



FOCAL Points



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FRIENDS OF CHILDREN AND LITERATURE — CENTRAL LIBRARY

THE FORTIETH FOCAL AWARD AND LUNCHEON

You might ask yourself, Why does the children’s department of the Central Library need its own Friends group?

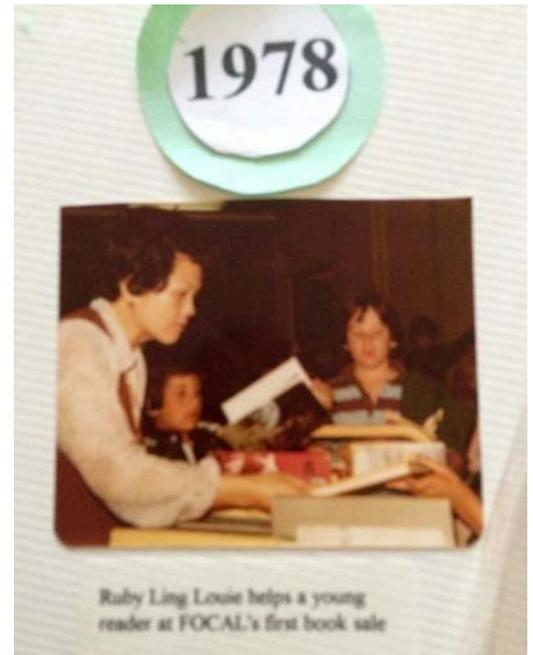
FRIENDS OF CHILDREN AND LITERATURE

(FOCAL) was founded in 1979 by a dedicated group of twenty volunteers driven by the desire to bring children and books together. Its original mission included highlighting the special collections of the children’s department.

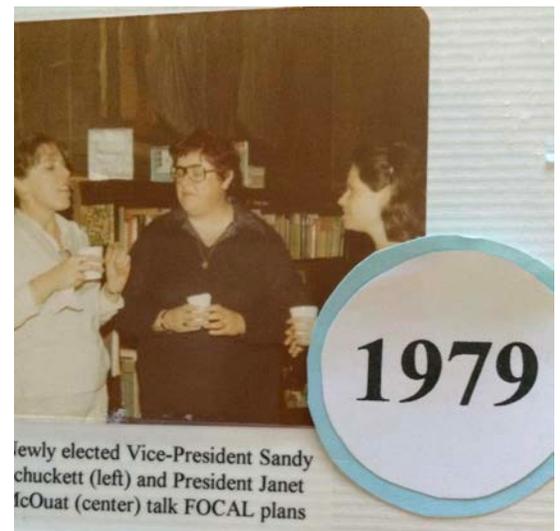
They were also fighting a continuing threat of closure! The Library Commissioners voted on the idea of shutting down the department several times. The vote was always close (three to two) but luckily the department remained open. This was mostly due to budget constraints, but partly out of the belief that “there were no children downtown.” This of course was entirely untrue!

The library staff launched daily programs for local schools and a group of loyal patrons (mostly teachers) launched FOCAL.

They fought to save the children’s department by protesting the closure, finally able to convince the Board of Library Commissioners to vote to keep the room open and authorize permanent staff to the department.



Ruby Ling Louie helps a young reader at FOCAL's first book sale



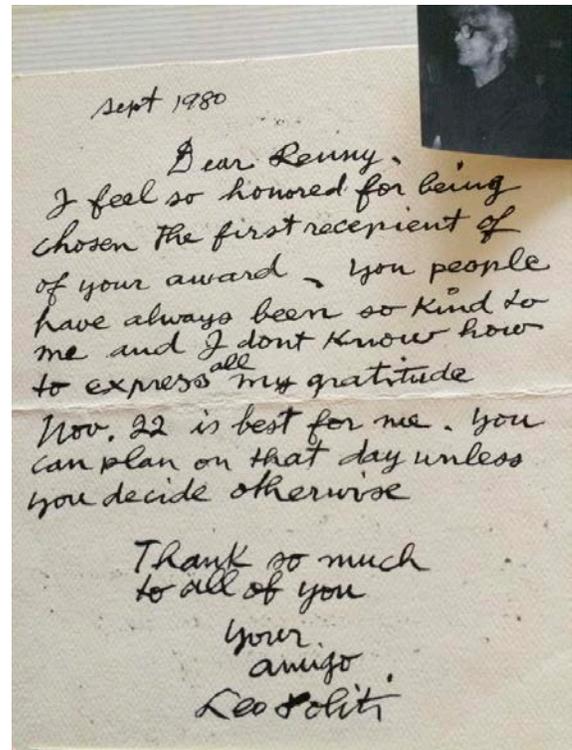
Newly elected Vice-President Sandy chuckett (left) and President Janet McQuat (center) talk FOCAL plans

Photos from the FOCAL archives

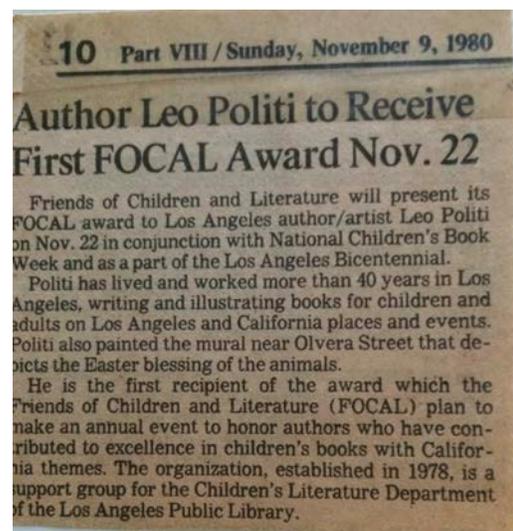
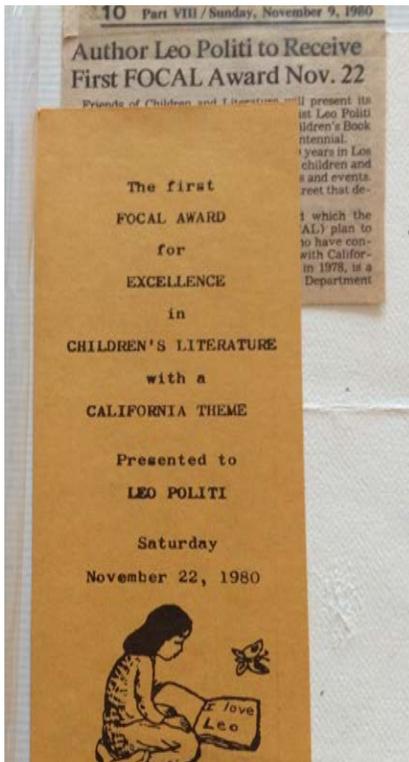
After ensuring the department would stay open, FOCAL was able to focus on highlighting the Children's Department special Californiana collection. FOCAL created an annual book award given to work that would enrich a child's knowledge and understanding of California and its history.

In order to be awarded the FOCAL book award, the book must meet several criteria: it must be a children's book! It must be of the highest literary and artistic quality, and must have California content.

In 1980, FOCAL unanimously bestowed its first award upon the distinguished author and illustrator Leo Politi, who lived and worked in Los Angeles for over 40 years. Leo Politi also drew the characters that became the FOCAL logo.



Note from Leo Politi to Renny Day, who is still a board member of FOCAL



The Essay Contest

In the early 1990s, FOCAL decided to include a new aspect to the book award, a writing contest. This would not only bring awareness to more children and families to the award and the Californiana collection, but it would also invite children to actively participate in the FOCAL experience.

Each year, children in grades 3 through 8 have to opportunity to enter the contest by reading the book and writing an essay about their impressions of the story and characters, as well as why they would like to meet the author. The winners of the award get to attend the award luncheon with a parent, meet and have lunch with the author, read their essay, and get a signed copy of the winning book.



The winners of the 2018 essay contest with their signed books.



The FOCAL award for the author is a handmade puppet to represent a character of the book. Represented above: The award given to Leo Politi in 1980 for the book *Pedro: The Angel of Olivera Street*



The essay contest winners posing with Uma Krishnaswami the author of the 2018 FOCAL award winning book "*Step up the Plate* Maria Singh"

More Student Creativity

The award luncheon is decorated with the work from students at Noble Middle School. Ray Moszkowicz, the art teacher, facilitates students reading and designing the center pieces from important scenes from the book. The students design different elements of the center pieces and the teacher puts it all together.

Each of the students is dedicated to this project, dedicating two days a week at lunch to meet as a group to read, chat about the book and think about the design. The team takes pride in working on it, it maintains their interest, they invite their friends to help.

They use a variety of materials and art techniques, from clay, collage, drawing and painting, to bring to life the story and their characters.

This year, to honor the book *Chef Roy Choi and the Street Food Remix* the students are thinking about Korean heritage, food trucks and the neighborhood. They are already hard at work doing preliminary sketches and sharing them with each other.

The centerpieces are for sale at the event, a donation that goes to the student art club at Noble MS.



The students work for weeks on these centerpieces, but often they are unable to join for lunch as they cannot buy tickets. This year, you may consider sponsoring one or more of these students so they may be able to join the celebration of their work.

Noble MS Students presenting their work at the 2018 FOCAL award luncheon.

FORTIETH FOCAL AWARD LUNCHEON AND ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

HONORING THE 2019 FOCAL Award Winner
Chef Roy Choi and the Street Food Remix
By Jacqueline Briggs Martin and June Jo Lee
And Illustrator Man One

Saturday, December 14, 2019 at the Border Grill at 12 Noon

445 South Figueroa Street #100 Los Angeles CA 90071

PARKING: Westlawn Garage - 524 S. Flower St. (\$1.00 with library validation)

Union Bank Garage - 445 S. Figueroa St. (\$5.00 with restaurant validation)

Please send this completed form and cash or checks, made payable to FOCAL and postmarked no later than Monday, December 9, to: Caroline Gill, 4335 Marina City Dr. #534, Marina del Rey, CA 90292

***Please consider sponsoring a student (essay or centerpiece designer), their teacher or a parent, whether or not you can come**

TICKETS WILL BE HELD AT THE DOOR

For questions, please contact Caroline Gill carolinegill7@gmail.com

Reservation Form

Name

Phone:

Address:

City, State, Zip:

Email:

Reservation Options	Number	Price	Amount
Luncheon FOCAL Members		x \$55	\$
Luncheon Non-Member		x \$60	\$
Lunch + \$25 Basic Membership		x \$80	\$
Lunch +\$30 Associate Membership		x \$85	\$
Lunch + \$60 Sustaining Membership		x \$115	\$
Lunch + \$100 Sustaining Membership		x \$155	\$
FOCAL Sponsored Tickets		x \$60	\$
FOCAL donation (Tax Deductible)			\$
Total:			\$

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Please send renewals to: Renny Day/
15221 Via de las Olas/Pacific Palisades, CA 90272

Name _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Membership is for the calendar year, January through December.
Dues are tax deductible.

New Renewal

Basic \$25

Contributing \$60

Sustaining \$100

Lifetime \$1000

Dewi Ochoa, FOCAL Points editor

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carolinegill7@gmail.com**

FOCAL
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