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Menus from the Collection of the Los Angeles Public Library

**"To Live and Dine in L.A.", New Project from The Library Foundation of Los Angeles,
Shines a Light on Food Culture in Los Angeles Through Menus**
New Exhibition, Book and Public Programs to Kick Off June 13

LOS ANGELES (May 12, 2015) – The Library Foundation of Los Angeles is bringing the city's food culture to life with "To Live and Dine in L.A." The exciting new project will showcase the Los Angeles Public Library's vast menu collection and celebrate the rich, as-of-yet-untold, history of restaurants and food in the City of Angels. Beginning Saturday, June 13, the project will include a major exhibition at the Central Library, the publication of the first book to explore the colorful history of restaurants and menus in Los Angeles, written and edited by USC Annenberg Professor Josh Kun.

"To Live and Dine in L.A." tackles the timely and critically important topic of food justice, showing us how vintage menus can serve as documents that go beyond the table, acting instead as guides to the politics, economics, and sociology of eating. The project is the second in a series of collaborations between the Library Foundation and the Los Angeles Public Library to explore the Library's extensive collections. The first was 2013's "Songs in the Key of L.A.," which showcased the Library's sheet music collection.

The "To Live and Dine in L.A." book and exhibition, which closes on November 13, 2015, will feature rare first edition menus from the Library's collection, in addition to menu templates and menu printing materials donated to the Library by The Lord Menu Company, a business that designed, printed, and delivered menus daily to landmark Los Angeles restaurants – including Bob's Big Boy, The Brown Derby, and Perino's – for most of the last century.

"'To Live and Dine in L.A.' asks how we can look at our city and its history through the window of menus. And, being trusted places of information, learning, and inspiration, libraries are just the place for that exploration to happen," said City Librarian John F. Szabo. "With this project, we also want people to talk about how historical menus can be a guide for thinking about issues of hunger, food access and food inequality in our community."

"Menus are written social and urban texts that are ripe for historical insight. Whether they know it or not, where or what people eat is important to their own identities and thoughts about community and culture," said Library Foundation President Ken Brecher. "At its heart, this project is a celebration of how a fundamental human need both inspires creativity and defines a city."

The Foundation and Library will further celebrate the changing historical role of food in L.A. with over 50 food and menu-related programs coming to life in branches of the Los Angeles Public Library. From story times to cooking demonstrations, nutrition workshops to conversations about history, these programs will span the six regions of the Library's 73 locations starting in June, helping to raise awareness of food access and food insecurity in contemporary Los Angeles. The Library Foundation will also present two public programs as part of its award-winning ALOUD speaker series and a film program with its Lost & Found at the Movies series, with more events to be announced soon.

For over a year, Kun and a group of his students, working with chef Roy Choi and librarians from the Central Library, combed the Library's roughly 9,000-piece menu collection, piecing together an unprecedented history of how, where, and what people ate in Los Angeles over the past century.

The book, "To Live and Dine in L.A.: Menus and the Making of the Modern City," published by Angel City Press, details the history of Los Angeles. Author Josh Kun riffs on what the culinary habits of a foodie city say about place and time, before comparing the lives of those who eat big while others go hungry, and the influence of that disparity on the city's history. Kun turns to chefs and cultural observers for their take on the modern: Chef Roy Choi tackles subjects that readers may have never contemplated in his book foreword. Pulitzer Prize-winning critic Jonathan Gold interprets food as theater, while museum curator Staci Steinberger examines the design of classic menus like Lawry's. Restaurateur Bricia Lopez follows a Oaxacan menu into the heart of Koreatown.

The book also includes an eclectic mix of leading chefs remixing vintage menus with a 21st-century spin: Joachim Splichal, Nancy Silverton, Susan Feniger, Ricardo Diaz, Jazz Singsanong, Cynthia Hawkins, Micah Wexler, Ramiro Arvizu and Jaime Martin del Campo cook up the past with new flavors.

Please visit lfla.org/live-and-dine for more information about the "To Live and Dine in L.A." project. Spread the word and join the conversation about Los Angeles' food history online by tagging your tweets and posts with **#ToLiveandDineLA**. [Click here](#) to preorder "To Live and Dine in L.A.: Menus and the Making of the Modern City." To explore the menu collection and other special collections, visit lapl.org.

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION OR INTERVIEWS WITH LIBRARY FOUNDATION OF LOS ANGELES PRESIDENT KEN BRECHER, CITY LIBRARIAN JOHN SZABO, OR AUTHOR/USC ANNENBERG PROFESSOR JOSH KUN: Please contact Katie Dunham at katiedunham@lfla.org.

About the Library Foundation of Los Angeles

The Library Foundation of Los Angeles provides critical support to the Los Angeles Public Library resulting in free programs, resources and services available to the millions of adults, children and youth of Los Angeles. Through fundraising, advocacy and innovative programs, the Library Foundation strengthens the Los Angeles Public Library and promotes greater awareness of its valuable resources. For more information, please visit lfla.org.

The Los Angeles Central Library is located at 630 West Fifth Street, Los Angeles, California 90071.

About the Los Angeles Public Library

The Los Angeles Public Library serves the largest population of any library in the country through its Central Library, 72 branch libraries, over six million books and other items, state-of-the-art technology, and its website. These resources and its more than 18,000 public programs provide everyone with free and easy access to information and the opportunity for life-long learning. For more information, visit www.lapl.org.

About the Curator

Josh Kun is a professor in the Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism at the University of Southern California, where he directs the Popular Music Project of the Norman Lear Center. He is the author or editor of several books, including *Audiotopia: Music, Race and America*, and his writings on music and culture have appeared in the New York Times, the Los Angeles Times, the American Prospect, Los Angeles Magazine, and many other publications. As a curator and consultant, he has worked with The Getty Foundation, the GRAMMY Museum, the Santa Monica Museum of Art, the Autry Museum, the Skirball Cultural Center, and others.

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