



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Buffalo & Erie County Public Library Unveils Bold Rebrand; Reaffirms Commitment to Intellectual Freedom and Public Service

- ***Profoundly Public*** reaffirms the Library's nearly 200-year legacy of protecting intellectual freedom in Buffalo and Erie County, including open access and free expression, while championing its role as the people's cultural institution.
- **A Space Utilization Study** has been launched to begin reimagining Buffalo's Central Library as a dynamic, 21st-century public institution at the heart of Lafayette Square.
- The Library also announces over **\$100,000 in grants** to Erie County public library branches, funded by donations, to improve patron-facing equipment & technology and enrich services.
- **In Conversation:** An event celebrating intellectual freedom, featuring award-winning journalist Margaret Sullivan and bestselling author Susan Orlean, will take place on May 9.

BUFFALO, N.Y., April 29, 2025 – The Buffalo & Erie County Public Library today announces a new chapter and brand, and a reaffirmation of its promise: to remain *Profoundly Public*.

As the oldest cultural institution in Western New York, the Library is reinforcing its nearly 200-year-old mission of open access – ensuring that it commits to remaining a pillar of intellectual freedom in our community for generations to come.

With a shift of emphasis from who we are and what we do, to how we do it - this reinvention aligns with future-focused investments in the downtown Central Library, as well as branches across Erie County.

Profoundly Public: A Statement of Purpose

More than a new logo or tagline, *Profoundly Public* is a declaration: libraries are not passive spaces – they are active, essential forces for equity, education, and civic life. It is the *people's* cultural institution.

At a time when information is increasingly locked behind paywalls, curated by algorithms, or restricted outright, the public library remains one of the few institutions where access to knowledge is truly free and impartial exploration is encouraged.

At the same time, between January and August 2024, the American Library Association's Office for Intellectual Freedom documented 414 attempts to censor Library materials, involving 1,128 unique titles – endangering one of the last frontiers of free information.

“A public library is one of the last places in our society where you don’t have to buy anything to belong,” said **John Spears, Director**.

“*Profoundly Public* is our promise that we will always be here—for every reader, every learner, and every community member who needs a space to create, discover, and grow.”

As part of this effort, the Library has overhauled its online store, allowing Buffalo, Erie County, and beyond to participate in this message and show their support. In partnership with Special Collections Department, the Library has designed items that represent at least seven decades of service, alongside new designs that represent the Library’s new identity, and its future.

All products purchased directly support the Library and its mission.

Investing in Downtown Buffalo

With Erie County’s support, a space utilization study is underway to reimagine the Central Library as a dynamic downtown destination: becoming a more welcoming space for patrons, while making room to showcase the Library’s nationally and internationally-renowned collection. This study is made possible by both public and donated funds.

Spanning two city blocks, the Central Library houses 3.2 million resources, including rare works, first editions, book art, and its crown jewel— Mark Twain’s handwritten manuscript of *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, one of American literature’s most significant texts.

“This space utilization study will lay the foundation for a future revitalization that, we hope, would further enliven our neighborhood in Lafayette Square” said **Spears**.

“It would also properly recognize the Library’s critical cultural legacy, and shape the Central Library’s future as a vital public institution and an attraction in its own right.”

Since its founding in 1836, the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library has been fundamental to Buffalo’s cultural development. The Library has housed collections that fostered the development of institutions like the Buffalo Fine Arts Academy (now the Buffalo AKG Art Museum), the Buffalo & Erie County Historical Society (now The Buffalo History Museum), and the Buffalo Society of Natural Sciences (now the Buffalo Museum of Science) – paving the way for their own development.

Investing in a better patron experience across Erie County

The Buffalo & Erie County Public Library is also pleased to announce the investment of over \$100,000 of donated funds to its member libraries across Erie County for public-facing equipment, technology, and programs.

This investment will help libraries, and Library departments, to purchase equipment that supports projects and initiatives benefitting patrons’ quality of technology access throughout Erie County. This grant’s goal is to give local libraries – especially those with limited resources – an opportunity to improve their spaces in a way that directly benefits public need.

“Profoundly Public means taking immediate action to expand our impact, embrace innovation, and working to ensure as many people as possible – urban, suburban, rural – have an opportunity for access,” said **Dorinda Darden, Deputy Director, Public Services**.

“This investment underscores that commitment toward continuous improvement. Every person in Erie County should have the tools and technology to empower themselves and others.”

In Conversation: Intellectual Freedom and the Library

On Friday, May 9, the Library will host ***In Conversation*** – a celebration of intellectual freedom featuring award-winning journalist **Margaret Sullivan** and bestselling author of *The Library Book*, **Susan Orlean**. This critical conversation will examine the freedom of expression today, and the role libraries can play in preserving open access to information and ideas.

The event is ticketed, and will take place at The Admiral Room, 237 Main Street, Buffalo, from 6-9 p.m. Tickets can be [purchased online](#), and will support the Library Foundation of Buffalo & Erie County. Space is limited.

“Libraries are more than just brick, mortar, and books— they are the beating heart of our social fabric,” said **Spears**.

“This entire campaign, and *In Conversation*, is a reminder that the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library will not waver in our commitment to keeping information free, open, and accessible to all.”

Press are welcome to request a media pass for In Conversation at the contact below.

Media Contact / Media Passes

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For Sponsorship Opportunities and Tickets to ***In Conversation***:
<https://ways2give.buffalolib.org/inconversation2025>

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