

**LOS ANGELES PUBLIC LIBRARY
BOARD REPORT**

June 26, 2025

TO: Board of Library Commissioners

FROM: John F. Szabo, City Librarian

**SUBJECT: INITIATE THE PROCESS TO NAME THE BOARD OF LIBRARY
COMMISSIONERS MEETING ROOM IN RECOGNITION OF LEONTYNE
BUTLER KING**

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Board of Library Commissioners approve the following resolution:

RESOLVED, That the Board of Library Commissioners initiate in accordance with Board Policy 1:312, the process to consider naming the Central Library Board of Library Commissioners meeting room in recognition of Leontyne Butler King, the first African American appointed to the Board of Library Commissioners.

FINDINGS:

BACKGROUND

1. Leontyne Butler King was appointed to the Board of Library Commissioners by Mayor Sam Yorty in August 1961 and was the first African American to serve on the Board.
2. In 1968, Ms. King was voted the first African American President of the Board of Library Commissioners. Her dedication to improve library service to underserved communities in Los Angeles' older and mostly black neighborhoods was strong, most notably in the Vernon–Leon H. Washington Jr. Memorial Branch Library, which was within walking distance of her home. The meeting room at the branch is officially named the Leontyne B. King Community Room. She also advocated for library budgets, permanent library branch locations (not rented) and library collections.
3. Ms. King was born Leontyne Butler on July 4, 1905, in New Orleans and met and married Celestus "Celes" King Jr. in Chicago. The couple moved to Los Angeles with their son Celestus King III in the late 1930s and settled in South Los Angeles where they owned and operated liquor stores and managed property. Ms. King coordinated fundraisers for community churches

and clubs and hosted meetings at her home and excelled at producing charity fashion shows. *The California Eagle* newspaper and *Jet Magazine* frequently named her one of the city's Best Dressed Women, and she was featured in the January 1953 issue of *Ebony Magazine* with a four-page spread.

4. In addition to her service with the Los Angeles Public Library, Ms. King was appointed to the American Library Trustees Association Board of Directors in 1969 where she advocated for public libraries in several states, representing libraries in Alaska, California, Hawaii, Idaho, Oregon and Washington. She also worked with the American Library Association and the California Library Association to support libraries nationwide.
5. The criteria and procedure for naming a community meeting room or area of a branch in honor or in memory of an individual is stated in Board Policy 1:312 attached.

Prepared by: Jené Brown, Director, Emerging Technologies

Reviewed by: John F. Szabo, City Librarian

Attachment

LIBRARY BUILDINGS

1:310 Naming of Branch Libraries.

The Board of Library Commissioners has sole authority for naming branches.

Historically, branch libraries have been named for their geographic location, for American authors, for outstanding Californians and for local community leaders.

Branch libraries are neighborhood libraries identified and located by the names of their respective communities. In meetings and forums throughout the city, people have expressed their desire for branch libraries to be named for the community.

New branch libraries will be named for the communities in which they are located. There is an important continuity and community identification with the name of each library that provides a sense of place, stability, and pride for people in the City of Los Angeles.

Existing branch libraries shall retain their current names and will not be subject to change.
(Revised 1/13/05)

1:312 Recognition in Branch Facilities.

To acknowledge citizen involvement and contributions to branch libraries, the Board of Library Commissioners may recognize individuals or organizations that have made substantial efforts or donations to enhance and improve library services in the Los Angeles Public Library:

- A. The Board of Library Commissioners may dedicate a branch library in memory of an individual and approve the design and placement of a plaque within the library with the individual's name. Recommendations for the dedication of a branch library may be accepted and processed in accordance with the following requirements:
1. A written recommendation must be submitted to the Board of Library Commissioners to include a justification for the proposed dedication.
 2. The justification shall include the person's prominent contributions to humanity, to the city, to the library, or to the community, and should demonstrate that the character and achievements of the individual set standards of excellence, served as a role model, and reflected the principles and ideals of American democracy, its diversity and plurality.
 3. The recommendation shall be posted in the libraries and on the Library's website for three months for review and the opportunity for comment by the public.
 4. Library staff will evaluate the recommendation and community input in a report to the Board of Library Commissioners for its consideration of the request.

1:312 Recognition in Branch Facilities (Cont.)

B. The Board of Library Commissioners may name a community meeting room or area of the branch in honor or in memory of an individual, and approve the design and the placement of a plaque with the individual's name. Recommendations for naming a community meeting room or area of the library may be accepted and processed in accordance with the procedures in 1:312 A above.

C. The Board of Library Commissioners may recognize significant donations to the Library, the Friends of the Library, or the Library Foundation of Los Angeles and approve design and the placement of a donor recognition plaque for gifts in the following categories:

- Silver - Donors of \$1,000 to \$4,999
- Gold - Donors of \$5,000 to \$9,999
- Platinum - Donors of \$10,000 to \$24,999
- Diamond - Donors of \$25,000-\$99,999
- Angel - Donors of \$100,000 and above

D. The Board of Library Commissioners may recognize the many generous donors who give at levels below \$1000 through bookmarks placed in library books, the maintenance of a "Donor Book" in the library or through a list on the Friends of the Library website.

E. The Board of Library Commissioners may recognize the contributions of volunteers in the Los Angeles Public Library and approve the design and the placement of a plaque for volunteers in the following categories:

- 10 Years of Service
- 15 Years of Service
- 20 Years of Service
- 25 ears of Service

F. The Branch Recognition Policy herein complements and does not change the Library Foundation of Los Angeles Policy on recognition of major donors. *(Revised 1/13/05)*

1:314 Sale of Surplus Property

POLICY ON THE SALE OF SURPLUS PROPERTY

The Board of Library Commissioners, under Charter Section 534 "Library Property," - *"Acquisitions of real property by the City for library sites shall first be approved by the Board of Library Commissioners. The Board shall have full control over all library sites and none of these sites shall be devoted to any other purpose in whole or in part without permission from the Board."* approves the sale of Library Department surplus property when branches vacate old library buildings and move into new branch facilities and when library facilities are no longer needed for the operation of the Library Department.