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Mayor Villaraigosa Appoints John Szabo City Librarian of Los Angeles Public Library

Los Angeles (June 14, 2012) – Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa today appointed John Szabo to the top post of City Librarian of the Los Angeles Public Library. Szabo will oversee the department's Central Library, 72 branches, 900 employees and \$113 million budget. The Los Angeles Public Library serves four million people – the largest population of any library in the United States.

"John Szabo is uniquely qualified to lead our city's renowned library system into a new era of innovation, expanded services and enhanced accessibility," Mayor Villaraigosa said. "We conducted an intensive national search for the right leader for the Los Angeles Public Library, and John Szabo exceeded all the criteria. With his experience, leadership and vision, we will develop the twenty first century's premiere public library system to benefit all Angelenos."

Mayor Villaraigosa has tasked the new City Librarian with restoring hours at libraries (two nights per week and Friday mornings at every library) and initiating a strategic planning process to ensure that the Los Angeles Public Library continues to be the national leader in innovative library service.

"It is an immense honor to lead the Los Angeles Public Library, and I am thrilled at the opportunity to serve the residents of this great city," Szabo said. "Angelenos love their libraries, and I eagerly look forward to working with the Mayor, City Council, Library

(more)

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Commission, staff and supporters to deliver innovative and comprehensive library services of the highest quality. At a time when public libraries are busier than ever, it is extremely exciting to provide services that address critical needs and that are so essential to the diverse communities we serve.”

Szabo comes to Los Angeles from Atlanta, Georgia, where he served as the Director of the Atlanta-Fulton Public Library System since 2005. During his tenure in Atlanta, he led the development of the Library Building Program funded by a \$275 million bond referendum approved by 65% of voters. This building program will build eight new libraries, expand two libraries and renovate 23 libraries. Szabo has championed innovative library services that address critical community needs in areas such as health disparities, workforce development, adult literacy, school readiness and emergent literacy for preschoolers.

He also initiated “eCampus,” a robust online learning environment with virtual courses, career readiness resources, live tutoring and other lifelong learning tools. Szabo has advocated for initiatives that foster and celebrate diversity including the renovation and expansion of the Library’s Auburn Avenue Research Library on African American Culture and History and the establishment of LGBT archives.

In addition to his leadership of the Atlanta-Fulton Public Library, Szabo serves as Director of Quality of Life Services for Fulton County with responsibility for the Department of Arts and Culture and the Fulton County Cooperative Extension Service.

Szabo is active in professional and community organizations. He currently serves on the Executive Board of Urban Libraries Council and the OCLC Global Council. He is a member of the External Advisory Board to the University of Michigan’s School of Information.

“John Szabo brings a wealth of experience to this position,” said Board of Library Commissioners President Dr. Tyree Wieder. “He is a national leader in the library profession and has the skills necessary to lead our great library forward in its mission to serve the diverse communities of Los Angeles.”

The Los Angeles Public Library serves the largest population of any library in the country. Its Central Library, 72 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 more information, visit www.lapl.org.

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