

News Release

For Immediate Release



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www.ecpubliclibrary.info

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Story Builder Library Expansion Campaign Recognizes High Level ‘Opus’ Donors

The L.E. Phillips Memorial Public Library in downtown Eau Claire and its Story Builder expansion campaign are proud to officially recognize the donors within its Opus Giving Society. Donors at this level have contributed or pledged financial gifts between \$100,000 and \$249,999. These generous donations have helped to bring overall funding to roughly 84% of the total project cost (\$18.5M).

The City of Eau Claire is investing \$11.5M to revamp the library’s failing mechanical systems while the Story Builder campaign is raising an additional \$7M in private funds to expand the library’s physical space—a long overdue effort to meet the demands of Eau Claire’s ever-growing and evolving population.

As of mid-December, the campaign’s Opus Giving Society members include Charter Bank; Don and Leatrice Mathison; Jerry Shea, Heidi Atkins, and Cooper and Kiki Shea; Lasker Jewelers; Judge Thomas and Jill Barland; and Dr. Louis G. Arnold. This giving society also includes a gift in honor of Ken and Roberta Vance, in addition to anonymous contributions.

Most donors at this level have secured naming rights to space and amenities within the new library design, some of which are still being discussed.

Commenting on Charter Bank’s support for the project, President and CEO Paul Kohler said, “Charter Bank believes that the Eau Claire Public Library is a vital community resource for so many in the Chippewa Valley. The library offers so many programs for every age, plus, they have continued to stay relevant during this roller coaster of a year.”

Don and Leatrice Mathison both worked in the Eau Claire school system and were vocal advocates for education. They were exceptionally frequent users of the library, and they believed in its mission and the importance of making library services accessible to all. They were pleased to be able to support the library in this way. Leatrice Mathison passed away in 2016, while Don Mathison passed away this past summer.

Of the expansion project, Judge Thomas Barland said, “Our family’s connection to the Library goes back to the early 1900’s when my grandfather, John C. Barland, served on its Board of Directors. We applaud the current Board for its wisdom in developing the Story Builder campaign which will provide our community with still another first class addition to our downtown. And, most importantly, the expanded Library will continue, as it has for all these years, to serve ALL citizens.”

Speaking of the library, Nicole Lasker of Lasker Jewelers said, “For three generations it has been a mission of our family business to give back to our community. We are blessed to be part of Eau Claire and feel it is important to give back and support the community that supports us. The library provides a space for anyone to learn and explore their interests. It is also a space for continued education, the arts, and a place for parents to connect with their children. Lasker Jewelers is a part of our community and we are proud to be part of something so integral to a healthy Eau Claire.”

Commenting on her family’s donation, Heidi Atkins (who also serves as co-chair for the Story Builder campaign) said, “This past year has taught us many things, and the thing that stands out most to me is the need for community—the need to support each other and our city. Committing time and resources to this campaign, to the library and all it does for the region, has been so rewarding. For me it’s the perfect way to spread support to as much of my community as possible.”

As to his own generous support for the expansion project, Dr. Louis G. Arnold adds, “The public library has been an essential resource of the Eau Claire community for generations. The Story Builder expansion program will maintain and enhance this resource in the foreseeable future. I am grateful for the opportunity to participate.”

The library’s expansion plans are designed to enhance core services. For example, an all-new third-floor event room will double community engagement space, offering expanded programming for all ages. Modernized study rooms will help individuals and groups to work, study, and meet. Redesigned shelving and display space will offer unprecedented physical access. And a new drive-up window will ease materials pickup. Beyond these essential enhancements, the expansion project dovetails perfectly with the city’s upcoming plans to construct an urban plaza between the library and City Hall.

Anyone interested in learning more about the campaign can visit www.ecpubliclibrary.info/storybuilder.

Questions about naming rights can be directed to Deputy Director Kimberly Hennings (storybuilder@eauclaire.lib.wi.us; 715-839-6225). Pledges and gifts can be sent to the Eau Claire Community Foundation, which supports the philanthropic portion of the Story Builder expansion campaign (306 S. Barstow St. Suite 104, Eau Claire, WI 54701; www.eccfwi.org; 715-552-3801; info@eccfwi.org).

For other library information, people may contact Information & Reference by calling 715-839-5004, emailing librarian@eauclaire.lib.wi.us, or chatting with staff via the library's website at www.ecpubliclibrary.info.

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