

For Immediate Release
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LIBRARY FOUNDATION OF LOS ANGELES' PRESIDENT KEN BRECHER ANNOUNCES RETIREMENT



(Los Angeles, CA -- May 18, 2021) The Library Foundation of Los Angeles (LFLA) today announced that Ken Brecher, President, is retiring and will leave the organization in early September 2021. Brecher has been with the Foundation for over 10 years and a search for a new President is set to begin this summer. During this time, the Library Foundation of Los Angeles will continue its mission of providing critical fundraising support to the Los Angeles Public Library.

LFLA Board Chair Gwen Miller says, "This moment is bittersweet. Ken's personal creativity and energy will be missed but he is leaving us with the legacy of helping the LFLA redefine what is possible for the 21st century public library."

Brecher began at the Library Foundation of Los Angeles in 2010 and working closely with LFLA Board leadership he played a main role in advocating for the passage of Measure L. This restored the public libraries to being open 7 days a week and increased the annual budget of the

City's 73 public libraries. During his tenure, Brecher was instrumental in transforming the LFLA into an organization of note in the nonprofit world. His annual speeches at the Skoll World Forum for Social Entrepreneurs in Oxford attracted international attention. Among other boards, he has served as an advisor to the Center on Philanthropy & Public Policy at the Price School of Public Policy at USC and on the Selection Committee for U.S. Rhodes Scholars.

Under Brecher's leadership, the LFLA curated three major projects - *Songs in the Key of Los Angeles*, *To Live and Dine in L.A.*, and *The Autograph Project* - that celebrated the Library's sheet music, menu, and autograph collections, complete with exhibitions, events, and three significant books edited by Josh Kun. Along with these successes the LFLA also partnered with the LAPL in looking at classic literary works through a contemporary southern California lens for *Whatever Happened to Moby Dick?*, *The Odyssey Project*, and *Hollywood is a Verb: Los Angeles Tackles the Oxford English Dictionary*.

The LFLA's public programming, such as The Mobile Museum Fair, attracted an audience of thousands as did *21 Collections: Every Object Has a Story*, curated by the LFLA's Director of Special Projects Todd Lerew. Brecher was also a prominent figure in conceiving and coordinating financial support for key initiatives at the Los Angeles Public Library such as the Teens Leading Change program (the Democracy Project) that is based in the branch libraries and provides teens from communities across Los Angeles with opportunities and support for civic engagement projects.

In announcing his retirement Brecher commented, "I have been privileged to work with an enlightened Board and staff who believe that the power of libraries can change Los Angeles and the world. Those bold words have been my marching orders and I have learned the most from young people who rely upon their public libraries to succeed in school from librarians who welcome everyone and are prepared to answer any and all questions to the Members of the Library Foundation of Los Angeles and generous donors who understand that books and technology are about access to information, to stories, values, and knowledge."

Ken Brecher was formerly executive director of the Sundance Institute and associate artistic director of the Mark Taper Forum. An anthropologist by training, Brecher was an honors graduate of Cornell and a Rhodes Scholar. He has received numerous fellowships, including a research grant from the Getty Center for Education in the Arts and a Ford Foundation Fellowship for his study of Amazonian tribesmen. He is the author of *Too Sad to Sing: A Memoir with Postcards* and editor of the classic *Xingu: The Indians and Their Myths*, by Orlando and Claudio Villas Boas.

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About the Library Foundation of Los Angeles

The Library Foundation of Los Angeles provides critical support to the Los Angeles Public Library resulting in free programs, resources, and services available to the millions of adults, children, and youth of Los Angeles. Through fundraising, advocacy, and innovative programs, the Library Foundation strengthens the Los Angeles Public Library and promotes greater awareness of its valuable resources. For more information, please visit fla.org.

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