

NOTICE OF CONSIDERATION TO NAME BOARD OF LIBRARY COMMISSIONERS MEETING ROOM AT CENTRAL LIBRARY

In accordance with Board Policy 1:322, the Los Angeles Board of Library Commissioners has initiated the process to consider naming the Central Library Board of Library Commissioners Meeting Room in honor of **Leontyne Butler King**, a trailblazer whose service marked a defining chapter in the Library's 153-year history.

Appointed by Mayor Sam Yorty in 1961, King became the first African American to serve on the Board of Library Commissioners. In 1968, she reached another historic milestone as the first African American elected Board President, breaking barriers and setting a powerful example of leadership and vision.

King devoted herself to expanding library services in underserved communities, particularly in older, predominantly African American neighborhoods of Los Angeles. She championed the establishment of permanent, fully resourced branch libraries rather than rented facilities and played a central role in founding the Vernon – Leon H. Washington Jr. Memorial Branch Library in South Los Angeles, just steps from her home. The branch's meeting room is officially named the **Leontyne B. King Community Room**.

Born July 4, 1905, in New Orleans, King met and married Celestus "Celes" King Jr. in Chicago before moving to South Los Angeles with their son, Celestus King III, in the late 1930s. Together, they owned and operated area stores and managed properties. Mrs. King was active in her community—coordinating church fundraisers, producing charity fashion shows, and hosting meetings at her home. She was frequently recognized for her style by African American media, including *Jet Magazine* and the *California Eagle*.

King's leadership extended nationally. In 1969, she was appointed to the American Library Trustees Association Board of Directors, advocating for public libraries across Alaska, California, Hawaii, Idaho, Oregon, and Washington. Through her service with the American Library Association and the California Library Association, she advanced a national vision of libraries as institutions of empowerment and lifelong learning.

Leontyne Butler King's contributions continue to stand as an enduring part of the Los Angeles Public Library's history.

The Board of Library Commissioners encourages community members to submit written comments for this proposal to:

Los Angeles Public Library

Board of Library Commissioners

630 W. Fifth St.

Los Angeles, CA 90071

Comments may also be submitted by email to: libcommission@lapl.org, no later than December 12, 2025. All feedback will be included in the public record and considered in finalizing this proposal to honor Leontyne Butler King.

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