

For Immediate Release  
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## **San José Assistant Library Director Ned Himmel Retires**

### ***Mary Nacu Appointed Acting Assistant Library Director***

**SAN JOSE, Calif.** — San José Public Library Assistant Library Director Ned Himmel transitioned to retirement this month, having made lasting contributions to the educational and recreational environment enjoyed by San Jose residents. His career spanned 35 years of California public library service:

- Mountain View Public Library (1974 – 1979)
- Redwood City Public Library. (1979 – 1998)
- San Francisco Public Library (1998 – 2001)
- San José Public Library (2001 – 2009)

Under his leadership the library codified a set of customer service principles—*Libraries~The San Jose Way*—thus formalizing a customer-centric service philosophy. Self-checkout, self-serve holds pick-up and intuitive signage are prime examples of the innovations that came about under his tenure. Cross-training of staff to ensure a positive first contact with the customer was another key initiative. These changes enabled the library to continue to deliver high quality service and meet rising demand in the face of dwindling resources. The Library consistently ranks at or near the top in terms of satisfaction expressed by residents when asked to rate city services through the City’s biannual customer survey.

Himmel was also deeply involved in the planning that preceded opening of the first-of-its-kind-in-the-nation Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Library to jointly serve

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residents of San Jose and the San José State University community. The success of that venture, coupled with the vibrancy of San Jose's branch library system, brought about the second national "Library of the Year" award in Himmel's career. The first was in 1992 when Himmel and San Jose Library Director Jane Light, then both at the helm of Redwood City Library, were proud to receive the first "Library of the Year" award. Between "*Libraries~The San Jose Way*" and the King Library model, San José Public Library has seen its reputation grow from a local asset to a national and international example of innovative library service.

The crowning achievement of Himmel's career at San José Public Library is the central role that he played in guiding the design and operations of 20 dynamic new branch library facilities that communicate the joy of libraries. Each of the libraries reflects the community they serve, yet are united by features shared in common. Collectively they exemplify libraries as Third Place and *Libraries~The San Jose Way*.

Library Division Manager Mary Nacu has been appointed Acting Assistant Library Director while the search for a permanent replacement gets underway. Nacu joined the San José Public Library system in 1984 and is a strong proponent of the library's customer service philosophy.

### **ABOUT SAN JOSE PUBLIC LIBRARY**

San José Public Library system (SJPL) is the largest public library system between San Francisco and Los Angeles on the West Coast in California, serving a culturally diverse population of approximately 1,007,000 in the nation's 10th largest city. Recipient of the prestigious national Library of the Year award, SJPL is recognized across the country for its innovation and leadership in the field and is one of the busiest library systems nationwide, with an annual checkout rate of more than 15 million items.

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