Mr. Pratt’s Many Hats

There was a time when libraries were all about the books. So we have to wonder what Enoch Pratt would think of his library and the major, varied roles it plays in the community today.

“LL WAGNER THAT MR. PRATT would first be both surprised and proud, Pratt Central and the 21 branches of the Pratt system are increasingly essential to the lives of Baltimore’s citizens. When Mayor Catherine Pugh outlined her broad vision for the city, focus was on education, economic development and jobs, and quality of life. That sounds like a job description that Pratt fills on a daily basis.

» Education At a recent annual Pratt Citywide Friends meeting, Baltimore City School Superintendent Dr. Sonja Santelises said the school system needs to “partner and tap into some of the existing resources in the city” and urged greater partnership among city schools and Pratt. Deborah Taylor, Pratt Library’s Coordinator of School and Student Services, has been nationally recognized for her work coordinating hundreds of school visits serving more than 12,000 students each year. From emergent literacy for babies through enrichment for seniors, both on-site and through mobile outreach, the Pratt Library supports lifelong learning. Mr. Pratt’s traditional books and contemporary technology provide seamless information for education.

» Economic Development and Jobs The Job and Career Information Center at Pratt continues to be one of the most significant resources for citizens seeking new work or advancement. Materials and programs on job searches, resume writing, interviewing techniques, career planning, resource guides and financial literacy are available throughout the library system, and computers may be reserved for two hours at a time for job-related activities. On weekdays with the Lawyer in the Library project providing free civil legal services, a Maryland Legal Aid lawyer may be seen at the Pennsylvania Avenue Branch sitting across the table from a family discussing wage claims, debt issues or housing matters. Individuals may attend a class or schedule an appointment to learn more about expungement, often the last roadblock to securing a job. A Mobile Job Center, generously funded by BGE/Exelon, will be delivering services and materials directly to (continued, page 2 bottom)

Quality Books for Children; Training for Parents

Early literacy is an urgent public health issue in Baltimore.

EARNING TO READ and being ready for kindergarten is important not just for academic success, but for good health over a lifetime. That’s the message that Baltimore philanthropists Rheda Becker and Robert E. Meyerhoff want to share with families across the city. The pair funded a new Pratt Library program called Books for Me to provide high quality books and early literacy training for parents and caregivers. This innovative program helps children birth to age five develop crucial pre-reading skills to improve school readiness.

“Children start to learn to read much earlier than people think,” Ms. Becker says. “This program begins to open the door to reading, so when children reach kindergarten they won’t be behind. There simply is no substitute for a parent or primary caregiver when it comes to helping young children become ready to read. When the adults in a child’s life know about the importance of early literacy and how to nurture pre-reading skills at home, the effect of literacy efforts is multiplied many times.”

“Books for Me” combines training for parents and caregivers in the five practices most important to early literacy—read, write, talk, sing and play—with high quality books to take home. As a result, participants understand the importance of reading, they know how to read to their children and they have their own home library.

Ms. Becker and Mr. Meyerhoff want families to have the best books available. They understand that children like books with interesting stories and colorful, inspired illustrations. “A new book, a beautiful book, is such a wonderful thing,” Ms. Becker says. “By the end of the program our families have several books and they’ve got a whole new way to reading. I know my boys loved their books when they were small, and I hope that happens with these children.”

For some parents and caregivers, reading to children does not come easily. They might be busy working two jobs or worrying about food and housing security. High-quality books might not be available. And parents who were not read to themselves as children might not be comfortable with reading aloud.

“People don’t realize how important it is to be read to when you are a child,” Mr. Meyerhoff says.

(continued, page 2 bottom)
Open for Business: Central Library Update

After more than 20 years of planning, setbacks, restarts and hard work, the first complete renovation of the Central Library is underway.

Updates to old favorites are also underway. The 244-seat Wheeler Auditorium will be improved with up-to-date audio-visual technologies so the Library can host more varied types of presentations, performances, and events. A live feed from Central Hall and new and improved seating and finishes will enhance the experience for attendees.

The Central Library’s lower floors are as busy as ever—children are still using their fine-free First Card to check out books, teens are working with librarians on their homework, and adults are applying for jobs with free computer and Internet access.

In the midst of enormous change, Enoch Pratt’s vision remains the same: “A library for all, rich and poor without distinction of race or color.”

It is estimated the project will take three years to finish, but the Central Library will remain open throughout, providing programs and services to all those who walk through its historic doors.

Regarding Central

WALK DOWN CATHEDRAL STREET reveals the first signs of the massive $154 million dollar project. Scaffolding envelopes the building as the beautiful limestone exterior walls are cleaned and restored. Highly visible signs ensure that passersby—in cars or on foot—understand the library is open for service.

All departments, books and materials are now on the first floor as the Library’s upper floors are currently closed to the public. Second and third floor windows have been removed for refurbishing, and interior scaffolding has gone up in Central Hall. Work is underway on many new and familiar spaces: The nation’s first Young Adult department is expanding significantly with flexible and varied space. Teens will be able to create digital music or film a video, organize a poetry slam or write code, participate in STEM-related programming (e.g., robotics, computer-generated animation), and enjoy author programs.

(Mr. Pratt’s Many Hats, continued) Baltimore citizens within months. Again, Mr. Pratt’s traditional books and contemporary technology provide seamless information for economic development.

- Quality of Life Dr. Leana Wen, Baltimore City Health Commissioner, affirmed at the launch in January of the Becker Meyerhoff Books for Me Program that public literacy is a major element of public health. Citizens with health questions often turn first to the closest librarian for help. Caregivers’ Corners at each Pratt branch offer brochures and guides detailing city health agencies and service. Pratt also hosts nutrition seminars, exercise classes and a vast number of arts, music and recreation programs, all of which enhance life in Baltimore. And no surprise, Mr. Pratt’s traditional books and contemporary technology provide seamless information for quality of life.

The Enoch Pratt Free Library’s foundation is books. While continuing to protect and provide these traditional literary and academic materials, the Pratt has also become a vibrant community center, providing materials, resources and services for stronger education, economic opportunity and quality of life. That may seem like a lot of hats to wear, but the amazing Pratt staff is wearing them well, daily providing services to the community that were unimaginable in Mr. Pratt’s era.

Mr. Pratt’s traditional books and contemporary technology provide seamless information for economic development.

GIVING TO THE PRATT IS EASY. Go to WWW.PRATTLIBRARY.ORG/GIVE to make an online credit card donation.

(A Book for Me continued) “A big part of Books for Me is special training and resources for parents and caregivers so they learn not just that reading is important but also how to do it best.” Role modeling rather than lecturing forms the heart of parent sessions.

This participatory style of learning is enjoyable and helps ensure that new skills are practiced at home. For children birth to age three and their families, Books for Me is offered at Early Head Start, Judy Centers and Baltimore Infants and Toddlers Centers. Programming at these sites consists of workshops and sessions featuring role modeling, information sharing, and a book giveaway. Children aged three to five and their families are served through Raising A Reader family literacy nights at schools and community centers.

Partnering with the Pratt Library was a natural choice for Ms. Becker and Mr. Meyerhoff. “Bob and I are interested in education and in leveling the playing field for children,” she says. “The Pratt Library is an extraordinary institution that continues to grow and meet our needs as we grow as a city. The Library provides so many services beyond books.”
Ensuring Continued Support, Peace of Mind

Drafting wills is a large part of what I do for a living. Clients often say to me, “If I don’t have a will, everything goes to the State, right?” That is not accurate at all. In fact, if you die without a will, everything goes to your family.

In many cases, this may not be what you would have chosen. Many of us want to have a lasting impact on organizations we supported during our lifetimes. This was the case with Howard Wright Hubbard, who specifically included the Pratt Library in her will.

While there are many ways to include charities in your estate plan, the simplest one is a bequest by will. It doesn’t cost anything up front, and married couples can arrange for a bequest that will take effect upon the death of the survivor. Good estate attorneys will usually ask if you want to make any charitable bequests. If yours does not, bring it up yourself.

What’s the right amount? That depends on your means, of course, and the needs of your family members. One reasonable approach is to determine what it would cost to maintain your annual support indefinitely, or, to use the technical term, how much would it take to endow your gift? Most charities have endowment funds. They hold the endowment intact and draw out a fixed percentage each year. The percentage is generally around 4–5%. Using that range, it would take

$20,000 to $25,000 to guarantee a $1,000 income stream for the library each year into the future. A bequest of $10,000 would endow an annual gift of $400 to $500.

As a loyal supporter and friend, you understand the importance of private support. By including the Pratt Library in your estate plans, whether by endowing your gift or otherwise, you can have a lasting impact and help ensure the library remains vital and relevant for years to come.

If you have questions about planned giving, please contact Cindi Monahan, Director of Institutional Advancement, at 410–396–5283, or cmonahan@prattlibrary.org.

Longtime PR Chief’s Special Bequest

Miss Howard Wright Hubbard, former public relations chief at the Pratt Library who died in 2015, remembered the Pratt in her will.

Miss Hubbard, a Baltimore native, began working at the Pratt Library in 1940. She served as the Pratt’s chief of public relations for 20 years until her retirement in 1963. “She was elegant, efficient and somewhat self-effacing,” said former state Sen. Julian L. Lapides, who was Miss Hubbard’s attorney. “She was always promoting the Pratt Library and not herself.

“A gift like Miss Hubbard’s is special,” said Judy Cooper, coordinator of public programs at the Pratt. “It helps support these popular programs, bringing together authors and their readers, and helps to promote the Pratt Library as Miss Hubbard did throughout her years at the Pratt.”

Through legacy giving, donors can have a profound impact on the library and its future. Including the Pratt in your estate plans is an easy way to ensure the library remains relevant and vital for years to come.

For more information on planned giving, please contact Cindi Monahan, Director of Institutional Advancement at 410–396–5283, or cmonahan@prattlibrary.org.

Bringing Nationally Known Authors to Baltimore

The Pratt’s Judy Cooper is able to act quickly and secure authors for Writers LIVE because Miss Howard Hubbard and other generous people included the Pratt Library in their estate planning. Competition for popular authors is intense, and having funds available means Cooper can bring the authors Baltimoreans most want to see and hear to the Pratt Library.

“The Pratt Library’s Writers LIVE series is definitely on the radar of NYC publicists; they’ve heard of the success of our author programs.” Cooper says. “And because of our endowed funding, publishers know we seek and are able to quickly confirm their most in-demand writers. For example, when Colson Whitehead’s publicist emailed in February 2016 and offered one date for Colson’s visit, I was able to reply within an hour to confirm.”

For information, CALL THE OFFICE OF INSTITUTIONAL ADVANCEMENT AT (410) 396–5283.
The Queen of Hearts oversees the Pratt Contemporaries’ Alice in Wonderland-themed Black and White Party. The 10th anniversary of the event raised $190,000 for the Library.

Elizabeth Hurwitz reads to her daughter on the new Book Buggy at the Spotlight: Children’s Programming event at the Govans Library in September 2016.

National Book Award-winning Author Jacqueline Woodson with Pratt Library Board Members Mychelle Farmer and Lidia Paz-Baker, along with Calvin Baker, at the 29th annual Booklovers’ Breakfast in February.

Sylvia and Eddie Brown with Pratt Library Board Member Verna Jones-Rodwell at the Colson Whitehead event in September.

Coming to the Pratt*

Mar 6
Newbery Medalist Kwame Alexander discusses his book The Playbook: 52 Rules to Aim, Shoot, and Score in This Game Called Life. Friends School of Baltimore, 6 p.m.

Mar 22
Misty Copeland discusses her new book, Ballerina Body: Dancing and Eating Your Way to a Leaner, Stronger, and More Graceful You. $30 admission includes book. Brown Center, Maryland Institute, College of Art, 7 p.m.

Apr 8
Mr. Pratt Presents, a gala event featuring Ron Chernow, Pulitzer Prize-winning author of Washington: A Life and Alexander Hamilton, which inspired the hit Broadway musical. Scottish Rite Masonic Center, 8 p.m.

Apr 18
Deepa Iyer discusses her book, We Too Sing America: South Asian, Arab, Muslim, and Sikh Immigrants Shape Our Multiracial Future. Maryland State Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped, 6:30 p.m.

*See the latest issue of Compass or check out prattlibrary.org for a complete list of upcoming speakers and programs.

MR. PRATT PRESENTS
RON CHERNOW

Pulitzer-Prize winning historian author of Alexander Hamilton, the inspiration for the hit Broadway musical.

The Library's Annual Gala
Saturday, April 8, 2017
prattlibrary.org/mrpratt