Library Foundation of Los Angeles
The Council

Mission Statement

In partnership with the Library Foundation of Los Angeles, The Council strives to benefit the Los Angeles Public Library by facilitating special programs and fundraising events, serving the community as ambassadors for the Library, and increasing public awareness of programs and services at the Los Angeles Public Library's Central Library and 72 branch libraries.

History of The Council of the Library Foundation 1994-2026

The Council of the Library Foundation was created in 1994 through the vision of Flora Thornton. On October 3, 1993, she attended the Gala Dinner celebrating the re-opening of the Central Library, where she admired the beautifully renovated and expanded facility and expressed a need for volunteers to increase public awareness of the Los Angeles Public Library and its programs and services.

Lodwrick M. Cook, Founding Chairman of the Library Foundation, invited Mrs. Thornton to lunch to discuss organizing a support group for the Library. He offered to launch the group with an invitation to the Arco-sponsored Prince of Wales Business Leaders Forum, held in the Library's Mark Taper Auditorium on November 4, 1994.

At that event, Joni Smith graciously accepted Mrs. Thornton's invitation to create The Council. Shortly after, an organizational meeting was held in Joni's home. Those in attendance included Joni Smith, Caroline Ahmanson, Nancy Livingston, Jean Smith, Flora Thornton, Nancy Vreeland, and Library Foundation Executive Director Evelyn Hoffman. Joni served as President of The Council until June 1997.

The Council settled into the format of Fall and Spring membership meetings and four to six author programs during the September-May season in the Central Library, followed by dinners with the author.

1997 was also the 125th anniversary of the founding of the Los Angeles Public Library. The Council participated by hosting its first series of citywide dinners to benefit library programs for children, youth, and families. The co-chairs were Joni Smith and Nancy

Vreeland. The dinners were so successful that they continued biannually and are currently known as the Literary Feasts.

The Council has completed its 31st season of literary programs which now includes eight to ten luncheons or dinners with a guest author at each event. The Council has grown dramatically from 44 charter members in 1995 to over 350 members.

The Council's contribution to the Los Angeles Public Library has grown exponentially as well. Council members have raised more than $38 million in private contributions for Los Angeles Public Library programs and services since 1994.