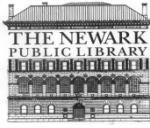


# THE NEWARK PUBLIC LIBRARY

5 WASHINGTON STREET, NEWARK, NEW JERSEY 07102



## PRESS RELEASE

Monday, November 23, 2009

Please Contact: Heidi Cramer 973-733-7837  
Pamela Goldstein 973-377-0300, Ext 14

### Renowned Curator to Deliver Prestigious John Cotton Dana Lecture, Capping Distinguished 62 Year Career at The Newark Public Library

William J. Dane, the distinguished curator of Special Collections at the Newark Public Library known for his keen eye for art, is retiring at the end of December. And he's leaving in vintage Dane fashion: quietly and without much fanfare.

Instead of marking the end of his 62-year career with a grand party, Dane plans to leave with a few words – by delivering the John Cotton Dana Lecture on Wednesday December 9 at 6 p.m. in the Main Library's Centennial Hall. The Dana Lecture, named for the library's famous second director, is sponsored biennially by The Friends of The Newark Public Library.

“His work at the Library and knowledge of special collections is unparalleled. He has ensured that some of our most interesting and unique collections, first established by Dana, have grown and flourished despite significant periods in the library's history when economic conditions permitted little support for them.” said Newark Public Library Director Wilma Grey.

Dane, 86, said he wanted to end his career quietly – by having a cup of coffee with the staff and departing the following week. But Patricia Bender, president of the Friends of the Library, suggested he deliver the Dana lecture as a way to bid farewell.



John Cotton Dana, hailed as the father of American libraries, led the Newark Public Library for over three decades and built it into one of the leading institutions of its kind in the state and nation. He was also the founder and first director of the Newark Museum.

“We wanted one more opportunity to celebrate the phenomenon that is Bill Dane,” said Bender, “The Friends are thrilled that he agreed to be this year's John Cotton Dana lecturer. For all these years, we have been privileged to benefit from Mr. Dane's artistic expertise and

his enthusiasm for all the beauty in the world. He is as genuinely interested in the work of the Friends of the Library as he is with the many artists he has known and supported over the years. It takes a special person to treat the famous and the not so famous in the same way.”

Dane began his career at the library in 1947, after serving in the Second World War.

“I’ve been here for 62 years, but now I think one has perhaps earned a change of some kind after 62 years,” he quipped with his usual wry humor, maintaining, “It’s been a fabulous job!”

Dane said he plans to spend his retirement traveling and visiting museums and galleries. His first stop will be Puerto Rico in February where he has vacationed annually for the last 50 years.

His intellectual curiosity and knack for discovering artists on the rise have distinguished Dane from other curators nationwide. Experts have called him one of the most astute and well-respected curators in the country.

Under Dane’s stewardship, the Library’s Special Collections Division has thrived, and today boasts of more than 23,000 fine prints and photographs, 5,000 posters and 1,000 rare books. The collection includes works by Rembrandt, Warhol, Lichtenstein, Kandinsky, Picasso, Matisse and Miro. Dane expanded the collections by including unique artists’ books, commercially produced pop-up books and even shopping bags.

Clement A. Price, the senior member of the Library Board of Trustees and head of The Institute on Ethnicity, Culture, and the Modern Experience at Rutgers-Newark, called Dane one of Newark’s greatest citizens of the past century.

“His fealty to the institution gave him an opportunity to preserve and enrich an art collection that rivals those of the nation’s other exemplary public libraries,” Price said. “His knowledge of that collection exceeds peers and the same may be said of his generosity toward the public.”

Dane first stepped into the Newark Public Library while he was attending classes at the Newark College of Engineering, now New Jersey Institute of Technology, as part of his military service. During a break from class, Dane wandered into the library, where he sat on one of the windowsills in the stacks and buried himself in a book.

“It was such a relief to get away from engineering books, a luxury to enjoy something I selected for myself,” Dane said in an interview with *The Star-Ledger* in 1997. “I never dreamed that one day I would return to the library and spend a half century working in the building.”

Dane was shipped to Europe in World War II, where he joined an artillery unit in the 69<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division and spent months dragging a 155-mm gun across Belgium and Germany.

After the war ended, Dane returned to the United States. He completed his studies at the University of New Hampshire, earning a bachelor’s degree. His family’s decision to move from his childhood home in Concord, N.H. to Montclair brought Dane back to the Newark Public Library. While looking for a job, he visited the library, recalling the peace and solitude he discovered among the stacks of books.

He was hired as a clerk for the Art and Music Department.

Dane enrolled at Drexel University in Philadelphia where he earned a Master's degree in Library Science. He learned about art by attending Harvard University and The Institute of Fine Art at New York University. He has also spent countless hours roaming the most celebrated galleries and museums in the world.

Dane has curated more than 300 exhibitions at the library, including such major displays as "A Salute to the Society of American Graphic Arts: 1915-1994," "Hidden Treasures of Japanese Art," and "The World in Prints."

"A library," Dane once told a reporter, "should be a palace for the people."

He is a board member of the Victorian Society in America, sits on the advisory board of the Printmaking Council of New Jersey and is a member of the Grolier Club, and the Art Libraries of North America. Dane is also listed in *Who's Who in American Art*.

The Newark Public Library is located at 5 Washington Street. Cost to attend the John Cotton Dana Lecture is \$25 per person, payable to The Friends of the Newark Public Library. The event will benefit the Gertrude Fund, an endowment dedicated to funding the Special Collections that was established by William Dane and named in memory of his sister. Carol Jenkins Cooper is chair of the lecture organizing committee. The Friends of the Newark Public Library is a community based membership organization dedicated to supporting and promoting the Library through programs, advocacy and financial support.

For reservations and more information, please call 973-733-7793 or visit [www.npl.org](http://www.npl.org)