Conservator Profile

Meet Adriana Dawson, Conservator Society Co-chair and PPL Trustee

As an avid reader in junior high, I couldn’t wait to get to the Library! What was truly special was that my mother, an immigrant from Colombia, would join me to get books and materials in Spanish. While she was on the first floor, enjoying all the books, magazines, and resources that could actually understand, I was upstairs in the teen section, diving into pre-teen romance novels and history and also watching movies. It was a really active space. It was a shared experience with my mom and other members of my family, multigenerational, multilingual experiences. So, the Library was doing everything it could to accommodate all the many languages and cultures that our rich, diverse community represents. It was a powerful and formative experience to share that space with my mother, where we were both learning at the same time.

Flash forward to when my daughter was young, we would come to the Library to attend children’s programming. I first came to PPL as a professional in 2014 as an assistant dean at Roger Williams University’s downtown Providence campus. It was my job to build partnerships with area “anchor organizations.” That’s when I met Jack and had my first real introduction to the magic.

I was so inspired by the scope of the PPL’s work and Jack’s vision, including ways to support the justice-impacted community and create Spanish-language partnerships. I felt personally motivated to step into that space as a volunteer, supporting GED programs and some computer literacy programs. That evolved with my transition to Verizon as community engagement director. I was thrilled, when in 2019, PPL was ultimately selected to partner with Verizon on its largest-ever grant in Rhode Island history in support of digital literacy. The Verizon has continued as an ongoing supporter of PPL, and I am proud to now call myself a PPL Trustee and Conservator. Cochairing the Conservator Society with the fabulous Laina Crowthers, I am excited to deepen our community of our supporters.
PPL Alum Spotlight

Because of YOUR generosity, individuals from all walks of life have transformative experiences at PPL. We\'ve thrilled to share these stories of success and achievement with you to demonstrate the incredible impact you are making when you support the Library. YOU REALLY do make these alum stories possible!

Grace Maffucci: On Volunteering at PPL

As a student at Providence College, my desire to volunteer in the Spanish-speaking community in Providence led me to PPL\'s Citizenship Class, where I not only became much more comfortable speaking Spanish and helping students practice, but also learned so much about the naturalization process and about the lengths people will go to become U.S. citizens. I have also had the opportunity to lead lessons on my own and to gain teaching experience.

I\'ve learned a great deal about the immigrant experience and the various countries from which our students come; and I\'ve seen resilience and strength in action, as students start out in the class with little English and knowledge of U.S. history and leave the class as citizens more American than I will ever be! The teacher, Katherine Dantis, is one of the most selfless, patient, and kind people I have ever met. She has had a great impact on the success of the students in the class. She\'s been a great friend and mentor to me and I attribute much of my wonderful experience with PPL over the last two years to her. I thank her for this experience that awakened by interest in English/Spanish education and for her recommendation letter that helped me win a Fulbright award as an English Teaching Assistant in Mexico!

Fundraising Update ...

RI Department of Education and PPL Partner to Offer 1,200 Chromebooks to Adult Learners

We are thrilled to let you know of this recent news as a result of a partnership between PPL, the RI Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, and the Federal Communications Commission\'s Emergency Connectivity Fund (ECF). More than 1,200 Chromebooks will be distributed directly to eligible adult learners under long-term loan agreements this spring. PPL led the development and submission of the application for more than $375,500 in ECF funds and is managing the purchase and distribution of the devices.

Savor the Story — An Evening in Provence

We are thrilled to report that our first in-person Savor the Story in our newly renovated library raised an amazing $135,000! Sincere thanks to everyone who came out and to our generous sponsors and partners. Congratulations once again to our esteemed 2022 Enlightenment Award recipient Mary B. Olen, shown here with fellow past and current board chairs.

Adriana Dawson, continued

My favorite thing about PPL is the people! It\'s the community. The heartbeat. You can feel the heart. PPL courageously steps into challenging conversations to lift people. The Library is a gateway via its books and its resources. It\'s a pathway for all community members: young people, displaced adults, elders, people experiencing homelessness, curious folks of all kinds — everyone! PPL is an amazing resource for the entire community to spark curiosity and connection. The Library always continues to build community to help redefine what community can mean.

I wish people knew the entire breadth and depth of all that the Library does and understood just how revolutionary the people and programs are. They need to come see us to fully get it! I want people to know how vibrant and vital PPL is. It is such an anchor and community partner! Part of my work is getting that word out, and I\'m working hard to do it. Regular families all across Rhode Island need to know that it exists and are ready to serve them in ways they haven\'t even imagined. PPL is a true hub and an anchor for the Providence community and Rhode Island as a whole.

PPL Staff Profiles (two recent Team X additions!)

Meet Beka Yang, PPL\'s Grant Coordinator

Beka Yang joined PPL as a Grants Coordinator this spring and is excited to use her writing powers to help fund some of the Library\'s most beloved programs. She grew up in Maryland and has been living in Providence since 2016. Beka is passionate about eating abundantly, working with others to end militarized violence in U.S. detention centers and Korea, and both- ering her aging cat named Ginger. These days, she\'ll tell you her favorite book is *The Rise of Kyoshi* by F.C. Yee.

Meet Jay Ruzicka, PPL\'s Digital Content Creator

We\’re happy to introduce Jay Ruzicka, digital content creator, who is new to both PPL and Rhode Island! Originally from New York, Jay relocated to Massachusetts in 2012 and accepted the role as the senior gift processing associate for MIT while simultaneously working as a photographer in the area. Now he finds himself in the Ocean State with his wife, daughter, and another on the way. Jay looks forward to creating digital content for PPL, connecting with the local community through our social media pages, and bringing awareness to the many great programs and services our library offers. In his free time he enjoys baseball, reading, and exploring Rhode Island with his family.

Passages

GAETANO \"GUY\" LOMBARDO

We are deeply saddened by the passing of Gaetano \"Guy\" Lombardo in March. He was 82. Guy leaves his children Nicholas and Maryanne and two grandchildren, along with a large extended family. Guy was a long-serving member of the Library\'s Board of Trustees and a Conservator, but his relationship with PPL dates back to his early childhood growing up in Providence\’s Federal Hill neighborhood, where he moved with his family from Sicily, Italy. He often reminisced about the love and memories of many hours over years spent visiting the Library as a student at Holy Ghost School, Classical High, and at Brown University. He earned his doctorate in physics at Cornell University.

Guy was a man of many talents and curiosities. Professionally, he evolved from a physicist to an operations research expert to a corporate executive in car manufacturing to an independent venture capitalist. He travelled the world and read and talked fluidly about science history, the arts, and many other subjects. With an earnest love of learning and value for the opportunities he had to learn, Guy was committed to working to make such opportunities available to others. He remained a devoted member of the Brown community, chairing the Brown Library Advisory Council, as well as serving his beloved Providence Public Library.

MARILYN J. WOLOOOHOIJAN

We are also saddened by the passing of Marilyn J. Wolooohojian in April. She leaves three children and their spouses, six grandchildren, as well as a brother and his family.

While only recently joining PPL\’s Conservator Society, Marilyn had a longtime appreciation for libraries and for PPL, as a resident of Providence and Rhode Island for 60 years. She was particularly fond of the Children\’s Library’s collection. Marilyn was a generous patron of the arts and many charitable organizations in both Rhode Island and Florida. Proud of her heritage, she was a charter member of the Armenian International Women\’s Association.

PPL\’s Special Collections was recently pleased to receive a donation of books from Marilyn on Armenian subjects that were not already in the collection, in particular, those written about the Armenian Genocide of 1915 – 1923.

Welcome New Conservators!


We\’d love to have email addresses and birthdays for all our Conservators. Please contact Alex at 401-5756478 or arempilis@provlib to help us stay in better touch!