

Looking and Planning Ahead

**A Message from Conservator Committee Co-chairs
Laina Crowthers and Ed Cabral**

PPL has been in a period of transformation over recent years. While it initially felt like this period would culminate with the completion of our renovation and beautiful new building, we are finding that this momentous benchmark was, in fact, only the beginning of a new chapter! Perhaps it would be more apt to say it represents a whole new book in the PPL series – the kickoff to a new period of evolution in the Library’s incredible almost 150-year history.



The start of fall always feels like an appropriate time to reflect on change and new beginnings. Change and growth continue to broadly define PPL as an organization, and it is also being palpably felt on a smaller scale within the Conservator Committee and External Relations team. With changes to our Committee leadership, longtime staff moving up into new roles (see profile on Beth Ricci, PPL’s former Grants Manager and newly appointed Director of External Relations), and new staff coming aboard, we are excited to continue welcoming new Conservators and pursuing efforts to refine our approach to events and library stewardship.

One such effort this year will be a revitalized focus on planned giving. Bequests and other planned gifts have been a critical part of the Library’s long-term sustainability going back to our founding. In fact, it was two significant bequests in 1895, combined with other major gifts, that provided the funds to build PPL’s magnificent building in 1900. And, in 1916, when a young Lyra Brown Nickerson left the Library its largest-ever bequest of \$2.5 million, she established a lasting tradition that secured PPL’s future and continues to sustain the Library and *Lyra’s own community* to this day. We owe our very existence today to the vision and generosity of individuals who shared in the Library’s mission as well as in fostering a legacy of support.

Some of you may have heard about PPL’s Lyra Brown Nickerson Society, whose members include those who choose to remember the Library through a bequest or gift through their will. We are excited to be celebrating with them next month and welcoming others who might be considering joining this esteemed group. (See more about this event in this newsletter.)

Change is always synonymous with opportunity, and we’re looking to the year ahead as an opportunity to facilitate fun, hands-on ways for you all to engage with the Library’s work and everything happening in our beautiful, renovated building.

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In the Stacks

UPCOMING EVENTS

Lyra Brown Nickerson: An Everlasting Legacy

Wednesday, October 11 | 11:30 am
Martha P. Sherman Mural Room

We are pleased to invite you to a special luncheon as we share the story of Lyra Brown Nickerson’s legacy and how you can contribute to the lasting impact of PPL’s Planned Giving Society. We are excited to hear current members’ personal stories of what inspired them to join the Lyra Brown Nickerson society and ensure that our Library, mission, and the resources we provide to our local community are secured for generations to come. We encourage you to share your questions or concerns as we dive into discussions around all aspects of the Planned Giving process. Guests are welcome! Please RSVP to Beth Ricci at bricci@provlib.org or 401-455-8074 by September 27.

Join us for *Daughters of Nantucket*!

Tuesday, November 14, 5 - 8 pm

Save the date for this event with Julie Gerstenblatt, author of *Daughters of Nantucket*. More details to come.

Updike Prize Ceremony, Featuring Katie Garth

Wednesday, November 15 | 5:30 - 6:45 pm
Donald J. Farish Auditorium

Join us as we welcome Katie Garth, our featured speaker for the 2023 biennial Updike Prize ceremony. Every other year we gather to celebrate student type designers designing new typefaces by refashioning the historical artifacts in the PPL’s Updike Collection on the History of Printing. Katie’s talk is entitled “What About All These Words and Images?” A Philadelphia print-based artist, Katie has exhibited internationally. She is a visiting Assistant Professor in Printmaking at Sarah Lawrence College and teaches at several Philadelphia-area universities.

Programs & Exhibitions Update

We’re looking forward to thematically connected events and exhibitions focused on water and waterways in the coming weeks and months. Complementing Eli Nixon’s Atrium-centered installation of papier-mache horseshoe crabs and related aquatic flora and fauna, upcoming events include scientist Caroline Ummenhofer and historian Timothy Walker on their use of whaling logs from PPL’s Nicholson Whaling Collection to study climate change (**November 8**); poet Colin Channer on his new book *Console*, which moves through the landscapes of the Caribbean and New England, from individual migration to the enduring suffering of the Middle Passage (**TBA**); and Professor Arthur C. Jones talk/workshop on his newly reissued book *Wade in the Water: the Wisdom of the Spirituals* (**October 14**). Stay tuned for more information!

Celebrating Trans History Makers

Saturday, November 18 | 11:30 am - 3:30 pm
Donald J. Farish Auditorium & Atrium

Join us for an afternoon celebrating trans lives with a LGBTQIA+ pop-up marketplace and resource fair, followed by a screening of *Framing Agnes* and a panel discussion with historian Jules Gill-Peterson, local trans scholar Elijah Edelman, and trans activist and community leader Jesinya Sousa.

11:30 am - 1 pm — Marketplace & Resource Fair (3rd floor Atrium)
1:00 - 2:30 pm — Screening of *Framing Agnes* (Auditorium)
2:30 - 3:00 pm — Panel conversation (Auditorium)

The film *Framing Agnes* examines the story of the pseudonymous Agnes — a pioneering transgender woman who participated in an infamous gender health study conducted at UCLA in the 1960s. This free event is hosted by Haus of Codec and Thundermist Health Center, in conjunction with the RI LGBTQ+ Community Archive at PPL. Please register for the film screening at <https://lu.ma/u/THAT>.

PPL ALUM SPOTLIGHT

Because of YOUR generosity, individuals from all walks of life have transformative experiences at PPL. We're 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!

Vivienne Diaz: Working at PPL a full-circle moment

PPL is a really important place to me, not just because it is a wonderful place to work, but also because my time here as the Youth



English-as-a-Second-Language Facilitator this summer has been my first adult job. It's felt like a very full-circle moment for me . . . it kind of felt like kismet.

I grew up loving libraries and taking part in library programming. I never imagined a library that has a maker space or such extensive collec-

tions, with not only a children's library, but also a teen loft in the same building.

Being able to run a first-of-its-kind pilot program in Rhode Island to create ESL instruction for high school students has been a super fun and fulfilling experience. The four-week program giving students around 16 hours of instruction, kind of figuring it out as we went, has been exhilarating for everyone!

This has been my very first teaching experience and I'm thrilled to have learned so much and made amazing connections. Everyone has been so supportive. Not only am I taking away these awesome experiences, but I feel I have gained a newfound confidence in the classroom.

I'll have such great memories of my experience here. At the end, I asked my students what their favorite things were about our class.

Some said they really loved the stories that we were reading; others liked the activities. But one of my students said that I was their favorite thing about the class. And I cried . . . in front of all these kids. But it was my favorite moment. I'm really going to think about that being like, wow, this is just a great moment for me.

For next steps, I'm finishing up my undergrad and looking at some graduate programs, and if I enter the classroom again, I know that I will have a really good network of wonderful, amazing people that I can turn to and ask for help.

PPL is such an important place in the community. . .

PPL is so awesome because it's invested in and really works with and for the community. It is present in the community, and it keeps giving back to the community.

I don't like to say "gap" because it's not like there's something missing, but PPL fills such an important space in Providence. My kids would come in so excited. And seeing them get excited to sign up for library cards and checking out books and seeing books in their language and finding programming that is interesting to them and helps them to grow as people, I think that is so important, and I think that's kind of why this library is so important to the community. It fills so many crucial areas that need filling.

It's nice to know that PPL will always be there.

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Did You Know . . .

PPL owes a great debt to its primary benefactor John Nicholas Brown, (1861 - 1900) who was largely responsible for funding the Library's historic 1900 building. Through a series of donations, Brown gave \$268,590 to construct and furnish the Library, which cost a total of \$387,000.

Looking and Planning Ahead, Continued

PPL's Conservator Society will continue to take us down many pathways of inquiry and interests, and we strive to keep these pathways well worth traveling. It goes without saying that keeping these pathways open and interesting cannot happen without your continuing support.

The Conservator Society website is continuously updated with new members being added regularly. If you would like to invite friends, family, and colleagues to join our group, please let us know! Contact Beth Ricci at 401-455-8074.

We look forward to seeing you at our upcoming Conservator events and at PPL!

STAFF PROFILE

Beth Ricci: PPL's new Director of External Relations

PPL's new Director of External Relations, Beth Ricci, is, per our COO Aaron Peterman's description at a recent staff meeting, "an oldie, but a goodie!" You likely know her from her previous position as Grants Manager, in which she played a foundational role in building PPL's grants program to its current status as a robust, well-oiled machine generating nearly \$3 million in revenue annually from an array of private, corporate, state, and federal grant makers.



As a member of the PPL family since 2015 and the longest standing member of the Development arm of Team External Relations, she has amassed a wealth of institutional knowledge, fruitful and collaborative relationships with staff organization-wide, and a warm rapport with our Board, donors, and supporters. Like many PPL staff, Beth is also a creative soul and accomplished artist, who has received numerous awards and international recognition for her work as a sound technician for film and TV. (If you attended either of PPL's two virtual Savor the Story galas, which she helped produce, you've seen some of this work firsthand!) She is also a musician — some of you may have also caught her talent on the keyboard on display during our annual PPLGives Day!

She is deeply passionate about PPL and eager to support the Library's continued growth and innovation, and looks forward to working more closely with our incredible network of Conservators and donors in her new role!

NEW CONSERVATORS

Welcome to Katherine Touafek and Antoine Telford, and Lionel Pires.

We'd love to have email addresses and birthdays for all our Conservators. Please contact Rae Hebron at rhebron@provlib.org to help us better stay in touch!