DEDICATION

This booklet, reflecting on the first thirty-five years of the Friends of The Ferguson Library, is dedicated to the 100-plus volunteers who annually contribute about 25,000 hours working in the Friends Book Shops and on our programs and committees. Without them and without the generous assistance of the Library staff, we could not fulfill our commitment of support to the Library.

MISSION

To promote community support for the priorities, programs and activities of The Ferguson Library.
Dear Friends,

Thank you for joining with us to celebrate our thirty-fifth anniversary. Over the years we have grown from a small “mom and pop” operation with a bank account of $8,000 into a big business with an annual income averaging more than $200,000. Of this, approximately 50% goes directly to support library programs, 15% to sponsor programs to benefit the community, 15% for administration, and 20% to run the book stores which provide 80% of our income.

In addition to the many gifts – such as shelves for the children’s room at the Main Library and furniture for the Weed Memorial & Hollander Branch children’s room – we have given direct financial support to book and art collections, staff scholarships, and The Ferguson Library Foundation. None of this would have been possible without the many hours of dedicated work contributed by our volunteers. For this, we thank each and every one for their support throughout the years.

This booklet gives you a look at the past. It is also an invitation for you to join us in making the next thirty-five years as successful as these have been. Again, many thanks for your support.

Regards,
Margaret Metwally
President

The Friends of The Ferguson Library  3
Congratulations to the Friends of The Ferguson on celebrating thirty-five years in partnership with the Library. You are not only advocates for our services, but also active supporter of our programs and priorities. You deserve our deep appreciation and thanks for all you do for the Library, and for Stamford.

The Friends are a public face of Ferguson in our community, and we couldn’t ask for better representatives of the Library with their unique brand of energy and enthusiasm. We wish you continued success in the work you do on our behalf and for the residents and businesses of Stamford.

Michael J. Cacace, Esq.
Chair, Ferguson Library Board of Trustees
When the Friends of The Ferguson Library came into being in 1979, we had little idea how successful the organization would be.

Now, thirty-five years later, the Friends are an integral part of The Ferguson Library. From their Books for Babies program, which gives the gift of a book to every baby born at Stamford Hospital, to the Literary Competition, which recognizes student writing, to their award-winning Book Shop, the Friends have found unique and innovative ways to support Ferguson.

We are truly grateful for all that the Friends do for our Library and for our community, and recognize the special dedication of their members for well over three decades.

Ernie DiMattia, Jr.
President, The Ferguson Library
Friends Logo 1980

Friends Logo 2003

Friends Logo 2010
Libraries have existed as long as the written word, but how long have support groups, such as the Friends, existed? According to the *Friends of the Library Handbook*, Sir Thomas Bodley, a diplomat under Queen Elizabeth I of England, formed a library for Oxford University in the late 16th century. He inspired some of his “honorable friends” to donate books, thus forming the concept of library benefaction.

Many of our libraries today, including The Ferguson, were started by private individuals. The formation of “friends” for public libraries is fairly new (among the earliest to involve an entire community was Detroit in 1942).

According to Marie Hurley, long-time director of The Ferguson, several attempts were made to establish such a group in Stamford, but the time never seemed right. It wasn’t until 1977 that the trustees, with the encouragement of then new president, Ernie DiMattia, agreed to form a committee to study the feasibility of such an idea.

The committee discovered that friends groups varied among communities, some merely straightened books on shelves, others owned the library building. After a great deal of thought, Ferguson trustees agreed to go ahead. Following are the highlights of the thirty-five years that followed this decision.

Joan K. Rinaldi
I n 1978, The Ferguson Library Board of Trustees recruited the first members of the Friends board and agreed on its mission. The certificate of incorporation was signed January 15, 1979. Sam Cross was asked to draw up its by-laws, thus becoming the first official Friend. Our first membership drive was held, the by-laws adopted and the officers ratified in 1980.

In order to support our programs, the Friends have always relied on book sales, membership dues and the work of volunteers. To provide a “face” for the Friends to the community, among the first actions was the adoption of a logo and the use of Fergie the Bookworm. In 1981 volunteers knitted sweaters with the Fergie logo to sell in the gift shop to support children’s programs.

The first Book and Author Luncheon, co-sponsored by the *The Advocate*, was held in 1980. The Lillian Moran Award to recognize community service, named in honor of a late board member, was inaugurated at that event. In its thirty-two year history, ninety-six noted authors spoke at the Book & Author Luncheon, including actress Helen Hayes and First Lady Betty Ford. The Book & Author Luncheon evolved into a Book & Author Tea in 2013, starting a new tradition.

A gift shop to sell used books was considered as early as 1983, and the idea was tested with our first book sales in 1985 and 1986. The grand opening of the Gift Shop, now called the Friends Book Shop at The Ferguson Library, was celebrated May 3, 1987. A second shop was opened at the Harry Bennett Branch...
in 2000. Collectible and rare book sales, Internet sales, and evening hours were among the innovations which brought the shops into the 21st century. The shops are our main source of funding.

In 1986, the Friends started a program called Books for Babies. Every new mother in Stamford Hospital received an illustrated book explaining the importance of reading to her newborn. Today, each book includes a pamphlet describing early childhood programs at the Library. We provide 240 books each month to the hospital and to date, over 57,000 books have been distributed.

In 1989, the Library administration asked the Friends to help support UNICEF and in 1990 we donated and shipped books to Sierra Leone. The following year, we donated 2,500 books to St. Joseph and Stamford hospitals, and from then on we continued to contribute to nonprofits such as the Girls’ Club, schools in Russia, Belize and Kenya, women’s shelters and the Osborn Prison section of the Hartford Correctional Center. This program was formally named Friend-to-Friend in 2007. However, its success overwhelmed our ability to manage it, and we reluctantly discontinued Friend-to-Friend in 2011.

From 1987 to 1993, the Friends played a supporting role in an annual literary competition sponsored by the Stamford Festival of the Arts. This grew into our own Literary Competition, which is now in its 29th year and receives hundreds of entries from Stamford students in elementary through high school each year.

In 2012, we launched the Friends Author Series as a way to bring authors into the Library through a series of informal evenings. The Author Series, with a modest ticket price, which includes a reception, has been very successful both as a fundraiser and a chance to showcase the Library to a new generation of users.

Over the past thirty-five years, through our various activities, we have contributed more than $2.5 million to the Library.
The accomplishments of the Friends and their contributions to The Ferguson Library are in large part attributable to the leadership and organizational skills of its presidents. We would like to recognize them.

June Fahey 1979 – 1981
Karen Angers 1981 – 1983
Renee Ganis 1983 – 1984
Suzanne deLima 1984 – 1985
Sally Shepard 1985 – 1987
Louise Stern 1987 – 1988
Cynthia Richardson 1989 – 1991
Lynn Hathaway 1993 – 1995
Wanda Major 1995 – 1996
Ginger Duncan 1996 – 1999
Gladys Cohen 1999 – 2001
Kitty Sample 2001 – 2003
Mary D. Uva 2003 – 2004
Ann M. Sexton 2004 – 2005
Maureen Bayne 2009 – 2011
Eileen H. Rosner 2011 – 2013
Members of the Board 1979 – 2014

Volunteers are not paid; not because they are worthless, but because they are priceless.
—Mother Theresa

Agronin, Belle
Angers, Karen *
Arnold, Arlene
Axiotakis, Gilda
Bayne, Maureen
Belfiore, Marie
Bennett, Dorothy *
Birnbaum, Charlotte
Bova, Dary
Breunig, Lisa
Carlin, Rosalind
Carriero, Gail
Chase, Betty
Chavkin, Joyce
Christophe, Cheryl
Connacher, Nat
Connor Sheila
Crawford, Dee
Dahl, Stephanie
Dechant, Kathleen
deLima, Suzanne *
Diamond, Cecile
DiMattia, Susan
Ditesheim, Binnie
Donaghy, Greta
Dubinsky, S.

Duncan, Ginger
Edgerton, Adele *
Fahey, June *
Fainelli, Grace
Farrell, Mary Alice
Flounders, June
Fleming, Susan *
Fogerty, Denise
Fox, Ginny
Frederick, Gina
Friedman, Bea
Fu, Emily
Fulton, Barbara
Ganis, Rene
Geller, Polly
Getreuer, Anne
Giusti, Ruth
Goldman, Sue
Gould, Sheryl
Greenberg, Sue
Greenwood, Janet
Guydon, Lorel
Hammock, Sam
Hart, Ann
Harvey, Beth
Hathaway, Lynn

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Schneider, Janet  
Schroper, Gloria  
Sexton, Ann Lake  
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Shapiro, Frieda  
Shapiro, Hilary  
Shaw, Miriam *  
Shepard, Sally  
Silvera, Sally  
Sinick, Nancy  
Smith, Brenda *  
Smith, Julie  
Smith, Lee  
Spelke, Ruth *  
St. Onge, Julie  
Stacey, Susan  
Stern, Louise  
Sunblad, Barbara  
Szekerus, Erna  
Thompson, Janet  
Tobin, Ester *  
Todd, Jill  
Toller, JoElla  
Uva, Mary D.  
Voss, Cady  
Weir, Lisa  
Weiss, Ann  
White, Vivien *  
Wienski, Phyllis  
Wilkov, Minnie *  
Wilson, Mary-Starke  
Works, Ann  
Zalichin, Olga  
Zitter, Hillary  

We would also like to recognize the trustees who acted as the first board until elections could be held in 1979:

Askin, William  
Bromley, J. Robert  
Ganis, Harvey  
Gambino, Joe  
Gochberg, Lawrence  
Mayers, Thomas  
Shafter, Mort  
Stoetzner, Eric  
Tyson, Wayne  
Wise, Robert  

*Founding Member
A W A R D S & R E C O G N I T I O N

1984  Connecticut State Friends of Libraries
       First place to Friends Newsletter
       Best in content and format among large city libraries

1985  J. C. Penney Company
       Golden Rule Award for Community Service

1992  Friends of Connecticut Libraries
       First place in large Friends category

1993  Friends of Connecticut Libraries
       First place in over-300 membership category

2000  Friends of Libraries USA Newsletter
       Credited the creation of Books for Babies program
       in 1985 to the Friends

2001  United Way Award
       Books for Babies project

2003  Friends of Connecticut Libraries
       Outstanding Friend, over-25,000 pop category

2003  Downtown Special Services District
       Main Library Book Shop Retailer of the Year Award

2004  Connecticut Family Magazine
       Named Main Library Book Shop one of 50 coolest places in Connecticut

2012  Friends of Connecticut Libraries
       Group Award

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Current Programs and Activities

Book Shops
•

Author Series
•

Book & Author Tea
•

Literary Competition
•

Books for Babies

In addition, the Friends support all library programs for children, teens and adults, including films, computer training, summer reading clubs and book discussions. The Friends also provide funding for staff development and scholarships.
Board of Directors

Margaret Metwally, President
Susan DiMattia, Vice-President
Anne Mochulsky, Treasurer
Janet Greenwood, Secretary
  Marie Belfiore
  Gail Carriero
  Joyce Chavkin
  Grace Fainelli
  Donna Getreuer
  Sam Hammock
  Gail Malloy
  Ricki Miller
  Eileen H. Rosner
  Janet Schneider
  Ann M. Sexton
  Hillary Zitter

www.fergusonlibrary.org/friends