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LIBRARY BOARD CONSIDERING DEDICATION OF VERMONT SQUARE BRANCH LIBRARY IN HONOR OF RITA WALTERS

Los Angeles, December 10, 2020 – The Board of Library Commissioners is considering the dedication of the Vermont Square Branch Library located at 1201 W. 48 St. in honor of Rita Walters, former Library Commissioner, Los Angeles City Councilmember, Los Angeles Unified School District Board Member, and long-time Los Angeles resident.

Walters, who died February 17, 2020, was described by the *Los Angeles Times* as a “trail-blazing African American Leader” who was a “fierce advocate of equity.” Elected to the LAUSD Board in 1979 as the only African American member, she served until 1991 and worked tirelessly towards racial integration in Los Angeles schools through her support of busing and the magnet program. In 1991, Walters became the first African American woman elected to the Los Angeles City Council, a position she held until 2001. Walters represented the Ninth Council District in which the Vermont Square Branch Library is located.

From 2002 to 2017, Walters served on the Board of Library Commissioners, the Los Angeles Public Library’s governing body. She championed the importance and benefit of a strong public library system, and presided on the commission during the greatest period of expansion and innovation in the library’s 145-year history, which included the largest library construction program in the nation. Walters’ experience, commitment and in-depth understanding of the library and the city played a crucial role in the success of the massive expansion project, which built or renovated 65 branch libraries, doubled the size of the library system and modernized libraries citywide.

(more)

Peter Persic, Public Relations & Marketing Director

As part of its consideration, the Board encourages the public to submit written comments during a three-month period from December 10, 2020 to March 10, 2021 to: Board of Library Commissioners, Los Angeles Public Library, 630 West Fifth Street, Los Angeles CA 90071. Comments may also be emailed to: rborden@lapl.org.

The Board policy for dedication is available at: <http://www.lapl.org/about-lapl/board-library-commissioners>.

A recipient of the nation's highest honor for library service—the National Medal from the Institute of Museum and Library Services, the Los Angeles Public Library serves the largest and most diverse urban population of any library in the nation. Its Central Library, 72 branch libraries, collection of more than 6 million books, state-of-the-art technology accessible at lapl.org, and diverse programs provide everyone with free and easy access to information and the opportunity for lifelong learning

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