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San Francisco Public Library Named 2018 Gale /Library Journal Library of the Year

Golden Gate City's Public Library System Honored for Exemplary Community Support, Reflection of San Francisco's Core Values

NEW YORK, NY - June 5, 2018 – San Francisco Public Library (SFPL) is the 2018 Gale /Library Journal Library of the Year. Under the leadership of recently retired City Librarian Luis Herrera and now his successor, Michael Lambert, SFPL is a library system that actively promotes San Francisco's values of inclusion, diversity and equality and creates programs and policies to support those democratic values.

"The San Francisco Public Library plays a crucial role in supporting our city's values and policies," wrote Mayor Mark Farrell. "Their open doors, immigration and citizenship programs, compassionate staff and community connections reflect our longstanding commitment to being a Sanctuary City."



As the 2018 Library of the Year, SFPL will receive a cash prize of \$10,000, is featured on the cover of *Library Journal's* (LJ's) June 15, 2018 issue, available in print and online, and will be honored at a reception at ALA 2018 in New Orleans. Established in 1992, each year the Library of the Year Award celebrates the library that most profoundly demonstrates service to the

community, creativity and innovating in developing specific community programs or has seen dramatic increase in library use and leadership in creating programs emulated by other libraries.

The SFPL story builds on the transformational leadership of Herrera, the 2012 *LJ* Librarian of the Year, who retired this past February after 13 years.

"I feel as though I've had an Ivy League education working with Luis Herrera. Luis was a transformational leader. He created an amazing culture of service and innovation here, but it is also a family culture for the staff. We care about one another, and we celebrate each other," Lambert said.

"We have an incredible talent pool at SFPL," Lambert continued. "Four years ago, we set out to be the premier urban library in the country, and our staff have bought

in. We launched an initiative called Service Excellence, and every staff member, custodian, page, security staff, our librarians, our managers, everybody goes through service excellence training. People have committed themselves to the patron focus service model, and they have committed to being a safe and welcoming library, a preferred destination [for] all San Franciscans.”

More than 6.6 million customers used SFPL’s library facilities in 2017, including the Main Library in the Civic Center, 27 neighborhood branches and four mobile outreach vehicles. The library system enjoys extraordinary political and fiscal support thanks to a voter led initiative that mandates an annual funding set aside from the city’s property tax revenues, resulting in an annual budget of \$126 million or \$144 per capita. Every SFPL library is open seven days a week and all 27 neighborhood branches are open a minimum of 50 hours each, with some open 55 and the Main Library open 60 hours.

In his support of SFPL’s nomination for 2018 Library of the Year, author, publisher, philanthropist and San Francisco resident, Dave Eggers said, “This library has real energy. It has real passion. They move quickly on initiatives and they say ‘yes.’ Contrary to some large institutions, that can be burdened by their own size and history, and which have the alacrity of a cruise ship, the SFPL is nimble, creative, and always inclined to find a way to make things happen.”

“The people of San Francisco are very lucky to have this excellent library at their fingertips, and the library profession is lucky to have it as a model and inspiration,” said Rebecca T. Miller, editorial director of *Library Journal* and *School Library Journal*. “San Francisco Public Library is truly a national leader in developing models of inclusion, demonstrating bold approaches to serving the diverse and underserved segments of its community, and redefining how urban libraries can and should be responsive to the national dialog on democracy.”

Also featured in the June 15, 2018 issue of *Library Journal* are two other libraries honored with special mentions in the 2018 Library of the Year Award program. They are:

- Chicago Public Library, honored for the second consecutive year, under the leadership of Commissioner and CEO Brian Bannon
- Cuyahoga County Public Library, Ohio, under the leadership of Executive Director Sari Feldman

A team of *LJ* editors winnowed the competitive nomination pool to a group of semi-finalists. Each of those was evaluated by a panel of qualified industry professionals—including Kent Oliver, director of Nashville Public Library, 2017 Gale/*LJ* Library of the Year, and Lance Werner, executive director, Kent District Library, Michigan, 2018 *LJ* Librarian of the Year.

For award guidelines, visit <http://lj.libraryjournal.com/awards>.

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