

LIBRARY

Storied Career Ends

City Librarian Fontayne Holmes retires from Los Angeles Public Library after 34 years of City service.



City Librarian Fontayne Holmes (center) was honored for her 34 years of distinguished and dedicated service to the Los Angeles Public Library at a retirement party in Maguire Gardens July 10. Among those honoring her at the reception were Councilmembers Wendy Greuel (left) and Tom LaBonge (right).



Enjoying the *Harry Potter* festivities at Central Library downtown last year were front, from left, Ilene Abramson, Children's Services Director, and Fontayne Holmes, City Librarian. Back: Betsy Hoage, Assistant Director, Branch Library Services, and Pat Kiefer, Assistant City Librarian.



Fontayne Holmes (right), City Librarian, is pictured here with Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa as she receives Urban Libraries Council's 2007 "Urban Player" award.



City Librarian Fontayne Holmes joined Mayor Antonio R. Villaraigosa, Dist. 15 Councilmember Janice Hahn, Library Commission President Robert A. Chick, State Librarian Susan Hildreth and other dignitaries Feb. 1 to cut the ribbon announcing the opening of the new Harbor City-Harbor Gateway Branch Library, at 24000 S. Western Ave.

Fontayne Holmes, City Librarian for the City of Los Angeles, retired from the Los Angeles Public Library in August. Holmes was responsible for the administration of the City's library system, which serves four million people—the largest population of any library in the United States—through the Central Library, 71 branches and online resources at www.lapl.org. Holmes also oversaw the department's \$120 million budget and 1,200 employees.

A retirement party was held in her honor at the Central Library July 10. Councilmembers Wendy Greuel and Tom LaBonge presented Fontayne with a City Resolution in recognition of her strong leadership that has made the Library Department a model for libraries around the world, and for her exemplary dedication to public service. A crowd of more than 200 staff and retired library employees, Board of Library Commission members, City officials and community members, and other invited guests turned out to wish her farewell.

A 34-year veteran with the department, Holmes' accomplishments include successfully building 64 branches on time and under budget in the largest library construction program in the nation. She also spearheaded the restoration of library service following the 1992 civil unrest that destroyed two branches and the devastating 1994 Northridge earthquake that damaged and closed more than 30 branches. Following both disasters, Holmes restored full library service within a year.

"Fontayne Holmes has served the people of Los Angeles admirably for 30 years at the Library and as the City Librarian has shepherded the Library system into a new era, with greater access, more resources and on-target programming for all Angelenos," Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa said.

During Holmes' tenure, the Los Angeles Public Library has become more popular than ever, experiencing record levels of use. Last year, more than 16 million people visited the library, more than 15 million books and other items were checked out, and Web-based services and resources were accessed more than 115 million times.

"It has been an honor to work with great staff in fulfilling the public trust by building new libraries and expanding library services across the City," Holmes said. "It has been even more rewarding to see people in every neighborhood

use their library and its services in record numbers, and to see how much they value the Los Angeles Public Library."

Holmes has served as City Librarian since 2004. She previously served as Assistant City Librarian, Central Library Director, Director of Library Facilities and Director of Branch Library Services, among others.

For the past 20 years, Holmes has guided the library's massive branch library building program, which is the largest in the nation and was completed on time and under budget. Under Holmes' leadership, the program rebuilt more than 90 percent of the City's libraries, doubled library space to more than 1.4 million square feet citywide and increased the number of libraries from 62 to 71 branches. Cost savings and efficiencies allowed libraries to be added to the program, which was funded through two bonds passed by voters in 1989 and 1998. Holmes played a key role in effectively leveraging the original \$232-million in bond funding into \$317 million, which provided funds to build additional libraries.

Holmes' other notable accomplishments include increasing library hours to provide equity of access to all neighborhoods and expanding the Adult Literacy Centers to 19 libraries. Holmes is also recognized for her success in bridging the "digital divide" by expanding the library's technology system to include 2,300 public access computer terminals in libraries citywide and expanding the library's offerings of electronic resources to include downloadable electronic resources including, books, music, films and audiobooks.

Holmes has made services to youths a high priority by implementing new programs such as "Live Homework Help," a service that provides real-time on-line tutoring; "Student Smart" seminars that help teens improve study habits and practice SAT/ACT test taking; and "Let's TLK," a series that help kids explore alternatives to gangs and other at-risk activities.

As City Librarian, Holmes also served as an ex officio board member of the Library Foundation of Los Angeles, which raised more than \$30 million during her tenure for enhancements to Library programs and services.

Holmes received many honors in recognition of her leadership and vision including the Urban Libraries Council Urban Player Award and UCLA's "Distinguished Alumni Award."



From left: Director of Children's Services Ilene Abramson and City Librarian Fontayne Holmes presented the Library's Reader Leader Award to Julie Andrews.

LIBRARY

A Wayans at the Library

Actress and author Kim Wayans and her husband, Kevin Knotts, read to children at two library branches. One more reading is set for September.

Authors Kim Wayans and Kevin Knotts read segments from their "Amy Hodgepodge" children's book series at two Library branches in August, and one more reading is set for September.

The "Amy Hodgepodge" series explores the life of a multiracial child who, after years of being home-schooled, attends public school for the first time and finds it difficult to fit in and make friends. The series tells the story of a shy young girl who receives the nickname "Amy Hodgepodge" because of her mixed African-American, Caucasian, Japanese and Korean heritage. After moving to a new town, Amy and her dog, Giggles, use a scrapbook to document her adventures as she deals with being "unique," making friends and navigating elementary school.

The readings were followed by question and answer sessions.

The first reading was held Aug. 11 at the Echo Park branch. The second reading was held Aug. 12 at the Baldwin Hills branch.

You can still be a part of the reading series, as one more is scheduled in September. That reading by Wayans and Knotts is to be held at 2 p.m. Sept. 21 at the Central Library's KLOS Theater. The Central Library is at 630 W. Fifth St. downtown.

Wayans and Knotts, a husband-and-wife writing team, are also actors based in Los Angeles. They were inspired to write the series by their nephews and nieces, many of whom are of mixed race, and by the observation that with every generation, we are all "becoming more of a hodgepodge." Sharing the series with children at the Library is the perfect setting, the couple said.

"Some of my fondest memories from childhood are of the library and getting lost in imaginary worlds through the magic of reading,"

Wayans said. "For me to be able to share 'Amy Hodgepodge' with children in a place that was so sacred and special to me as a child, is incredibly gratifying."

Information: (213) 228-7000.



Authors Kim Wayans (left) and Kevin Knotts (center top) talk to youths at the Baldwin Hills library branch Aug. 12. They appeared as part of children's book reading series.



Authors Kevin Knotts (left) and Kim Wayans (second from left) read from their "Amy Hodgepodge" series to youths at the Baldwin Hills branch Aug. 12.



Authors Kim Wayans (front left) and Kevin Knotts (front right) and a group of youths at the Baldwin Hills library branch. Wayans and Knotts read excerpts from their "Amy Hodgepodge" series to the youths at the library.

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**OCTOBER 5
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for Details**

LIBRARY

Summer Camp at the Library

Library's Camp LAPL Summer Literacy Program promotes library services to disadvantaged youths.

Summer camp 2008 took on a new meaning at the seventh annual Camp LAPL, a literacy program benefiting disadvantaged children hosted July 14-18 by Los Angeles Public Library's downtown Central Library. The program is designed to bring children living in shelters and hotels from nearby downtown neighborhoods to the library and introduce them to library services, Reading Clubs and other resources.

During the Camp LAPL week, the children participated in storytelling workshops, magic shows, science projects, crafts and performing arts. They also received a docent tour of the historic Central Library and were treated to a puppet show in the Children's Literature

Department. The participants were selected from Los Angeles Unified School District's targeted programs.

"Children come back to the library throughout the year," said Ilene Abramson, director of Children's Services. "We see them working on their homework, using the computers and attending programs."

Camp LAPL communicates to children that libraries are non-threatening, informative and entertaining places open to everyone. The program is supported through the Library Foundation of Los Angeles and sponsored by the Union Pacific Foundation, Betty McLaughlin and Richard Neri.



Camp LAPL kids at a dinosaur education session with (standing, from left) Angela Chandler, LAUSD; Eva Mitnick, Senior Librarian, Children Services Dept.; Richard Wade, performer; Maureen Wade, Senior Librarian, Children's Services Dept.; and Jamie Corral, LAUSD.

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