

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MEDIA CONTACT: Lauren Skinner
lskinner@lapl.org
213-228-7555

Michelle Obama Presents Los Angeles Public Library With Nation's Highest Library Honor

*White House Ceremony Recognizes Los Angeles Public Library's Exceptional
Community Contributions with National Medal for Museum and Library Service*

Los Angeles, May 18, 2015 –
First Lady Michelle Obama
today presented the Los
Angeles Public Library with
this year's National Medal on
behalf of the Institute of
Museum and Library
Services. The award was
accepted by City Librarian
John F. Szabo during a White
House ceremony. Joining



From left: City Librarian John F. Szabo, Los Angeles community member Sergio Sanchez and First Lady Michelle Obama.

Szabo were Board of Library Commissioners member Mai Lassiter and Los Angeles community members Sergio and Francisca Sanchez. The Sanchezes were selected to represent the millions of Angelenos whose lives have been improved by the library. After emigrating from Mexico 24 years ago, the Sanchezes used library resources to improve their English, pursue their GEDs and become U.S. citizens through the Los Angeles Public Library's "Your Path to Citizenship" program.

The National Medal for Museum and Library Service is the nation's highest honor given each year to five libraries and five museums for service to their communities. For 21 years, the award has celebrated institutions that present extraordinary and innovative approaches to public service to make a difference for individuals, families and communities.

Peter Persic, Public Relations & Marketing Director

(more)

The Los Angeles Public Library was selected for its success in meeting the needs of Angelenos and providing a level of social, educational and cultural services unmatched by any other public institution in the city. The award recognizes the library's programs that help people on their path to citizenship, earn their high school diploma, manage personal finances and access health and well-being services and resources.

"These National Medal recipients have demonstrated a genuine understanding of their communities and are committed to addressing community needs," said Maura Marx, acting director of the Institute of Museum and Library Services. "IMLS believes museums and libraries are vital community anchors that enhance civic engagement, cultural and educational opportunities, and economic vitality. The remarkable community contributions these institutions have made are proof positive of this."

"I want to thank IMLS for recognizing the exceptional efforts of the Los Angeles Public Library," said Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti. "Our library's outreach programs exemplify my 'Back to Basics' priorities. When library staff connect Angelenos with resources to pursue citizenship, access health care, or find employment, that is true customer service in action. Our libraries improve lives every day, and this National Medal is well-deserved."

Congressman Xavier Becerra (CA-34) stated, "For over 140 years, the Los Angeles Public Library has served our diverse community of Angelenos with dedication and excellence. Under the superb leadership of City Librarian John F. Szabo, the library has become a pioneer in delivering innovative and groundbreaking services to all members of the community. The library's Veteran's Centers help local veterans obtain VA benefits and secure employment. Citizenship Corners offer Angelenos assistance in preparing for their citizenship exams. I join the people of our great city in congratulating John and the hard-working staff of the Los Angeles Public Library system."

Acknowledging the award, Szabo said, "We are extremely honored to receive this prestigious award from Michelle Obama and to be recognized by IMLS for the library's success in empowering our diverse communities and delivering services that help all residents of Los Angeles reach their goals."

The 10 honorees exemplify the nation's great libraries and museums and demonstrate outstanding impact and quality of programs, services and partnerships, exceeding the

(more)

expected levels of community outreach. They were selected from 30 finalists among more than 150 institutions from across the country that were nominated for the honor.

After the ceremony, StoryCorps—a national nonprofit dedicated to recording, preserving, and sharing the stories of Americans—will visit the Los Angeles Public Library to document stories from the community.

For a complete list of 2015 recipients and to learn more about the National Medal winners, please visit www.ims.gov/medals.

About the Institute of Museum and Library Services

The Institute of Museum and Library Services is the primary source of federal support for the nation's [123,000 libraries](#) and [35,000 museums](#). Our mission is to inspire libraries and museums to advance innovation, lifelong learning, and cultural and civic engagement. Our grant making, policy development, and research help libraries and museums deliver valuable services that make it possible for communities and individuals to thrive. To learn more, visit www.ims.gov and follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

About 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, more than 6 million books and other items, state-of-the-art technology and its website (www.lapl.org). 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.

#