Hello! My name is Joe Wilson, Jr. Many of you know me from the roles I’ve played at Trinity Rep over the past 18 years. I am also proud to serve as a Professor of the Practice of Theatre at Wheaton College. My life in Providence has been made richer because of my neighbors. Of course, Trinity sits across the street from PPL. One of my closest friends, who happens to be my next-door neighbor works at PPL. Another friend, who also used to live next door to me is one of the main reasons I have had the honor of working at Wheaton. Among the many beautiful things about living in Providence is that while our beloved city is composed of so many vibrant neighborhoods, our size allows the city to at times feel like one big neighborhood. People taking care of each other, challenging each other, strategizing about how to build a better and more equitable future together, while acknowledging that place making is critically important to our survival as a civil society. Creating community is vital to fostering a sense of worth and belonging, and inspiring us to be in service of the greater good.

The theater, our educational institutions, and our libraries are “mini-communities,” and our support for them are essential to the building of the “Beloved Community.” These institutions are not just collections of people or books, but stories that reflect the multiplicity of who we are, allowing us to grow and become who we strive to be. This is why I am so proud to be a PPL Conservator. I, among many others, joined together to raise money in support of the new RI LGBTQ+ Community Archive at PPL. This effort came at a time when I was also working on the epic, award-winning play The Inheritance: Parts One and Two by Matthew Lopez at Trinity. Like the LGBTQ+ Archive at PPL, the Inheritance asks us to reflect upon the past, allowing us to honestly examine the present, recommitting ourselves to the creation of a world interconnected by compassion, empathy, and justice.

The play was inspired by E.M. Forester’s Howards End. At the beginning of that novel, Forester asks us to “Only Connect,” to one moment at a time... to one person at a time. We are at a moment in history when there are so many different ways to “connect.” We all have so many “friends” via Facebook or “followers” via Instagram and TikTok, but these relationships can be fleeting, occasional, or transactional. Our libraries provide one of the most fundamental and lasting ways that we remain in communion with each other. Of course, we make connections through our shared stories, and the knowledge we gain from all of the wonderful resources offered by our libraries. But we also connect with people, those who help guide us through volumes of information for the purpose of answering the questions we ponder and exploring the pain and beauty of the world we inhabit. In addition, libraries curate programming and provide intergenerational educational opportunities, bringing together the community as we engage our curiosities and passions collectively, leading us to the joy and truth that we seek. Libraries are safe spaces for students to study and for everyone to simply reflect. Even during our darkest COVID days, libraries continued the work of connecting us all to our greater selves.

During this holiday season and as we approach the end of the year, I am asking that each of you consider making a gift to our library. Preserving the robust work of PPL is needed now more than ever. Building meaningful connections, with our past, with the truth, and with others must be our sacred charge. PPL is at the center of this work. Thank you for your continued support of Providence Public Library.

A Message from Conservator
Joe Wilson, Jr.

Did You Know...?

...PPL actually has two birth dates? The Library was initially chartered and named in 1874 as The Free Library, Art Gallery and Museum in the City of Providence. It subsequently was rechartered in 1875 as Providence Public Library. So PPL officially will turn 150 in 2025. The planning has already begun for commemorations of the Library’s illustrious past, present, and future. Stay tuned!

Upcoming Events...

Virtual Crêpe Demo with Claudine Pépin & Rollie Wesen
Thursday, February 9 — 6:30 pm
We are pleased to announce the details of our February crêpe-making demo event with Claudine Pépin and Rollie Wesen, Professor at JWU and Executive Director of The Jacques Pépin Foundation! The event will be virtual, so we hope everyone will be able to join us. Please save the date!

Looking Ahead...

An Author/Literary Event in March/April
Savor the Story! — May 5, 2023
Visit provpub/sts-sponsor-2023 for sponsorship information.

PPL’s October 25 Dance Party was MAD HOT!
The Paramount Classics documentary, Mad Hot Ballroom, captured the minds and hearts of moviegoers the world over, and did not disappoint at PPL, as Conservators and friends were treated to a discussion and abbreviated film screening with fellow Conservator Rodney Eric Lopez, former teacher artist and executive director of Dancing Classrooms. Special thanks to Claude Michelle Aubourg of Valiant Arts and Carolyn Castro of Napua O’Polynesia, who joined moderator PPL’s Christina Bvilacqua in the discussion.

Rodney not only shared his experiences from Mad Hot Ballroom, but then led everyone in a joyful dance lesson not soon to be forgotten! We also enjoyed delicious dance-friendly Soul Food with a Latin twist from Kin Southern Table and drinks from Conservator Eric Taylor of Bottles Fine Wines!

Need Some Great Holiday Gift-Giving Ideas?
We’ve got you covered. And, you can support your favorite library at the same time! Celebrate your loved one with a seat plaque ($250) in our fabulous new Donald J. Farish auditorium. You get to choose the seat! Learn more: www.provlib.org/auditorium-seats/

We offer bookplates ($100) that can be put into new books being added to our collection. Choose a genre or subject area; we’ll do the rest and let you know the title. Email Rae at thebrn@provlib.org for more info.

After some swag? Head to PPL’s Market at shop.provlib.org. We have wearables, including T-shirts, sweatshirts, caps, bandanas, and even cool PPL socks! There’s also awesome insulated bags and foldable totes. If drink wear is your thing... we have that too!
Passage

HENRY DEXTER SHARPE, JR.

We are saddened by the passing of Henry D. Sharpe, Jr. in July. He was 99. He leaves his cherished wife of nearly 69 years, Peggy, Boyd Sharpe, their children, Henry III, Douglas, and Sarah, their spouses, and five grandchildren.

Born in Providence, Henry graduated from Phillips Exeter Academy and Brown University in 1945. He earned two battle stars while serving in the U.S. Navy during World War II.

In 1946, he joined the apprentice program at Brown & Sharpe Manufacturing Co. and, in 1951 at age 27, succeeded his father as the firm’s President and CEO. He later served as chairman until retiring in 1996 after 50 years. Henry championed community advancement and integrity, serving on boards of the Providence Journal, RI Public Expenditure Council, United Way, Brown University, The Public’s Radio, and many other civic and philanthropic organizations.

Henry and Peggy have been longtime benefactors of PPL, joining the Conservator Society at its inception in the 1990s. They were major supporters of the Library’s Expanding Possibilities campaign in 2002, as well as generous funders of various campaigns dating back to the 1980s.

Welcome New Conservators!

Welcome to Candy Adriance, Kate & Arthur Chute, Ronald & Delores DeLellis, Philip Gould & Athena Poppas, and Juan & Tina Wilson.

We’d love to have email addresses and birthdays for all our Conservators. Please contact Alex at 401-575-6478 or arempis@provlib.org to help us stay in better touch!