

2026 Helen Everett Honorees: Jeff & Lynne Todoroff

If you were to picture a Venn diagram of all that makes Humboldt County special, you would find Jeff and Lynne Todoroff right in the center. Fishing, quilting, photography, volunteering, birding, and life-long learning. Each of them scholars, extremely well read and well-traveled, but as comfortable discussing comic books and the Outlander novels as they are medical and science journals. They are the most interesting kind of Humboldt resident.

Lynne and Jeff Todoroff both grew up in California, graduated from Bay Area high schools and then pursued the sciences at UC Davis, where they met and married. Lynne achieved her degree and began working in research and clinical pathology while Jeff completed his Doctorate in Veterinary Medicine. Then followed five years of Jeff's post-doctoral training, internship, and residency in Philadelphia, where their daughter Cherril was born, and in Boston. They returned to Walnut Creek where Jeff passed the Specialty Boards in Surgery, shortly before the birth of their son, Jeremy.

As the children grew older and Jeff's veterinary surgery practice took off, Lynne took a quilting class and rediscovered a love of sewing. She began making quilts and by and by obtained a long arm quilting machine. Thus began her Bay Area quilting business, where she enjoyed a host of exceptional fabric artists as clients.

One evening Jeremy stopped in for dinner with his parents on the way back from a Wildlife Conclave fieldtrip 'up



north' at Humboldt State. It sounded like a dream to Jeff, so he and Lynne took a sabbatical and came up for a semester. Jeff said, "It felt like coming home." They decided to retire here and built their home in 2009. Lynne continued quilting and Jeff achieved a Master's Degree in Veterinary Epidemiology at the age of 65. Lynne joined one of the coolest book clubs in the area and Jeff joined the Foundation Board. (Also very cool.)

We nearly lost the Todoroffs to Montana, but thankfully son Jeremy, his wife Kaytee and their two girls Mia and Avery moved back to California, so the lure of faraway grandchildren was averted. Over the last 18 years with time of their own choosing, they have embraced Humboldt County and supported the organizations that work to benefit the community. They are generous and present. They love this area and truly relish their Venn diagram of roles here.

Please join us in recognizing Lynne and Jeff Todoroff on Wednesday, December 9th at the Sequoia Conference Center. Social hour begins at 5:00; dinner at 6:00. We look forward to celebrating with you!

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From the President's Desk

Alison Talbott

My social media feed is rich with library content. Typically, there are book recommendations, inspiring quotes, and interesting program updates from rural libraries across the country. I love it; it keeps my passion at the forefront and uplifts my spirit.

Recently though, a disturbing story out of Arkansas has been the topic that keeps showing up. In 2023 an Arkansas state law made it a crime to allow youth access to books considered harmful to minors. Books including *Romeo and Juliet*; *Our Bodies, Our-Selves*; and *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee*, just for example.

The American Civil Liberties Union of Arkansas said “Access to ideas and information is fundamental to a free society. Libraries and bookstores exist so people can encounter new perspectives, challenge assumptions, and make up their own minds—not so the government can decide which thoughts are acceptable.”

This summer, after numerous appeals, the court **upheld** the law, creating criminal liability for librarians who distribute content considered “obscene” or “harmful to minors.” City and county governing bodies will now have the final say over library content, criminalizing librarians. This is beyond comprehension.

I am aghast at the Arkansas situation, and I feel incredibly fortunate to live in a state and community that values intellectual freedom. I’m no longer willing to take that freedom for granted though. Each day I am taken aback anew at the speed with which societal norms and mores are being thrown out the window. Author Timothy Snyder says “We have a tendency to assume that the institutions around us will always exist. But history repeatedly shows otherwise.”

I am surrounded by passionate readers—friends and family, the foundation board, and you, our community’s steadfast library supporters. I firmly believe that by continuing to work together to strengthen and, should it ever become necessary, defend our libraries, we are doing the vital work of democracy. Heaven knows I just want to curl up with a good book and escape the world, but the public library is an institution I will fight for. I know you will too.

A final note: In May, Chris Cooper resigned as our Director of Libraries. We all enjoyed working with Chris and wish him the best in his next endeavors. By the time you read this newsletter our new Director, Jeff Scott, will have taken the reins. Jeff’s qualifications are beyond bona fide and based on a short but enjoyable meeting I found him to be both professional and approachable. I look forward to welcoming Jeff and his wife to our fair county, and to working together to support Humboldt County’s Libraries.

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American Civil Liberties Union

Holiday Gala: December 9, 2026

Our board members have collaborated with Humboldt's inspired community of artists and business owners to curate a live and silent auction that will kick off your holiday shopping in style. Among the works for sale will be paintings by George Van Hook and a Fairy Tea Party from Shoshanna.

(right) *Arcata Bottoms Farmhouse*, oil on paper;
(below) *Fast Water*, oil on panel, by George Van Hook.



Shoshanna's famous parties aren't just for children! Treat your favorite friends to a magical gathering with all of the fairy trimmings!



R.I.P. Humboldt Co. Bookmobile; New Bookmobile

by Elizabeth Murguia

If you live in one of Humboldt County’s rural communities that depends on the arrival of your branch library on wheels, you already know—the old relic has finally been put to rest. Twenty-one years on the road, with over 200,000 miles logged, the trusty bookmobile, that ‘pop up’ community center on wheels, has finally traversed its last mile. Humboldt library patrons in Orleans, Orick, Big Lagoon, Honeydew, Petrolia, Myers Flat, Weott, Redcrest, Dinsmore, and Bridgeville are out of luck, for now. *

A brand-new Bookmobile has been ordered and will be delivered in early 2027. (Stay tuned for announcement and a joyous ribbon cutting!) But this new Bookmobile would not be on its way without the extraordinary generosity of library supporters from across the county.

In 2025 the county librarian asked us to help raise funds for the replacement bookmobile, in fact, for roughly two thirds of the cost of replacement. It was a big ask, as it nearly doubled what HLF typically fundraises and grants to the library each year. But clearly, the need was indisputable, and it checked all the boxes of our mission: bringing the resources and wonder of access to the library to patrons across Humboldt County, no matter how far the reach.

We proceeded with the abiding belief that our donors and other community funders would respond to the need. An early pledge and a major gift from an anonymous donor set us on the path to success. Additional significant gifts were received from the Patricia B. and William D. Smullin Foundation, Rotary Club of Eureka Sign Smith Service Fund, PG&E, Coast Central Credit Union Community Fund, the Rose Perinin Foundation, as well as local businesses and individuals.

At the Annual Holiday Gala in December, we brought the project to a packed house of enthusiastic library supporters when our auctioneer, Senator Mike McGuire, pitched the project during the live auction part of the evening. Frankly, we were gobsmacked. Scores of bidders stepped up to raise their paddles to give generously. The outpouring was heart-felt, and so affirming.

With your help, the new bookmobile will soon be back on the road. In rural towns from Dinsmore to Orleans to Honeydew, Bookmobile Day is highly anticipated and will be a

major community event. We all know: It is not just about books—it is about education and creating connections through literacy and lifelong learning. Vital, important, fundamental. Or, as my 8-year-old great granddaughter recently told me, “Reading a book is like taking an adventure in your mind.” Well said.

So, take a bow, and look at everyone who opened their hearts and their check books to make sure there would be a new Bookmobile on Humboldt County roads again.

** In the meantime, the county’s Ford van delivers books ordered for pick-up—but no browsing, no internet, no swapping stories of favorite books read and returned. Check the library’s website for schedule.*

Bookmobile Donors

\$100,000	Pam Dressler Linda Forbes Gregg Gold Shelly Holstein Humboldt Hoo Hoo Club, No. 63 Eva Janson Martha & Fred Johansen Daniel Kain Nancy Dye Leer & Lee Leer Littlefield Family Foundation Michele McKeegan & Ed Olsgard
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Wright's Recommendations

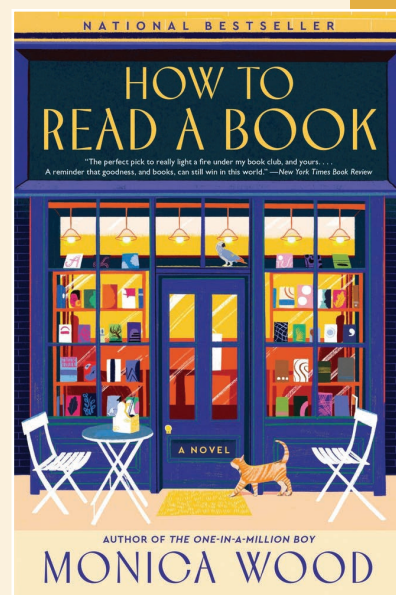
by Erika Wright

How to Read a Book by Monica Wood

I love a cozy, feel-good novel that isn't afraid to tackle difficult topics, and this book does that beautifully. It's warm, hopeful, and full of characters you would genuinely want in your life. Violet is only 22 when she is released from prison after serving 22 months for accidentally killing a woman while driving drunk. She is thoughtful, resilient, deeply remorseful, and trying to figure out what comes next. Harriet is a widowed, retired English teacher who runs a prison book club, carefully choosing books for the women because she believes that stories matter. The women in her prison book club trust her because she listens, she cares, and she treats them like they matter. Frank is a retired machinist still struggling with the aftermath of losing his wife, who happens to be the woman Violet killed. When the three cross paths in the bookstore, all of their lives begin to change.

The novel deals with incarceration, grief, guilt, and forgiveness, while also highlighting the inequalities and circumstances that can shape a person's life. Violet's crime is serious, but it's also the kind of mistake many people make every day without catastrophic consequences. The book never excuses her actions—in fact Violet takes full responsibility—but the book also refuses to reduce Violet to her mistakes. Even Violet's work assisting a scientist studying African parrots feels connected to the novel's larger themes of communication, understanding, and being truly seen.

This is a big-hearted novel about second chances, forgiveness, and learning to live with your own contradictions. It's about found family, the ways people change one another's lives, and the power of stories to help us make sense of ourselves. Most of all, it's a book that asks what defines a person. Is it the worst thing they've ever done, or the choices they make every day afterward? For me, that's what makes this story so memorable.



*Every book is a treasure, and every time you
open one up, you will meet new friends and take
wonderful journeys to magical places.*

Dolly Parton

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Kenzie Mullen



Kenzie Mullen has devoted her life to libraries and the communities they serve. Her career began in Crescent City, where she worked at the Crescent City Library and drove the Bookmobile throughout beautiful Del Norte County. After three years, she moved to Humboldt County, serving at the Eureka Main Library, the Arcata Branch for seven years and, finally, the Trinidad Library for 30 years.

Throughout her career, Kenzie loved helping patrons connect with the resources they needed. She also saw firsthand the meaningful and lasting impact that libraries and the Bookmobile can have on people's lives.

Kenzie and her husband, Mike, have included the Humboldt Library Foundation in their estate plan to ensure that their support continues well into the future. Kenzie hopes their gift will help the Library not only survive, but thrive for generations to come.

Judith Stoffer

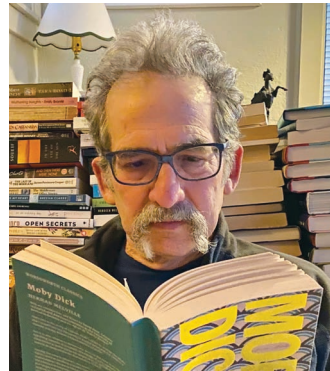


For donor Judith Stoffer, a lifelong love of libraries began with curiosity and a dark staircase in a small South Dakota general store. At just five years old, Judith wandered upstairs one Saturday night and discovered the town's tiny library and the librarian who would hand her a book each week to take home and return after

she had "read it." "That was it," Judith recalls. "I visited her every Saturday night for years."

That early experience sparked a lifelong connection to libraries, reading, and community. Judith later became part of the original committee that helped build Humboldt County's beautiful library facility and continues to be a dedicated library supporter today. From checking out book club reads to donating books back to the collection, Judith's story is a reminder of how meaningful libraries can become throughout a lifetime.

Gregg Gold



For Gregg Gold, PhD, the library changed the course of his life. "I would not have a PhD if it was not for my public library," Gregg shares. "The public library gave me access to books and the knowledge necessary to successfully do research so I could be admitted to my PhD program."

Today, Gregg supports the Humboldt Library Foundation because he believes libraries are "an essential and vital resource for everyone in the community." Stories like his are a reminder that libraries open doors, create opportunities, and provide access to knowledge for people of all ages and backgrounds.

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500 Seventh St. 707-822-5954

Blue Lake Branch

1100 Greenwood Ave. 707-668-4207

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