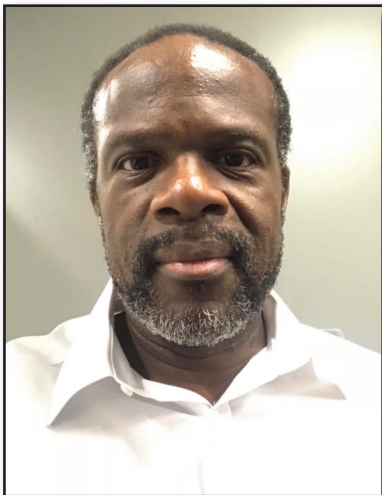


## Civil Rights, Artistic Diversity, Historical Reckoning: Exploring the Film, Literature, and Lives of Marginalized Communities

Mechanics' Institute produces compelling programs intended to inspire critical thinking, idea-sharing, and experiential learning about topics related to artists, writers, and thinkers who have experienced the marginalizing effects of exclusion from privilege afforded to groups who hold political and cultural power. February marked CinemaLit's third annual "**Black Lives on Film**" series in celebration of Black History Month.



The series began with local film critic Omar Moore (*left*) serving as guest host, initiating discussion of the first film – the 2020 documentary ***Driving While Black: Race, Space and Mobility in America*** — which one attendee called a “major eye-opener” about the complexities and hazards faced by Black travelers navigating a highly segregated America.

The following week, the 1978 film ***Killer of Sheep*** was heralded by participants as a profound examination of the realities of systemic poverty in the Watts neighborhood of Los Angeles. In 1990, *Killer of Sheep* was selected for preservation in the United States National Film Registry by the Library of Congress as being culturally, historically, and aesthetically significant.

***One Drop Rule*** is a 2001 documentary about how the early 20th century legal principle of racial classification via a single “drop of blood” relates to the contemporary practice of colorism. The film explores attitudes towards lighter and darker shades of skin, which led attendees into an in-depth conversation about the cultural construction of race.



*Image used with permission of Kanopy, Inc..*

The month closed with ***Luce***, a 2019 feature film about a former Eritrean child soldier — a suburban teenager raised by a white family who is dealing with the psychological trauma of his circumstances. The nuanced questions raised by this film led to a lively discussion about expectations, stereotyping, and coded language. “Articulate,” one participant observed, “often means, ‘smarter than those other Black people.’”

The deep engagement in this NEH-funded film series demonstrates a desire among Mechanics' Institute program attendees for meaningful discussions about race and racism. Continue the conversation in June by attending CinemaLit onsite at Mechanics' Institute to view films such as acclaimed director Jordan Peele's ***Get Out***, historical feature films based on the lives of American heroes Harriet Tubman (***Harriet***) and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. (***Selma***), and Spike Lee's iconic 1989 film, ***Do the Right Thing***.

# Upcoming Events

## ***Constructing a Nervous System: A Memoir***

with Pulitzer Prize-winning author Margo Jefferson; Cosponsored by City Lights Books & Publishing; Programs in "Civil Rights, Artistic Diversity, Historical Reckoning," supported by a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities

April 14, 6:00 pm; Online; Registration required

MI members and public: Free; public: \$5-\$10 sliding scale

In *Constructing a Nervous System*, Jefferson shatters her Self and recombines the pieces into a memoir of stunning originality, a performance of the elements that comprise and occupy the mind of one of our foremost critics. Jefferson fuses the criticism that she is known for, fragments of the family members she grieves for, and signal moments from her life, as well as the words of those who have peopled her past and accompanied her in her solitude, dramatized here like never before. Please check the [event link](#) for additional details and to register. Books will be mailed to participants by City Lights Books & Publishing.



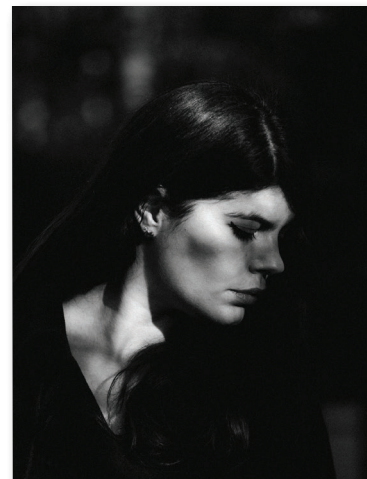
## ***Learwife: A Novel***

Author J.R. Thorpe in conversation with Philippa Kelly, Dramaturg in Residence at California Shakespeare Theater; Cosponsored by California Shakespeare Theater

April 21, 12:00 pm (noon); Online; Registration required

Members of Mechanics' Institute and Cal Shakes: Free; public: \$5-\$10 sliding scale

Word has come. Care-bent King Lear is dead, driven mad and betrayed. His three daughters too, broken in battle. But someone has survived: Lear's queen. Exiled to a nunnery years ago, written out of history, her name forgotten. Now she can tell her story. To find peace she must reckon with her past and make a terrible choice – one upon which her destiny, and that of the entire abbey, rests. Giving unforgettable voice to a woman whose absence has been a tantalizing mystery, *Learwife* is a breathtaking novel of loss, renewal, and how history bleeds into the present. Please check the [event link](#) for additional details and to register.



## ***Becoming Story: A Journey Among Seasons, Places, Trees, and Ancestors***

with author Greg Sarris; Cosponsored by Heyday Books and California Institute for Community, Art, and Culture (CICAN); Programs in "Civil Rights, Artistic Diversity, Historical Reckoning," supported by a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities

May 12, 5:30 pm; 4th Floor Meeting Room; Registration required

MI members and Friends of Heyday Books and CICAN: Free; public: \$5-\$10 sliding scale

*Becoming Story* asks: What does it mean to be truly connected to the place you call home — to walk where innumerable generations of your ancestors have walked? And what does it mean when you dedicate your life to making that connection even deeper? Moving between his childhood and the present day, Sarris creates a kaleidoscopic narrative about the forces that shaped his early years and his eventual work as a tribal leader. He considers the deep past, historical traumas, and possible futures of his homeland. His acclaimed storytelling skills are in top form here, and he charts his journey in prose that is humorous, searching, and profound. A gently powerful memoir, *Becoming Story* is also a master class in the art of belonging to the place where you live.



Missed any of our recent events or programs? Many of them are recorded and available online. Please visit the [Mechanics' Institute YouTube channel](#) to enjoy!

Margo Jefferson photo credit: Claire Holt  
J.R. Thorpe photo credit: Tristan Hutchinson



## Upcoming Events

### Bloomsbay

A city-wide celebration of Bloomsday in honor of the 100th Anniversary of the publication of James Joyce's *Ulysses*

*Mechanics' Institute is proud to partner with the Consulate General of Ireland of San Francisco, the San Francisco Public Library, UC-Berkeley, Irish Studies Program, City Lights Books & Publishing, and other collaborators to celebrate the anniversary of one of the great innovations of modern literature with programs, performances, and exhibits across the city during the week (June 12-18).*



On June 16, Mechanics' Institute will host a full day of activities themed "Reimagining Joyce" beginning online at noon with a Bloomsday greeting from Dublin, where author Catherine Flynn will offer an introduction to her much anticipated book, *The Cambridge Centenary Ulysses: The 1922 Text with Essays and Notes*. This midday program will also include a talk with publishers of *Ulysses: An Illustrated Edition* which features the striking and humorous illustrations by renowned Spanish neo-figurative artist Eduardo Arroyo (1937–2018). The afternoon event will be onsite with our annual gathering of community readings, live music, Irish cuisine and libations. Costumes encouraged! **Check Mechanics' Institute's website for forthcoming details and to register.**

### Bi-Annual Members Meeting: Hybrid

**May 19, 5:30 pm Reception; 6:00 pm Meeting**  
**4th floor Meeting Room**

**Registration Required for Virtual Attendance**  
**MI Members and Guests; Free**

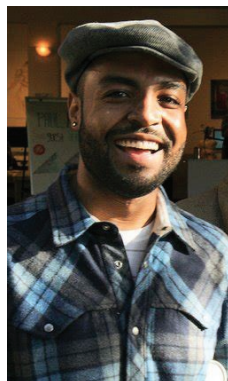
Join us onsite or online for the Bi-Annual Members' Meeting of Mechanics' Institute to hear from fellow members, staff, and trustees. Learn about plans and programs, technology updates, and efforts to improve your experience as members. Proof of vaccination is required to attend onsite, where light refreshments will be included and masks are optional. We look forward to seeing you there, whether in-person or virtually!

## Celebrate Pride Month

Two programs in June will celebrate Pride Month by highlighting the compelling work of LGBTQIA+ authors.

### Play, Orchestra, Play, Play Something Sweet and Light and Gay

In a panel discussion on June 8, local writers speak about the use of music in their work. Authors who will present their music and writing include (below, left to right) Vernon Kieve III (*Southern Migrant Mixtape*), Lori Ostlund (*After the Parade*), and Alec Scott (*Until It Shimmers*). Enjoy tunes, short readings of passages tied to these musical pieces, and a conversational question and answer session. **Check Mechanics' Institute's website for forthcoming details and to register.**



### World Literature Book Group Reads *My Tender Matador* by Pedro Lemebel

**June 22, 7:00-8:15 pm**

**Online; Registration Required**  
**MI Members Only; Free**

On June 22 the World Literature Book Group will discuss *My Tender Matador* by Pedro Lemebel, the Chilean essayist, chronicler, and novelist known for his humorous depiction of Chilean popular culture from a queer perspective. *Tengo miedo torero* (*My Tender Matador*) is a love story set a few days before the attempted assassination of Augusto Pinochet. The Queen of the Corner, a romantic who embroiders linens for the wealthy and listens to boleros to drown out the gunshots and rioting in the streets of Chile, and young, handsome Carlos, a guerrilla fighter who uses the Queen's house to store mysterious boxes and hold clandestine meetings, are at the center of this tale of revolution and romance – a stirring portrait of Chile at an historical crossroads. By turns funny and profoundly moving, Pedro Lemebel's lyrical prose offers an intimate window into the mind of Pinochet himself as the world of Carlos and the Queen prepares to collide with the dictator's own in a fantastic and unexpected way. Join fellow members to discuss this seminal and stirring novel.

# Chess

## Mechanics' Online Chess Classes

Check out the wide range of [chess classes](#) being offered by the Mechanics' Institute.

### Seasonal chess class; Mondays 6:00 - 7:00 pm; dates TBD

In this six-week session, students will take an in-depth look at various chess topics for intermediate and advanced players, led by GM Nick de Firmian.

### Introduction to Chess for Mechanics' Institute Members; Wednesdays 5:00 - 6:00 pm; Ongoing

This virtual class is open to members who have no knowledge of the game or who know the very basics and want to improve. FM Paul Whitehead walks through the basics at a pace suitable for the class, teaching piece movement basics, checkmate patterns, the importance of development, and general strategy.

### Chess Improvements for Developing Players; Wednesdays 7:00 - 8:00 pm; March 9 through May 11

In this class, Coach Colin covers all three stages of a chess game: opening, middle game, and endgame. Endgame topics will include the philidor position, lucena position, and checkmating with two bishops as well as general endgame strategies. Students will solve chess puzzles to practice tactical ideas.

### Free Women's Online Chess Class; Sundays 10:00 am - 12:00 pm; Ongoing

Coached by FIDE Trainer Sophie Adams, this class is for women and girls looking to develop their chess skills in a community of women. Knowledge of piece movements and mates is expected. This class is free to participants through a generous gift from Alexandra and Robert Lindsay.

## Mechanics' Onsite Chess Events

The historic **Tuesday Night Marathon (TNM)** is celebrating its 50th anniversary this year and continues to provide challenging games each Tuesday for our chess community. Players compete in different sections according to their rating, and games are both US Chess and FIDE rated. Catch GM Nick de Firmian or FM Paul Whitehead giving the pre-TNM lecture that starts 5:45pm each Tuesday covering current chess excitements from around the world. More information can be found [online](#).

Join Mechanics' Institute's chess club once a month to play four **US Chess rated games** in one day! Upcoming dates are April 2, May 8, and June 4.

**Mechanics' Championship Quads** are held monthly on the second Saturday and fill the chess club with competitors seeking to challenge players close to their chess rating. Upcoming dates are April 9, May 14, and June 11.

## Mechanics' Institute Scholastic Events for K-12 Players

**Monthly Scholastic Tournaments** will be held April 9, May 14, and June 11. Students have a chance to compete against players from other schools to earn trophies or medals. Find more [information](#) and register online.

**Weekly online tournaments** continue to be popular with students and are held on weekends. Players compete from the comfort of their home knowing that their games count toward their US Chess online ratings. Check the [schedule](#) and register online.

### Scholastic Chess Classes with Mechanics' Institute Coaches

Scholastic Beginner Class with Coach Kiernan

**Students may sign up for either Mondays or Wednesdays 3:30 - 4:30 pm**

Scholastic Advanced Class with Coach Andy

**Mondays 6:00 - 7:00 pm**

Scholastic Intermediate Class with Coach Andy

**Tuesdays 5:00 - 6:00 pm**



*Chess camp attendees (left) and scholastic chess players at West Portal Elementary School (right) learn decision-making skills and practice concepts such as fair play and learning from mistakes.*

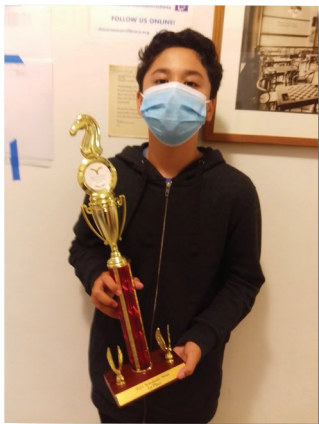


*Tuesday Night Marathon players compete in the chess room at Mechanics' Institute. (above).*

## Outreach

### Chess Programs Enrich Bay Area Schools' Curriculum

Studies show that chess can be beneficial to students' cognitive and social-emotional development, and Mechanics' Institute believes that students whose families cannot afford to pay for afterschool chess programs should not be excluded from these benefits. The Institute provides free chess programming to students in Title 1 schools, offering free weekly chess classes through the support of generous donors who give to Mechanics' Institute's scholastic Youth Outreach Chess Program.



*Justyn holds his well-earned 1st place trophy.*

Justyn is just one player who continues to thrive in the Institute's scholastic chess classes and beyond. Justyn played his first in-person, over-the-board event during Fall 2021. He lost every game of that event. Defeat did not deter Justyn; rather, his passion for chess and his resilience helped him improve. Justyn says, "I set a goal to get better.

I studied some basic openings like Queen's Gambit and Caro Kann for black and learned more lines to be more prepared. I used Chess.com and game tactics, and also practiced a lot of endgame tactics."

In his second in-person tournament, Justyn's perseverance and positive mindset paid off – he won every game in his section with a perfect 4/4. Justyn has been a regular at monthly Mechanics' Institute scholastic tournaments and is a member of Francisco Middle School Chess Club. He advises beginners not to give up when they don't do well in a tournament. "...losing a few games doesn't matter in the long run...you can come back next time. Learn, study, practice and do a lot of tactics, puzzles, and study endgames and your work will help you win games."

Mechanics' Institute chess coaches serve several San Francisco schools during weekday afternoons and coach students in afterschool classes. Winter and Spring sessions are well underway and will continue to run until the end of May. If you are interested in setting up a chess program at your child's school, please reach out to [chessroom@milibrary.org](mailto:chessroom@milibrary.org) to start the process.

## Recent Major Gifts

We are grateful for the support we receive from the following individuals and foundations, who make our continued growth possible. Thank you! The following contributions were received between December 1, 2021 and February 28, 2022.

Anonymous  
Joel Bauman  
Russell Brandwein  
In Memory of Stephen Brandwein  
Sheila Cunningham  
Daniel H. Drown  
Paul A. Fisher  
Robert and Michelle Friend  
In Honor of Richard Laiderman  
Richard and Ann Frobose  
Sandra Hess  
Mrs. Louis O. Kelso  
L. Daniela Kirshenbaum  
Richard Laiderman\* and Jung-Wha Song  
David J. Madson\*  
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In Memory of Nini McCabe  
Paul McCauley  
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Mark and Lisa Pinto  
David Reyna  
Matthew H. Scanlan  
Charles Sullivan\*  
In Honor of Kimberly Scrafano  
Lindsey and Keith Tonsager  
Alexander Yuill-Thornton II

\* James Lick Legacy Society Member

### Mechanics' Institute Donors Give Generously Toward Year-End Appeal

At the end of January, Mechanics' Institute concluded our annual year-end appeal, which typically brings in the largest share of funding for Mechanics' Institute operations in each fiscal year. From November through January, your considerable generosity resulted in a total of **more than \$70,000** to help the Institute meet your needs.

#### Thank you!

You may know that membership dues cover only 20% of the cost of the services and programs you have access to as a member of the Mechanics' Institute. What you might not realize is that 72% of the donated funds that keep Mechanics' Institute running come from members just like you. Whether you donate \$10 or \$10,000, every gift makes a great impact on the collections, services, programs, and space that Mechanics' Institute provides.

To support the Mechanics' Institute, **donations** may be made any time of year [online](#), by **mail** to PO Box 577, San Francisco, 94104-0577, via your company's **matching gifts program**, or directly from your **retirement or other investment account**.



# A Selection of Upcoming Library Programs

Mechanics' Institute offers classes, workshops, and reading groups each week. For program details and to register for programs, visit our website at [milibrary.org](http://milibrary.org), where you will find complete listings and information.

***No Poetry No Peace: a reading and celebration of human expression and peace***  
hosted by Sheryl Bize-Boutte; Produced in partnership with the San Francisco Writers Conference  
April 28, 6:00 pm;  
Online; Registration required  
MI members and public: Free

Mechanics' Institute welcomes a group of poets both local and remote to explore how "poetry provides pathways for creative and cathartic human expression and peace," as Sheryl Bize-Boutte (*right*) and her daughter Dr. Angela Boutte write in their collaborative book of poetry, *No Poetry No Peace*.



This is the third reading in the bi-annual series which began in February 2021 and is already beloved by Mechanics' Institute members and visitors alike. Join the celebration and hear the work of Mireya S. Vela, Douglas Cole, Grace Marie Grafton, Gini Grossenbacher, Aqueila M. Lewis-Ross, and Sheryl J. Bize-Boutte. Please find more information about the poets who will be reading at this event and register via the [event link](#).

## Writing Workshops

This Spring Mechanics' Institute will offer several classes in partnership with the San Francisco Writers Conference. Author and instructor Lyzette Wanzer has an extraordinary ability to help other writers think strategically about their careers, and will be offering an intensive workshop (*see below*) to help writers professionalize their work with an artist statement. Digital librarian and writer Michelle Zaffino will offer a class on outlining. Author Carole Bumpus will teach writers about the culinary travel memoir.

**Boot Camp Intensive: Write Your Artist Statement**  
May 14, 10:30-4:00 pm  
MI Members \$45; Public \$55



Artist statements are not just for visual artists and performers; in the 21st century, writers need them too. In this one-day Boot Camp led by author and instructor Lyzette Wanzer, attendees will read several statement examples, learn how they are used, and then craft, workshop, and revise several drafts of their own statements. Please check the [event link](#) for additional details and to register.

## Classes and Member Groups

**Understand Your iPhone!**  
April 6, 7:00-8:00 pm  
Online; Registration Required  
MI Members only

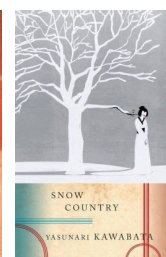
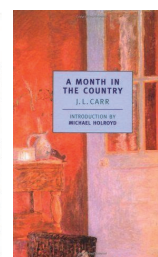
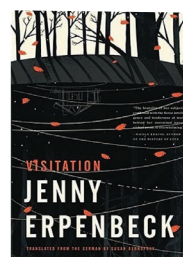
Ever wonder why the battery on your iPhone drains so quickly? It may be that you've inadvertently permitted apps to run in the background which may not be in use and could be tracking your location using GPS. "Understand Your iPhone" is designed for iPhone users who want to take greater control of the device and learn how it can best fit into their daily lives. Participants will learn about apps, Facetime, when to connect to Wi-Fi, what cellular data is and when to use it, how to update your iPhone, how to share photos, how to create and update Contacts, how to get started with Mechanics' Institute library apps like Libby and Kanopy, Health features, and privacy settings you need to know.

**World Literature Book Group**  
Bi-monthly on Wednesdays, 7:00-8:15 pm  
Online; Registration Required  
MI Members only

The World Literature Book Group is a long-running member-led meetup that transitioned to a virtual format in 2020. Members engage in lively discussion and vote on books to be discussed at future meetings from a quarterly list of titles recommend by fellow readers.

The member group reads books that are international in scope, touch on universal themes, or explore difficult histories and stories through a lens of deeper understanding.

Upcoming selections of the World Lit Book Group include *Visitation* by Jenny Erpenbeck, *A Month in the Country* by J.L. Carr, and *Snow Country* by Yasunari Kawabata.



# Member Profile

## Hamilton Carter & Family



Hamilton Carter and his family were introduced to the Mechanics' Institute in 2015. His children love the library and the chess club, and often volunteer at Mechanics' Institute events with him. They enjoy going to author talks, and especially look forward to events on architecture in the city.

Hamilton tells us that chess classes and events at Mechanics' Institute are a great supplement to his children's home school curriculum. His daughter Hamilton Jr. enjoys writer's activities and was introduced to the Women's National Book Association through Mechanics' Institute Writer's Lunches.

Hamilton is an engineer and writer whose book, *Metric Driven Design Verification: An Engineer's and Executive's Guide to First Pass Success*, was published by Springer. He has written several articles for *The Mary Sue* and *winnie.com*. He is currently working on a writing project documenting his experiences in San Francisco, Los Angeles, New Mexico, and other locations.

He cites the sense of community that CinemaLit fosters as an important factor in his particular fondness for the weekly event, and relishes the chance to watch old movies with fellow film buffs. When able to attend in person, Hamilton and his children are frequent CinemaLit volunteers.

If you see Hamilton around the Institute, introduce yourself!

# CinemaLit

CinemaLit screenings and salons are hosted onsite at Mechanics' Institute in the 4th Floor Meeting Room. Vaccination verification is required; masks are optional.

Programs begin at 6:00 pm; Registration required  
MI members Free; public \$5-\$10 sliding scale

## April: Hidden Histories

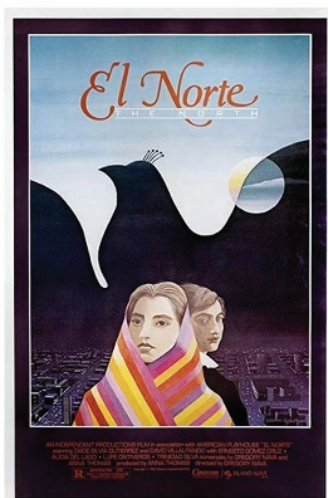


Image used with permission of Lions Gate Films, Inc.



NATIONAL  
ENDOWMENT  
FOR THE  
HUMANITIES

April 1 ***The Tall Target*** (1951) 78 min; Directed by Michael Mann

April 8 ***El Norte*** (1983) 141 min; Directed by Gregory Nava

April 15 ***Vera Drake*** (2004) 125 min; Directed by Mike Leigh

April 22 ***Rosewood*** (1997) 140 min; Directed by John Singleton

April 29 ***Trumbo*** (2015) 124 min; Directed by Jay Roach

## May: Thrillers

Including *Seconds*, starring Rock Hudson and Frank Campanella; *Seven Days in May*, starring Burt Lancaster and Kirk Douglas; *The Parallax View*, starring Warren Beatty and Paula Prentiss; and *Enemy of the State*, starring Will Smith and Gene Hackman

## June: Black Lives on Film: Past and Present

Check our website for details on this CinemaLit series featuring acclaimed directors Jordan Peele, Ava DuVernay, and Spike Lee.

*Hidden Histories and Black Lives on Film: Past and Present are part of the "Civil Rights, Artistic Diversity, Historical Reckoning: Exploring the Film, Literature, and Lives of Marginalized Communities." This programming has been made possible in part by a major grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities.*

# William R. Newmeyer, III

## In Memoriam, 1936-2022

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William Newmeyer III was an editor and contributor to the journal of *the American Society for Surgery of the Hand*, and author of *Primary Care of Hand Injuries*. He served as Chief of Surgery at St. Francis Memorial Hospital. Teaching and helping others succeed was important to him; he sponsored a hand surgery fellowship program and was an assistant clinical professor of surgery at UCSF for many years.

Bill was an integral member of the Mechanics' Institute Board of Trustees from 2007-2022, a firm believer in the power of stories, and was committed to the Mechanics' Institute as an organization as well as an ideal of what a library and membership organization could be. Mechanics' Institute President of the Board of Trustees Lindsey Tonsager notes, "Bill's commitment to the work of the Board and the growth of the Institute was clear from the enthusiasm and insight he brought to our Board meetings and the friendly greetings he shared with all visitors to the Institute."

Bill founded the James Lick Legacy Society, named for the first benefactor of the Mechanics' Institute, which is composed of members who have generously included Mechanics' Institute in their estate plans. Bill knew that charitable bequests make a crucial difference to a non-profit organization's financial stability and worked tirelessly to ensure that Mechanics' Institute would endure. Not only did Bill work for the longevity of Mechanics' Institute as a trustee. He and his wife Nancy, who predeceased him in 2017, were frequent attendees of book groups, programs, and events.

Bill's kindness and enthusiasm were hallmarks of his interactions with everyone he knew. He will be missed.

57 Post Street  
San Francisco, CA 94104

[www.milibrary.org](http://www.milibrary.org)

### Library Questions?

Call:

415.393.0101

E-mail:

[reference@milibrary.org](mailto:reference@milibrary.org)

### Membership Questions?

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[membership@milibrary.org](mailto:membership@milibrary.org)

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Renew: [milibrary.org/renew](http://milibrary.org/renew)

### Library Hours

Monday - Friday

12 pm - 6 pm

Saturday 10 am - 3 pm

### Chess Room Hours

Monday - Friday

11 am - 5 pm

### Closures

**April 17**

Easter

**May 30**

Memorial Day

**June 19-20**

Juneteenth