



LOS ANGELES PUBLIC LIBRARY

LIBRARY NEWS

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City Librarian Fontayne Holmes to Retire From Los Angeles Public Library

Thirty-Year Career With Library Includes Successfully Managing the Largest Library Building Program in the Nation

June 2, 2008, Los Angeles – Fontayne Holmes, City Librarian for the City of Los Angeles, will retire from the Los Angeles Public Library in August 2008. Holmes is 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 oversees the department's \$120-million budget and 1,200 employees.

A 30-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.

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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 audio-books.

Holmes has made services to youth 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.

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As City Librarian, Holmes also serves 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 has received many honors in recognition of her leadership and vision including the Urban Libraries Council Urban Player Award and UCLA's "Distinguished Alumni Award."

The Los Angeles Public Library serves the largest urban population of any library in the country. Its Central Library, 71 branch libraries, six million books and state-of-the art technology provide everyone with free and easy access to information and the opportunity for life-long learning. For further information visit the Library's Web site at www.lapl.org.

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