



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Grand Island Memorial Library to Dedicate Reading Garden Honoring 42-Year Trustee Richard Earne

Outdoor space fulfills late trustee's vision for accessible community gathering at the Library

GRAND ISLAND, N.Y. – May 12, 2026 - The Grand Island Memorial Library will dedicate the **Richard Earne Reading Garden** on **Wednesday, May 13 at 5 PM at 1715 Bedell Road, Grand Island.**

The event will celebrate the life and legacy of the late Trustee Richard “Dick” Earne with a dedication of the garden space to him. A reception will follow.

Members of the public and media are welcome to attend.

The garden honors Earne, who served as a Library Trustee from 1980 to 2022 — a 42-year tenure during which he helped oversee construction of the current library building. He also served as president of the Association of Contract Library Trustees (ACT) of the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library.

Earne was also a Grand Island Rotarian for 44 years, serving as District Governor for Rotary District 7090 and earning the *Paul Harris Fellow* distinction nine times.

“This project complements Dick's vision — a place where people can reflect, be outside, and feel at home at their library. He believed deeply that the Grand Island Memorial Library belonged to the community” said **Library Director Bridgette Heintz**. “This is a genuine celebration of his spirit, and he remains without question one of the strongest library advocates this community has had.”

“Dick never passed up an opportunity to bring people together in service to this community. Whether he was volunteering at the library, leading Rotary initiatives for over four decades, or participate wherever he was needed – he was always there.” said **Sherry Miller, Reading Garden Committee member and Grand Island Rotarian.**

“This garden is a fitting and permanent tribute to a man who gave so much to our community” **Miller** continued.

The Reading Garden was Earne's vision for extending library space into a comfortable outdoor seating area for patrons.

Phase I launched in April 2024 with seating, a notice board, and a Little Free Library funded through an Earth Day grant from the Air & Waste Management Association.

Phase II, completed in August 2025, added hardscaping, expanded garden beds, and flat-topped boulder seating.

The garden was made possible through an all-of-community effort, including The Grand Island Rotary, Cinderella Isle Garden Club, the Town of Grand Island, Friends of the Grand Island Memorial Library, Assemblyman Angelo Morinello, the Reading Garden Committee, the Grand Island Memorial Library Board of Trustees and the Grand Island Community. Special thanks for their continued support of the Library.

About

Established in 1836, the **Buffalo & Erie County Public Library** is Buffalo's oldest cultural institution. *Profoundly Public* in all we do, Library locations serve more than 2.35 million visitors annually through 37 branches and mobile services. The Library also houses over 3.2 million resources, extensive digital collections, and innovative programming. With a collection of international and national note, the Library continues to significantly impact community education, equity, and cultural enrichment. In 2025, every dollar invested returned \$4.24 in community benefits, totaling over \$131 million in annual value.

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