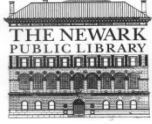


# THE NEWARK PUBLIC LIBRARY

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P R E S S   R E L E A S E

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## **Newark Public Library Recognizes Supporters and Community Leaders at Booked for the Evening Gala**

PNC, a major funder of cultural programming and children's educational activities at the Newark Public Library, was among the honorees recognized on Nov. 3, at the Library's annual Booked for the Evening fundraising dinner at Nanina's in the Park. Honorees also included longtime supporters of the Library: Victor and Jane Parsonnet, Carol G. Duncan, and Kurt Landsberger.

"We are so fortunate to have many dedicated members of the community who are committed to the Newark Public Library and recognize its importance to the City of Newark and the State of New Jersey," said Library Director Wilma Grey.

Frank J. Giantomasi, Esq., based in Genova, Burns & Giantomasi's Newark office and a member of the Commercial Real Estate Redevelopment and Environmental Law Practice Group, served as the dinner chair. With over three decades of experience, Mr. Giantomasi is recognized as a leader in urban development, planning law, zoning law and tax abatement law.

"I understand firsthand the major force the Newark Public Library is in the intellectual and cultural life of the greater Newark community. For more than a century, this institution has been a cornerstone of the City of Newark, from sharing in the joy of reading with the city's children to preserving the region's history. Genova, Burns & Giantomasi, as a neighbor just across Washington Park, is proud to support the Newark Public Library," said Giantomasi.

Campbell Hester, an eighth grade student, community volunteer, aspiring writer, and frequent visitor to the Library's North End Branch, gave a speech, "What the Newark Public Library Means to Me." Ms. Hester described how her family has a long history of using the North End Branch, starting with her grandfather when he was a young boy. In her eloquent remarks, Ms. Hester described doing research for school projects, participating in the Library's summer reading program, and the importance of reading.

"Someday I hope to become a published author. It would be amazing to walk into my local library and see my book on the shelf! Hopefully, our Newark Public Library will still be standing strong! I believe when you close the doors on our libraries, you close our minds. And it is in our minds that we start to dream and imagine all the possibilities life has to offer," said Hester.

Special Recognition for Individual Support was awarded to Victor and Jane Parsonnet. Dr. Parsonnet, now Medical Director of the Pacemaker and Defibrillator Center and the Division of Surgical Research at the Newark Beth Israel Medical Center, is an accomplished surgeon and researcher. He was Director of Surgery for

34 years and founded the hospital's Pacemaker Center in 1966. Mrs. Parsonnet worked as a research assistant at the Pacemaker Center, and then, for 27 years, served as Administrator of the Department of Surgery. They both recall their happy and educational experiences with the Newark Public Library and have used its resources, most recently in searching for genealogical information about both of their families. The Library's cultural and historical presentations have been very much appreciated, especially a historical retrospective of the Newark Beth Israel Medical Center. The Parsonnets note that the educational and cultural leadership of the Library and its outreach to the neighborhoods, the Newark Museum, Aljira, the New Jersey Historical Society, New Jersey Symphony, and NJPAC have been invaluable to the city. To them, the prestige and growth of these organizations are the foundations of Newark's renaissance.

Carol G. Duncan, Ph.D., Professor Emerita of Art History at Ramapo College was the recipient of the President's Award. Ms. Duncan is internationally known for her pioneering work on the representation of women and patriarchal authority in art. For the past two decades her work has centered on the ideological meanings of art museums. Her most recent book, *A Matter of Class: John Cotton Dana, Progressive Reform, and the Newark Museum* (Periscope Publishing, 2010), is a study of the Newark Museum, as a product of early 20th-century reform culture. *A Matter of Class* examines John Cotton Dana, best known as the director of the Newark Public Library from 1902 to 1929 and of the Newark Museum from 1909 to 1929, and discusses the young Dana as a man "struggling to throw off a detested New England upbringing and remake himself as a free-thinking intellectual;" the professional Dana whose modernization and democratization program reshaped American public libraries; and the established Dana who "endeavored to create a progressive museum as an equivalent to his reformed library."

A longtime supporter of the Library, Ms. Duncan has kindly funded Kids Unscripted Theater workshops and numerous other children's programs.

Kurt Landsberger, founder of Bel-Art Products, Inc. was recognized with an award for Community Service. Mr. Landsberger and his late wife, Anny, founded two successful northern New Jersey based companies: Bel-Art Products and MaddakInc. Bel-Art Products' Scienceware® laboratory products solve the everyday challenges faced by scientists and researchers the world over. Maddak's Ableware® produces aids for daily living to help those with permanent and temporary disabilities lead more independent lives and has grown to become the largest such manufacturer in the United States.

Mr. Landsberger is also the author of six books and has a long history of philanthropy in Essex County. The Newark Public Library's Charles F. Cummings New Jersey Information Center is the proud recipient of Mr. Landsberger's collection of more than 2,000 historic postcards, focusing primarily on Essex County buildings and landscapes.

"Public libraries provide a unique opportunity to all citizens for lifelong learning and personal development. Over the years I have appreciated having access to the Newark Public Library when conducting research for my books and exploring other topics of interest. Support for the Newark Public Library assures their ability to continue to be a dynamic part of the community and is an investment in our future," said Landsberger. PNC has a long history of strengthening and enriching the lives of neighbors in the communities they serve through their ongoing philanthropy and their extensive employee volunteer program. The PNC Corporation is the principal source of funding for the PNC Foundation, which actively supports nonprofit organizations that provide resources and services to the people and neighborhoods where PNC has a significant presence.

PNC Foundation is collaborating with neighborhood-based organizations to enhance educational opportunities for children through their signature program, PNC Grow Up Great, for which funding has recently been extended by \$250 million over 10 years. In developing Grow Up Great, PNC partnered with nationally renowned early education experts Sesame Workshop™, The Fred Rogers Company, and National Head Start Association. The Foundation awards grants to nonprofit organizations which, in turn, work to directly improve school readiness by providing programs in one of the following areas: math, science, the arts and financial

education for young children. By focusing its philanthropy in these critical areas, PNC hopes to achieve greater results in school readiness, which will yield stronger, smarter and healthier children, families and communities.

As part of this initiative, the PNC Foundation awarded a grant of over \$300,000 to the Newark Public Library. This will enable the Library to teach city children lessons in spending, sharing and saving and equip parents to reinforce the lessons at home. The 18 month program will include storytelling and structured activities to provide age appropriate financial education to approximately 8,000 preschoolers aged 3 to 5.

Since 2007, PNC Foundation's local arm has provided funding in support of the Library's annual Black History Month celebration. With generously increased funding over the years, PNC Foundation's annual contribution now covers the entire cost of this important monthlong educational and cultural series of events.

"The value of our relationship with the Newark Public Library is priceless," said Linda Bowden, PNC Bank northern New Jersey regional president. "The programs that we are privileged to support, from Black History Month to financial education for preschoolers, reflect the historic role the library plays in enriching the Newark community."

Proceeds from Booked for the Evening benefit the Newark Public Library's Annual Fund.

The Newark Public Library is the largest municipal library in New Jersey with a collection of more than 1.5 million books, audio and visual materials, and a unique collection of prints, posters, and historical documents. The historic Main Library is at 5 Washington Street in downtown Newark and eight branches are located throughout the City.

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