robinson family
- A celebration of the “No on 710 Freeway Fighters” which included stories captured through a “California Listens” digital story telling grant
- Judson Studios presentation on their design, development and installation of the Resurrection Stained Glass window at a United Methodist Church in Kansas. This is the world’s largest stained glass window.
- A screening of jazz saxophonist John Coltrane’s documentary “Chasing Trane”. This event also included a live jazz set by Mark Hatch and Group 5 and was followed by a Q & A with the film’s maker John Scheinfeld
- The debut performance of “Ray Bradbury Live (Forever)” by Emmy Award winning actor Bill Oberst, Jr
- Performances by international recording artist Julia Vari, the David Plenn Band and Grammy winner Luciana Souza as part of the Annual Eclectic Music Festival

These are just some examples that drew enthusiastic full house audiences and together with author nights, presentations on relevant local topics and art displays demonstrated the Library’s commitment to the community’s cultural life.

In addition to the Board’s oversight of the Library policies and budget, two accomplishments this year are particularly noteworthy. First, the Library Board Foundation subcommittee obtained all needed approvals to establish the “21st Century Committee for the Library” under the Friends of the Library. This committee, once staffed, will address fundraising for major capital projects that are outside of the City’s budget, such as:

- The Library 1st floor interior design remodel, including lighting, electrical, flooring, décor, shelving and furnishings
- Implementation of Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) technology for streamlining materials handling, improving collection management and generating management reports

The Board also worked with local stained glass artist Tim Carey on the design of a fused glass window for the Ray Bradbury conference room that will celebrate Bradbury’s centennial in 2020. The art work was the first project to be approved by the newly formed Public Arts

Commission and has recently been approved by City Council. Funding is now being secured and we are on track for installation in 2020.

In April, the Board and the Library hosted a library volunteer recognition lunch to recognize and honor the many people who generously give their time to support the Library. Much of this volunteer effort is provided and co-ordinated by the Friends of the Library. Board member Alan Jutzi was the guest speaker and gave a lively, informative presentation on Alice Millard who became the most prominent female antiquarian bookseller in the USA and lived in South Pasadena in the early 1900's.

Library staffing has been particularly challenging this year, however, vacancies allowed for a very positive realignment of full-time positions that went into effect July 1 with the adoption of the 2019 - 2020 Fiscal Year budget. A vacant Clerk II position in the Support Services area was converted to a Children's Librarian and the vacant Digital Services Manager position was converted to an Adult Services Librarian with a focus on digital services. Interviews for these positions took place in November and December and the new staff will join the library in the new year. In June, the Board was saddened by Steve Fjeldsted's decision to retire. Steve was the Director for over a decade and was responsible for many significant accomplishments which continue to enrich the Library and the community. Assistant director Cathy Billings was named to the position of Director, City Librarian in November and, with the City Manager's decision to decouple arts and culture from traditional library functions, will focus on staffing, applying technology, library acquisitions, programs and outreach. The assistant director position has been removed from the library organization. The Board has recommended that consideration be given to replacing some of the part time staff with equivalent full time positions. The City Manager plans on working with Cathy to determine how funds from the restructuring of the Library's senior management staff can be used to achieve this objective.

Finally, 2019 was the year that the much loved Library tree was awarded South Pasadena Historical Landmark status (registration #55). This event was celebrated in February with speeches, poetry reading, live music and a real time water color painting while all the time children played in its huge root structure. Just like the tree our library continues to grow, adapt and flourish with dedicated staff and volunteers, an engaged city council and board, and above all a community that values and patronizes its Library.