

# ANNUAL REPORT

## FISCAL YEAR 2021



July 1, 2020 - June 30, 2021



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Deputy Director of Customer Engagement

Jenny Bogoni  
Executive Director, Read by 4th

Robert Bradley  
Human Resources Manager

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Special Collections (resigned March 31, 2021)

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Dr. Guy A. Sims  
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## MESSAGE FROM THE ANNUAL REPORT COMMITTEE

Fiscal 2021 was a pandemic-impacted year across the globe, throughout the country, and here at home. We grieved at our personal and collective losses. We longed for good health and best outcomes. We masked and we socially distanced. We agitated for better and we organized for more. We became eligible for COVID-19 vaccines. We championed our community's immunity. We were scared yet resilient. We responded to this uncertain moment with new and sustained Library offerings like outdoor storytimes and storywalks; mutual aid events; and zoom book groups that addressed collegial and neighborly needs.

When our Library doors were closed for in-person use, we premiered Materials Pick-Up which facilitated safe access to physical materials. Books are friends and we would not, could not, do without them. We expanded the reach of our 1-833-TALK FLP call center to make connecting easier. We transformed four libraries into School Access Centers so neighborhood children could engage in remote learning while school buildings were shuttered. We created in-person and digital exhibitions on the 100th anniversary of the 19th amendment (Making Her Mark: Philadelphia Women Fight for the Vote) and traveled back centuries via books and objects (Medieval Life: European Manuscripts in Philadelphia Collections).

We enhanced our collections with additional works by Black authors for whom the search for true justice and fearless joy continues. We enhanced ourselves with readings and virtual trainings. We purchased the "Historical Newspapers-Black Newspapers" database which provides cardholders with access to primary source material from 10 historic Black newspapers, including the Philadelphia Tribune. We hired the Library's first Chief of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion; and we launched the search for a new President and Director, one whom would lead with responsibility, empathy, and DEI priorities.

The new Diversity and Inclusion Steering Committee—composed of Library staff at all levels, amongst others—was instrumental in the design of an Educational Assistance Fund. This Fund will provide financial assistance to staff earning associate and bachelor degrees. We also announced the first three scholarship recipients for Drexel University's MLIS program, a requirement for librarian positions, so that we might grow our own.

We look ahead to 2022. We want our Library to be rich in resources; we want Philadelphians to be healthy, wealthy, and wise, as our municipal compatriot, Benjamin Franklin, expressed in the 1700s. We welcome new leadership, new chapters, and new ways of being together that resemble the old. We offer this forthright assessment as the Free Library's Annual Report for Fiscal Year 2021, a year like none of us have ever known.

Submitted by your Annual Report Committee for FY21:

Andre Bracy  
Jennifer Donsky  
Adam Feldman  
Aaron Frey  
Kristy Graybill

Grace Jonas  
Christina Patton  
Carolyn Polgardy  
Nathanael Roesch  
Julie Skodzinski

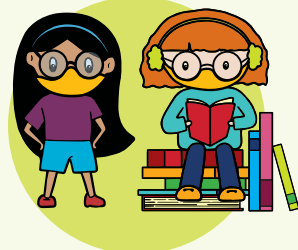
## LEADERSHIP MESSAGE

With the continuation of COVID-19, the Free Library of Philadelphia diligently responded to community needs during fiscal year 2021. Through their dedicated resilience, our Library staff expanded the materials pickup, reference services, virtual and outdoor programming that began early in the pandemic. Four Neighborhood Libraries (Blanche A. Nixon/Cobbs Creek, Ramonita G. Rodriguez, Widener and Wyoming) supported the School District of Philadelphia by serving as School Access Centers. Knowing the importance of in-person service to our communities, libraries opened their doors as they were able. Rebuild Philadelphia, which will bring updates to designated buildings, advanced to the community engagement phase at two libraries (Lawncrest and Paschalville). Central Public Services Division spearheaded a system-wide initiative to assist with the 2020 Census.

The appointment of Leslie Walker as Interim Director in September 2020 signaled the charting of a new path. The Free Library solidified its commitment to effective and thoughtful change with the hiring of Dr. Guy Sims as Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer in December 2020. The Board of Trustees welcomes their guidance and looks forward to their impact on the Free Library in the years to come. I am humbled and honored to serve and look forward to the impactful changes that we foresee in the library's future.



Folasade A. Olanipekun-Lewis  
Treasurer, Board of Trustees



Four libraries served as **School Access Centers (SAC)** for students unable to participate in remote learning from home. (\*These libraries were closed to the public while serving as SACs.)



In response to building closures caused by COVID-19, we premiered **Materials Pick-Up (MPU)** services at 51 libraries.



Though in-person services were limited, our **new 833-TALK-FLP phone line** was critical to assisting patrons. Staff received 20,240 calls!



Digital lending grew by leaps and bounds with **audiobook checkouts up 12%** and **ebook circs up 17%**.



Staff doubled-down on their technical prowess, adapting tools like Zoom for events. As a result, **program attendance skyrocketed this virtual year**, reflecting a decade-long overall attendee trend.



Why buy when you can borrow? The Library is your free golden ticket to smart thrift. In fact, **borrowers saved an average of \$257.62 this year!**

# BY THE NUMBERS

PROGRAMMING AND SERVICES	FY 21	FY 20
Total cardholders	715,239	840,052
Active cardholders	515,327	*
New library card registrations	38,283	83,723
Percentage of Philadelphians with a Library card	44.59%	47.4%
Virtual program attendees	716,405	209,793
Total wireless connections	505,501	1,024,789
Total website visits	4,065,239	6,099,144
Unique blogpost views	100,479	140,474
CIRCULATION		
eBooks (Overdrive)	1,350,389	1,154,951
Digital audiobooks	687,839	613,862
Total materials borrowed system-wide**	2,836,466	4,205,393
STAFFING		
Full-time employees (budgeted)	684‡	754
Full-time employees (filled)	669	690
OPERATING SUPPORT AND REVENUE		
City General Fund	\$39,650,733	\$46,268,849
State Grant Funds	\$8,423,500	\$7,820,226
<b>Total Support and Revenue</b>	<b>\$48,074,233</b>	<b>\$54,089,075</b>

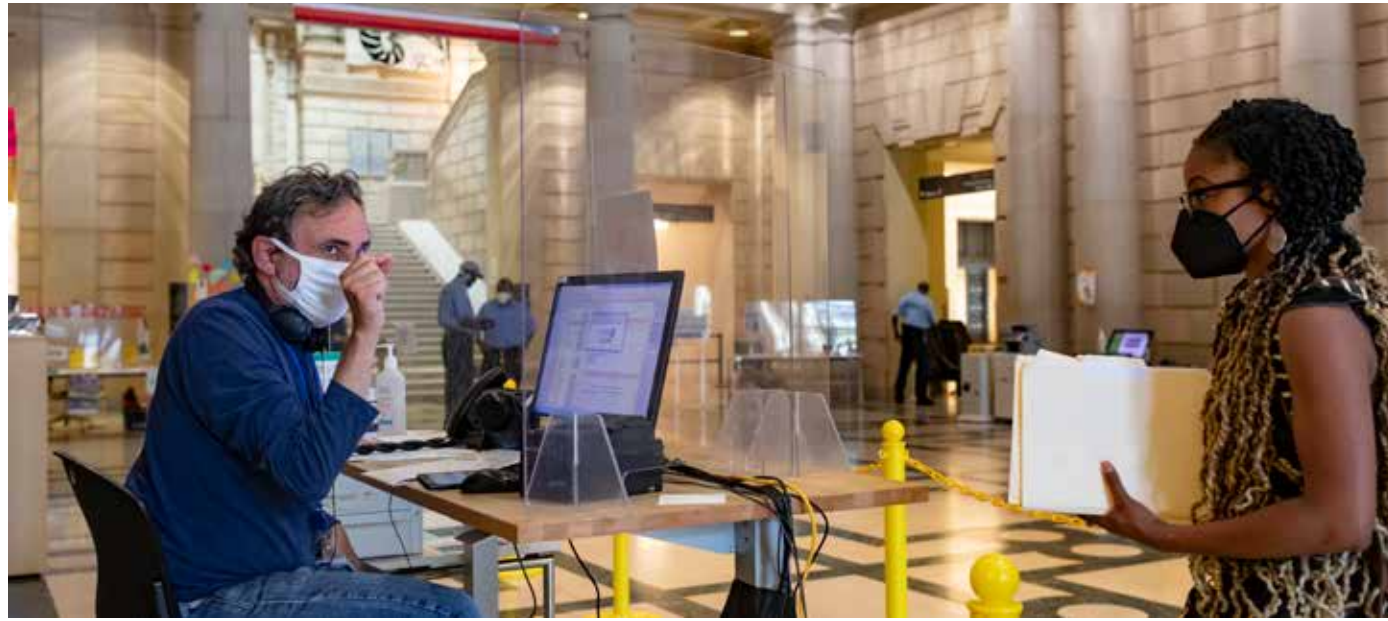
\* New metric for FY21 reporting.

\*\* In-person browsing was unavailable for many months due to COVID-19 restrictions.

‡ A 10% decrease to staffing numbers equals 70 fewer fulltime employees

# HIGHLIGHTS

## PROGRAMMING AND SERVICES



**We may have been masked and behind plexiglass, but staff continued to assist patrons.**

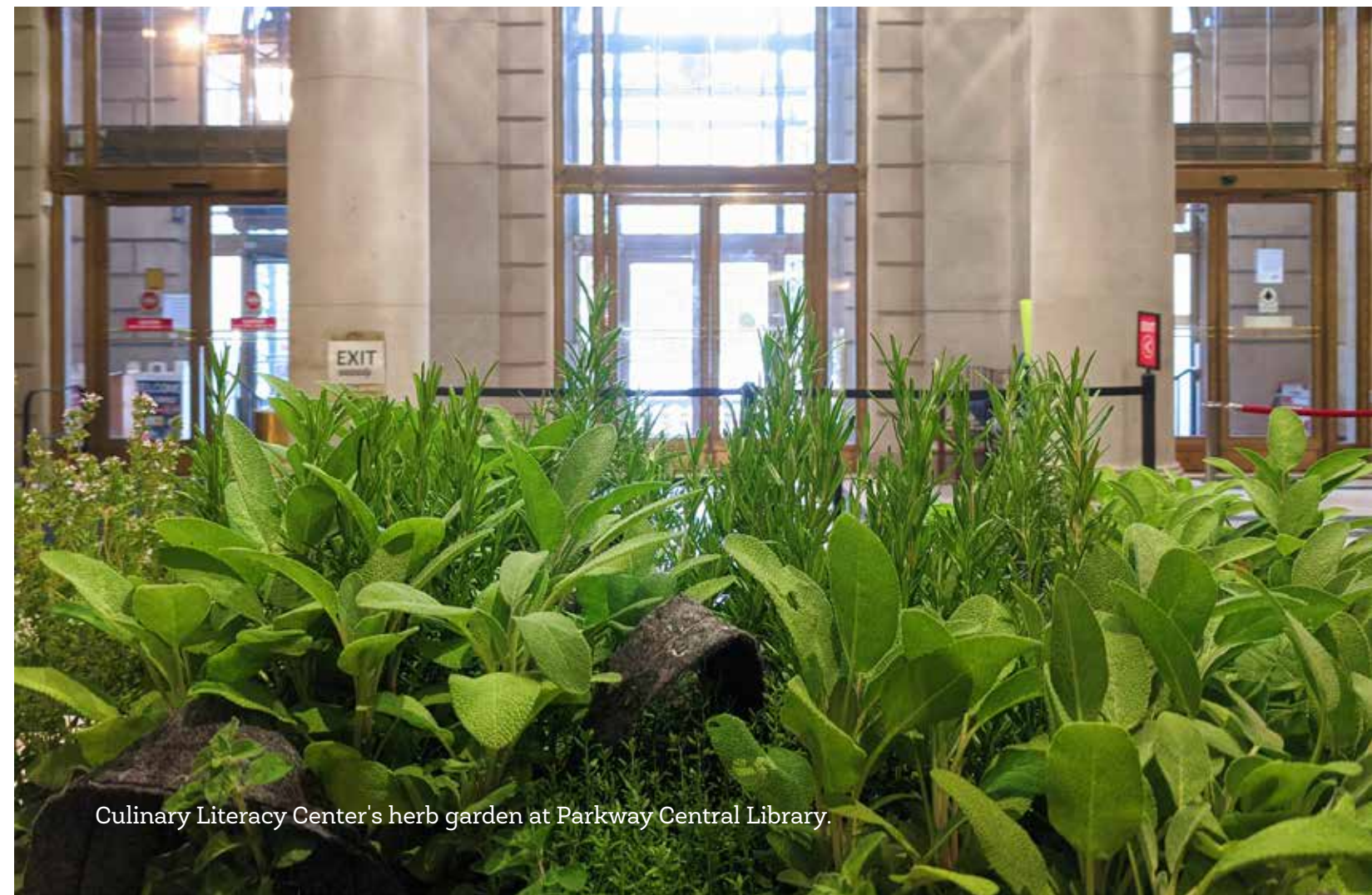


Book browsing and reading at the Library are timeless pleasures, even if one had to be masked to do so this year.



The Juneberry trees planted throughout Philadelphia become heavy with delicious, edible berries each year. This **Juneberry Joy** event with the Philadelphia Orchard Project at Blackwell West Philadelphia Regional Library served up a horticultural education, along with Juneberry lemonade!

Librarians at Kingsessing wrote eight **in-depth blog posts that highlighted major figures in jazz history** who were born in Philly, and hosted virtual book discussions centered around each figure. Featured albums were available for free streaming through Alexander Street's Jazz Music Library database.



Culinary Literacy Center's herb garden at Parkway Central Library.

# HIGHLIGHTS

## CHILDREN, TEENS, AND FAMILIES



Though many things were different this pandemic year, some fortunately remained the same; children and teens were able to enjoy **crafting and STEAM activities** while safely outdoors.



During the warmer days, we were able to gather in the sunshine for **Library storytimes**, just like in the Before Times.

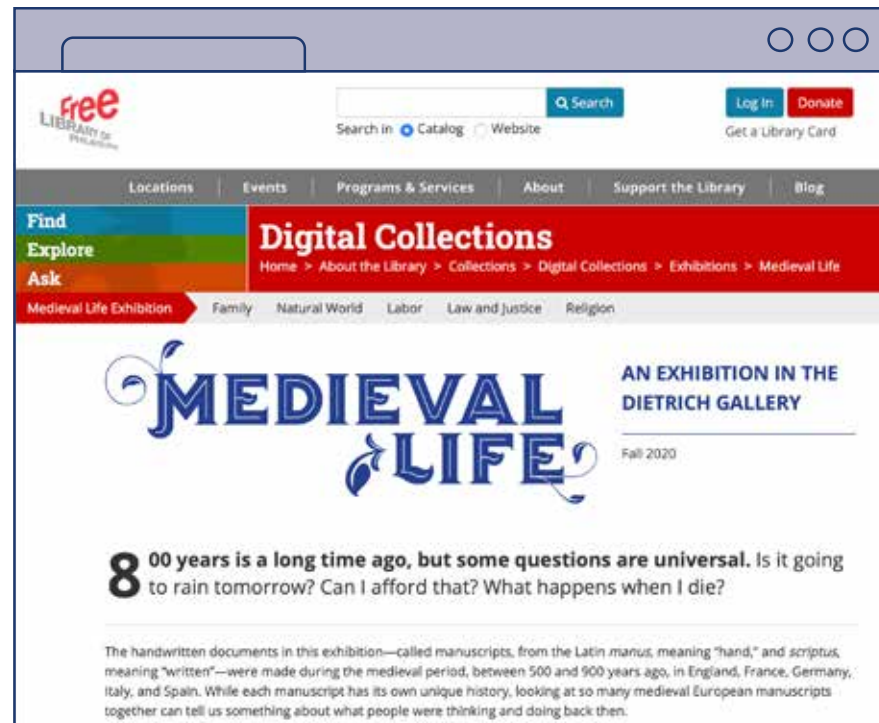


We're all familiar with reading stories, but what about **walking stories**? Librarians in Philly and across the country have arranged children's story books into their constituent page parts and placed them en plein air for families to stroll through and enjoy together.



The joy and wonderment of books and reading remained the steadfast same.

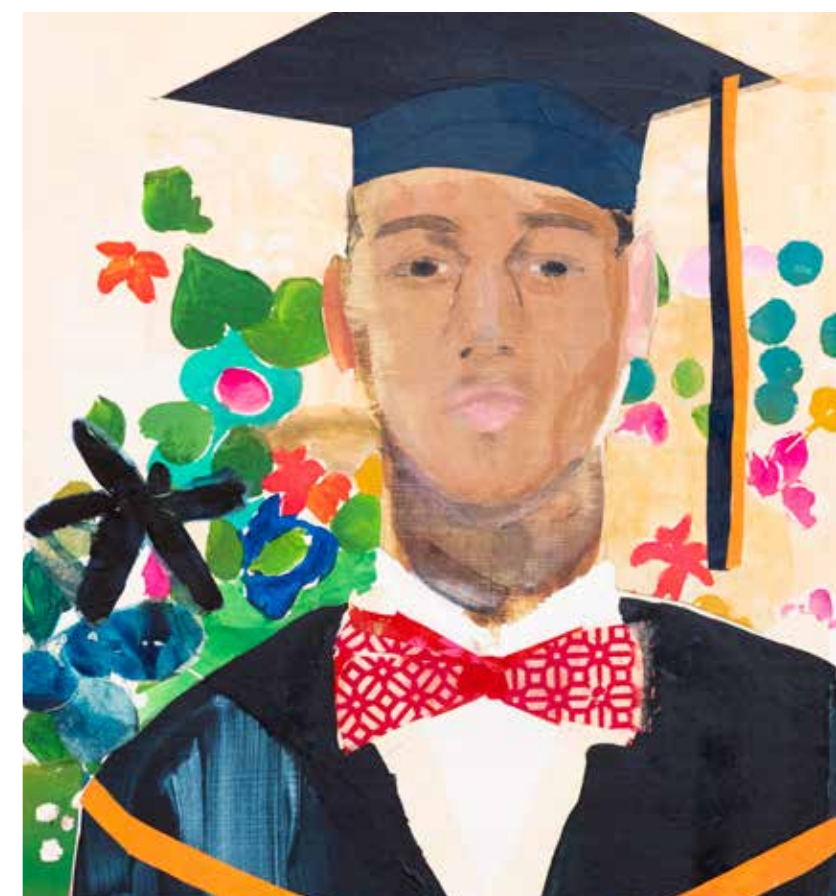
# SPOTLIGHT EXHIBITIONS



Hundreds of Philadelphia’s medieval manuscripts, dating from 1100 to 1600 CE, were first brought together as part of *Bibliotheca Philadelphiensis*, a major regional digitization project, between 2016 and 2019. The exhibition **Medieval Life: European Manuscripts in Philadelphia Collections** brought together books, scrolls, single pages, cut fragments, and facsimile reproductions. Though COVID-19 restrictions limited access to the Dietrich gallery, our digital team created a complementary online exhibition.

[www.freelibrary.org/medievallife](http://www.freelibrary.org/medievallife)

In 2020, the United States observed the 100th anniversary of the 19th Amendment, which granted the right to vote to some women, while excluding many others. We staged **Making Her Mark** to inspire conversations and action around the rights of citizenship, activism, and voting.



## Logan Library hosted the traveling **Souls Shot: Portraits of Victims of Gun Violence** exhibition

The emotional display consisted of scores of portraits of victims of gun violence, some of whom never made it past their teenage years. These portraits memorialize lives that were cherished and lost much too soon. Virtual interviews were conducted with some of the affected families and posted on Logan’s Facebook page.

# SPOTLIGHT

## COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS



The book bike rolled into Shakespeare Park.

Multiple libraries held **mutual aid fairs** in partnership with neighborhood organizations. Mutual aid is a time-honored tradition in which the essentials that all people deserve are accessed through an approach that prioritizes dignity, lived experiences, and interconnections. These fairs became an indispensable service during the pandemic.



A Community Give-Back event at Kingsessing Library was very well-attended.



Outside Logan Library, patrons and residents learned of programs and services throughout Philadelphia.



Staff from Joseph E. Coleman Northwest Regional Library tabled at Germantown Supply Hub (and below).



Youth Services and Program staff met residents at Norris Square Park in Kensington.



# Choirs Line Up For Annual Choir

## The Philadelphia Tribune

PHILADELPHIA, PA., THURSDAY, OCTOBER 13, 1938

**CRAMPLE BETWEEN UNIONS**  
*More may die as result of Team mail shootings*

**ATLANTA WORLD**  
 ONLY NEGRO DAILY NEWSPAPER IN THE WORLD  
 FINAL HOME EDITION

**THE AFRICAN AMERICAN**  
 Maryland's Best  
 The Afro-American is the oldest, largest, and newest weekly newspaper in Maryland.

**Chicago Defender**  
 DON'T BE MISLED  
 THERE'S A REASON  
 THIS NEWSPAPER  
 EVERYBODY READS IT

**Call Post**  
 CLEVELAND  
 Ohio's Fastest Growing Weekly

**CHRONICLE**  
 "A VOTERLESS PEOPLE IS A HOPELESS PEOPLE"  
 REGISTER AND VOTE!

**Sentinel**  
 LOS ANGELES  
 Fearless—Free

**THE NEW YORK AMSTERDAM NEWS**  
 EXTRA REGULAR WEEKLY EDITION  
 Complete in Two Sections

**Norfolk Journal and Guide**  
 NORFOLK, VIRGINIA, SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 16, 1938

**Courier**  
 AMERICA'S BEST WEEKLY  
 CITY EDITION

# ARREST AIDES IN 76

**Here's HEART THROB FOR YOU-- Anywhere**

**Police Flaunt Of Strikers As Politics Be**

**Majority Of S Race Lines Di Present a Uni**

**MAYOR'S ST**

**Heavily Popu Are Cluttered Areas Are Sh**

Tragedy stalked in the wake of a perfectly natural urge, when John Henry Washington, 42, invalidated for years, sought the return of his own two sons, Frederick, 14, and John Henry, 12, who had been making their home with their aged grandfather, Steven Washington, 82, in Gowan, S. C.

Grief stricken over the fact that his father had threatened to have him arrested and lynched if he carried out his intentions of taking away the children, thus realizing a long cherished dream, John Henry Washington died here Thursday night of what is believed to have been a broken heart.

According to the Rev. C. J. Jones, 2238 Montgomery avenue,

brother-in-law of Washington, they had attended a funeral in Bamberg, S. C., together with a brother, Isaac, the latter part of September, and had been asked by the father to stop over in Gowan, that he might bring back with him the two boys.

Word of their intentions, meanwhile, had reached the elderly patriarch, who immediately set out for Ola, a nearby town in South Carolina, where he notified the sheriff and constable of the proposed plan.

Armed with a double-barreled shotgun and two revolvers, the two men escorted Steve Washington back to his home to await the arrival of his son and Rev. Jones. (Continued on Page 20)

## Russell A. Allen In Court; Wife Wins Support Order

His special field is issuing licenses to referees in pugilistic circles, but Russell A. Allen, secretary of the State Athletic Commission, had nothing to do with the naming of the referee last Friday.

The "referee" was Judge William Lewis, in Municipal Court, and the opposite corners of the legal "ring" were occupied by Allen and his wife, Alice, from whom he has been separated since last July.

Mrs. Allen told the judge that Allen had abused and cursed her on several occasions.

She testified that she left him on

mission, a post that pays him \$3,500 a year. He was formerly a Coroner's detective.

The Allens have an adopted daughter, Virginia.

**Consul Exchange Pending Between U. S. And Liberia**

WASHINGTON, D. C.—An exchange of consuls between the United States and Liberia is pending as the result of the signing

With arrests of N ers constantly mount ees is directly affectin than has any previous of Philadelphia.

The combined n Highway and Street majority of whom ar Throughout the lence between the stri directing the strike a ficals with illegal arre ness in dealing with i

Sources familiar with connection with the strike lical chicanery—directing Wilson, whom they accus

# Philadelphia NEIGHBORHOOD LIBRARIES

- Center City**
  - Parkway Central**  
1901 Vine Street, 19103  
215-686-5322
  - Library of Accessible Media for Pennsylvanians (LAMP)**  
1500 Spring Garden Street #230, 19130  
215-683-3213
  - The Rosenbach**  
2008-2010 Delancey Pl, 19103  
215-732-1600
- North**
  - Cecil B. Moore Library**  
2320 Cecil B. Moore Avenue, 19121  
215-685-2766
  - Fishtown Community Library**  
1217 East Montgomery Avenue, 19125  
215-685-9990
  - Kensington Library**  
104 West Dauphin Street, 19133  
215-685-9996
  - Lillian Marrero Library**  
601 West Lehigh Avenue, 19133  
215-685-9794
  - McPherson Square Library**  
601 East Indiana Avenue, 19134  
215-685-9995
  - Ramonita G. de Rodriguez Library**  
600 West Girard Avenue, 19123  
215-686-1768
  - Richmond Library**  
2987 Almond Street, 19134  
215-685-9992
  - Widener Library**  
2808 West Lehigh Avenue, 19132  
215-685-9799
- West**
  - Haddington Library**  
446 N. 65th Street, 19151  
215-685-1970
  - Haverford Library**  
5543 Haverford Avenue, 19139  
215-685-1964
  - Lucien E. Blackwell West Philadelphia Regional Library**  
125 S. 52nd Street, 19139  
Adult/Teen: 215-685-7433  
Children's: 215-685-7422
  - Overbrook Park Library**  
7422 Haverford Avenue, 19151  
215-685-0182
  - Wynnefield Library**  
5325 Overbrook Avenue, 19131  
215-685-0298
- North Central**
  - David Cohen Ogontz Library**  
6017 Ogontz Avenue, 19141  
215-685-3566
  - Joseph E. Coleman Northwest Regional Library**  
68 West Cheltenham Avenue, 19144  
215-685-2151
  - Logan Library**  
1333 Wagner Avenue, 19141  
215-685-9156
  - Nicetown-Tioga Library**  
3720 North Broad Street, 19140  
215-685-9790
  - Oak Lane Library**  
6614 North 12th Street, 19126  
215-685-2847
  - West Oak Lane Library**  
2000 E Washington Lane, 19138  
215-685-2843
- Northwest**
  - Andorra Library**  
705 East Cathedral Road, 1912  
215-685-2552
  - Chestnut Hill Library**  
8711 Germantown Avenue, 19118  
215-685-9290
  - Falls of Schuylkill Library**  
3501 Midvale Avenue, 19129  
215-685-2093
  - Lovett Memorial Library**  
6945 Germantown Avenue, 19119  
215-685-2095
  - Roxborough Library**  
6245 Ridge Avenue, 19128  
215-685-2550
  - Wadsworth Library**  
1500 Wadsworth Avenue, 19150  
215-685-9293
- Northeast**
  - Bushrod Library**  
6304 Castor Avenue, 19149  
215-685-1471
  - Frankford Library**  
4634 Frankford Avenue, 19124  
215-685-1473
  - Greater Olney Library**  
5501 North 5th Street, 19120  
215-685-2846
  - Lawncrest Library**  
6098 Rising Sun Avenue, 19111  
215-685-0549
  - Northeast Regional Library**  
2228 Cottman Avenue, 19149  
Adult/Teen: 215-685-0522  
Children's: 215-685-0509
  - Tacony Library**  
6742 Torresdale Avenue, 19135  
215-685-8755
  - Wyoming Library**  
231 East Wyoming Avenue, 19120  
215-685-9158
- South**
  - Charles Santore Library**  
923 S. 7th Street, 19147  
215-686-1766
  - Fumo Family Library**  
2437 S. Broad Street, 19148  
215-685-1758
  - Independence Library**  
1905 Locust Street, 19103  
215-685-6621
  - Philadelphia City Institute**  
1905 Locust Street, 19103  
215-685-6621
  - Queen Memorial Library**  
1201 S. 23rd Street, 19146  
215-685-1899
  - South Philadelphia Library**  
1700 S. Broad Street, 19145  
215-685-1866
  - Thomas F. Donatucci, Sr. Library**  
1935 Shunk Street, 19145  
215-685-1755
  - Whitman Library**  
200 Snyder Avenue, 19148  
215-685-1754
- Far Northeast**
  - Bustleton Library**  
10199 Bustleton Avenue, 19116  
215-685-0472
  - Fox Chase Library**  
501 Rhawn Street, 19111  
215-685-0547
  - Holmesburg Library**  
7810 Frankford Avenue, 19136  
215-685-8756
  - Katharine Drexel Library**  
11099 Knights Road, 19154  
215-685-9383
  - Torresdale Library**  
3079 Holme Avenue, 19136  
215-685-0494
  - Welsh Road Library**  
9233 Roosevelt Boulevard, 19114  
215-685-0498
- Southwest**
  - Blanche A. Nixon/Cobbs Creek Library**  
5800 Cobbs Creek Parkway, 19143  
215-685-1973
  - Charles L. Durham Library**  
3320 Haverford Avenue, 19104  
215-685-7436
  - Eastwick Library**  
2851 Island Avenue, 19153  
215-685-4170
  - Kingsessing Library**  
1201 S. 51st Street, 19143  
215-685-2690
  - Paschalville Library**  
6942 Woodland Avenue, 19142  
215-685-2662
  - Walnut Street West Library**  
201 S. 40th Street, 19104  
215-685-7671

## BLACK NEWS. BLACK VOICES.

Cardholders now have access to 10 historic Black newspapers through the Historical Newspapers-Black Newspapers collection (ProQuest), including full-text access to the Philadelphia Tribune (1912-2001)





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**LIBRARY OF PHILADELPHIA**



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**FREE**  
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