

An Overdue Productions film in association with BiFolkal Productions

# The Hollywood Librarian

## A Look at Librarians Through Film

“I long to throw my arms around every librarian I meet on behalf of all the souls they never knew they saved.”

– Barbara Kingsolver, American writer

Running Time: 96 minutes

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## **PRAISE FOR *THE HOLLYWOOD LIBRARIAN***

"A deft weaving... a hopeful elegy ...a well-reasoned, eloquent, and enjoyable argument for the continued importance of libraries in the modern democracy..."

-*Film International Magazine*

"Entertaining, uplifting and educational, it's everything a good documentary should be."

-*The Edmonton Journal*

"Anything but boring."

-*The Tallahassee Democrat*

"What this movie is really about is the survival of civilization."

-*Racine Journal Times*

"A touching, amusing, insightful and entirely delightful film."

- Vartan Gregorian, Carnegie Corporation of New York

"Brilliant! I had no idea it would be so moving."

- Alison Bechdel, author of *Fun Home*, *Time Magazine's* Best Book of 2006

## **LIBRARIAN TESTIMONIALS**

"*The Hollywood Librarian* will make librarians very proud but more importantly it is destined to set the record straight about the true nature of librarianship. Wouldn't it be wonderful if everyone could see it? It could change the world!"

- Mrs. Jet Kofoot, Algona (IA) Public Library

"I can't tell you how much your movie *The Hollywood Librarian* spoke straight from my heart. It is everything I have been feeling, fighting for and working towards for the last 25 years."

- Denise Smith, Stanton County (KS) Public Library

"Showing *The Hollywood Librarian* was a great outreach and fundraising opportunity for our library. Thanks to the production company, it was easy to organize the event, even for a very small library like us. The documentary really proved to be an eye-opener for the general public while the "library people" enjoyed the validation."

- Catherine Lavalley-Welch, University of South Florida

"This is a film you don't want to miss. I stayed in the rear of my library and listened and watched the attendees as they laughed, grew serious, shed tears, and remained completely engaged by this film. For days afterward, thank you notes streamed into my inbox from the participants."

- Charlotte Ballard, Wells Middle School, Houston

## FILM SYNOPSIS

They have more cardholders than VISA, more customers than Amazon, and more outlets than McDonald's. Meet America's librarians. *The Hollywood Librarian: A Look at Librarians Through Film* is the first comprehensive treatment of the subject of librarians. A vivid blend of factual documentary, feature film, and storytelling, it reveals the history and realities of librarianship in the entertaining and appealing context of American movies. Interviews with actual librarians, intercut with film clips of cinematic librarians, examine such issues as literature, books and reading, censorship, library funding, citizenship and democracy. For the first time, we see and understand the real lives and real work of American librarians who for decades have been a cultural force hiding in plain sight.

This film's subject is librarians: who they are, what they do, why they do it, and the impact of their work in people's lives. The underlying meaning is how we express our own humanity, how we listen to ourselves and one another in the realm of the written and read word -- a uniquely human privilege.

Audiences will be surprised and delighted by the fascinating librarians in this entertaining and enlightening film, and will emerge with a greater appreciation for the range of literature and materials available to them thanks to our nation's librarians.

## NOTABLE QUOTES FROM *THE HOLLYWOOD LIBRARIAN*

**EUGENIE PRIME:** The librarian holds a very important role in a society, and I would like to think that in the future that there is still this very critical and important role – keepers of the flame. Whether it's the flame of democracy, whether it's the flame of freedom, whatever that flame is, that we are in a sense keepers of that flame – that civilizing flame.

**MOLLY KLISS, LIBRARY GRADUATE STUDENT:** From the very first day when I went out on the reference desk and was learning about all the various resources and databases and helping people, I just knew that it couldn't get any better.

**JAMIE LARUE:** I was playing baseball, and I was probably six years old. I was way out in right field, and I was bored out of my mind. And then I saw a shimmering on the horizon – this blue bus. And this blue bus was a bookmobile. And I walked off the baseball diamond – just left – and stepped inside, and there the first thing I saw was Mrs. Dolores Johnson. And she had the little bangs, and the bun in the back, and she had the sweater with the little chain across this, and she looked at me like I was the person she had been waiting for all of her life.

**RAY BRADBURY, AMERICAN AUTHOR:** When I was twelve years old, we traveled on route 66 from Illinois out to Arizona and finally to California. It took nine days – but I could hardly wait for the day to be over. Why? Because a library was waiting for me. So I discovered in crossing America seventy years ago, and all the books they had there that they didn't have in Waukegan. So when my father stopped the car, I hit the ground running to the nearest library because there was mystery waiting and surprise.

**RUTH GILBERT:** The image of the librarian has always been a little iffy. When I first got my degree, one of my friends said, how much is that per "Shh!"?

**PEG PERRY, FORMER LIBRARIAN:** They wanted to ask me a question. They said, is it true that you're Katherine Hepburn's sister? And I said, yes. And their faces fell and they said, well, what are you doing in the Canton Public Library?

**ROGER SIMPSON, LIBRARY PATRON:** The library has given me a chance to better my life. You see, at the age of forty I became homeless. I had problems with my reading and writing. I had to drop out of school in the ninth grade to go to work. So I came to the Center for Reading and Writing, also known as CRW, at Tompkins Square Library. Since I have been coming to the library, I have achieved a place to stay of my own and my first bank account. I have a good job and paying my own rent. Now I'm standing on my own two feet again. So I love this library. Thank you.

**EUGENIE PRIME:** To me, the library represents all that freedom represents. I mean if you really think about what is freedom? Freedom simply means the power to choose – that I am empowered to have choices. I have choices as I'm exposed to information. So think of the library as that living symbol of freedom.

**PAT LAWTON, PH.D., PROFESSOR OF LIBRARY SCIENCE:** We're not just a bunch of women sitting around making marks on pages.

**RHEA LAWSON, PH.D., LIBRARY DIRECTOR:** Just recently, I sat with a woman who said, oh, you're a librarian? I like books. They usually go – I'm a librarian, I like books. And I just told her that, well, you know, I'm responsible for a multimillion-dollar business called a library – called a public library. I have a staff of six hundred and we have thirty-seven locations. So, I really am a businesswoman running a business, and I'm not just shelving books.

**EUGENIE PRIME:** We have a way of getting people to share with us what that problem is and then are able to package the answer in a way they would want. Google can't meet that, no way. The catalogue was the first tool that was hyperlinks. You go to your catalogue, and you look at the tracings on the catalogue card, and it told you that if you're looking on this subject, if you look at this other book – it is related. The first hyperlink! The people thought that they created hyperlink with the 'net. Come on, guys.

**SUSAN TURRELL:** You know you have to pay for the heat, and you have to pay for the phone, and you have to pay for the electricity, and you can't – what are you going to do? Maybe you cut hours? But I couldn't do that. I couldn't stand the thought of – I mean, who was I going to penalize? Was I going to penalize the older people, who come in in the morning, or the people who come in with their children, or the kids who come after school? I didn't know what to do there. The one thing you can cut or have some control over, unfortunately, is your book budget. Without books you're not a library, but that's where you pare down the budget when you need to save money. And it just kills me, but that's what we have to do.

**MARIA RODDY:** The impact on the children of this city is going to be enormous if we were to close. It is hard to imagine. Very difficult and very painful to imagine. There's anger. The children are angry. The high school students have rallied twice. They're angry. They don't understand why these things happen. That's what a closed library's all about. You're being left out. You're marginalized, and you know you are marginalized. And that is the tragedy of closing a library. That's why we're here talking to you, because that's the passion, the commitment, the dedication that we have as librarians to prevent that from happening. It can't happen in the United States of America. It cannot happen.

**RAY BRADBURY:** The wonderful thing about a good library is going in blindly and reaching your hand out, and you open a book and, well, that one's not quite it. And you open another one, that's okay. And you open a third or fourth one, and suddenly there's a mirror image of yourself. You're looking for yourself in the library.

**NANCY PEARL:** People absolutely adore being librarians. And who wouldn't? I mean, it's a perfect job.

## CREDITS

An Overdue Productions film in association with BiFolkal Productions

Producer/Writer/Director | Ann Seidl  
Executive Producer | Lynne Martin Erickson  
Cinematographer | Aaron Harris  
Location Sound & Re-recorder | Pete Winter  
Editorial Consultant | Juliana Parroni  
Associate Producer | Mary Clare McKesson  
Original Score | David J. Murphy & Nestor Torres  
Additional Cinematography | Barbara Jabaily

UNITED STATES • 2007 • 96 mins • Shot on Panasonic Varicam • Color • NTSC •  
BETA/DVD/DVCAM • Aspect Ratio • 4:3 Stereo English/Spanish/French Subtitles

## ABOUT THE FILMMAKER

### **ANN M. SEIDL** | *Writer and Director*

Ann Seidl has a master of library and information services from the University of Denver. She is a library consultant and the owner and principal of Information, Managed, a library consulting business which provides library research and GIS analysis products to public libraries and systems. She completed the screenplay for the film in 2003 and has spoken at annual library conferences in more than 10 states and Canada about the documentary. Before becoming a librarian, Ann worked as a voice-over actor for various television and film productions, hosted a weekly television newsmagazine in the Denver market, and anchored fund drives for both Colorado Public Television and Florida Public Radio. Her national work has included Samsung cameras, Ramada Inn, and AT&T Wireless Services, as well as narration for several independent non-fiction films. Her voice can be heard on DirecTV, giving MPAA ratings before the start of films.

## ABOUT THE LIBRARIANS

**RUTH GILBERT** has been a teacher, an indexer, and a librarian for almost 40 years. With a BS in Chemistry, she joined the Colorado Council of Medical Librarians in 1966 and has served the organization as both Treasurer and President. Gilbert, well into her 80's, plans to focus her time working towards a single-payer national health care plan.

**JAMIE LARUE** has been the director of the Douglas County Libraries in Colorado since 1990. He regularly writes a weekly newspaper column that appears in the Douglas County News-Press and its affiliates. A former President of the Colorado Library Association, he has won various awards throughout his 30 year career.

**MARIA MENA** is the Youth Services Coordinator for the LeRoy Collins Leon County Public Library System in Tallahassee, FL. She has been a librarian for over 15 years.

**JAN NEAL** is a Head Librarian at the Salinas Public Library. She played an integral role in saving the library from closing in 2005. Since then, SPL has been able to operate seven days a week and even has a Bookmobile. 2009 marks the library's Centennial Celebration.

**NANCY PEARL** has been a librarian in the Seattle area for 40 years. She published the first edition of her popular *Book Lust* series in 2003. She is a regular literary commentator on National Public Radio's "Morning Edition" and in 2004, Pearl won the Women's National Book Association Award for her extraordinary contribution to the world of books.

**EUGENIE PRIME** is the Head Librarian at Hewlett-Packard. She joined HP in 1987. In June 1998, Dow Jones Interactive Publishing and the Special Libraries Association (SLA) named her the first winner of the Dow Jones Leadership Award. She has been a librarian for about 30 years.

**MARIA RODDY** is the Branch Manager of the Cesar Chavez Branch Library in Salinas, CA. She was active in the fight to pass Measure V in 2005, which funds all Salinas library operations through 2015. She has been a librarian for over 13 years.

**ELEAORE SCHMIDT** retired as Library Director of the Long Beach Public Library in 2008, after 32 years in the industry. Having helped save the Main Library from the city's attempts to shut it down, she now hopes to relax in retirement and travel to "exotic places" with her husband, Peter.

**SUSAN TURRELL** is the former Library Director at the Tunkhannock Public Library in Pennsylvania. Her fundraising efforts and dedication to the branch have truly made TPL, as the film says, "the library that Susan built." She retired in January, 2009, after 20 years on the job.

## CONTACT INFORMATION

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