

***For Immediate Release***

**MEDIA ALERT:** The ribbon cutting for the Philip Roth Personal Library will be held in the Main library, second floor, **5 Washington St., Newark**, at **3 p.m. Monday June 7**.

Speakers will be Joslyn Bowling Dixon, Newark Public Library Director; Lauren Wells, President of the Board of Trustees of the Newark Public Library; Mayor Ras Baraka; with brief remarks by Ann Beha, Ann Beha Architects, Jonathan Alger, C&G Partners, and Sharvil Patel, Shawmut Design and Construction.

**Please arrive by 2:30 pm** to allow time for set-up.



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**Goodbye, Columbus,  
Hello Philip Roth Personal Library**

***Author’s Gifts of Books and Endowments  
Provide Funding to Benefit  
Newark Public Library’s Collections,  
Programs and Services and Create a  
Literary Destination***

***Tours and Visits Will Begin in June***

**NEWARK, NJ, JUNE 2, 2021** – The Newark Public Library (NPL) has transformed a second floor space into the home of the Philip Roth Personal Library (PRPL), an installation that captures the author’s engagement with reading, writing and Newark.

With many of Roth's books on display (often with annotations and marginalia) and exhibits about the author, the Philip Roth Personal Library provides a window into his mind and imagination and conveys how reading shaped his intellect and writing. A ribbon cutting will be held June 7 and the PRPL will open to the public starting in June for limited visits and small group tours, adhering to current COVID protocols.



In 2016 Roth announced he was leaving his personal collection of 7,000 books, from his Manhattan and Connecticut homes, to the Newark Public Library. A Newark native, Roth benefited from NPL's collections as a youth and a student and drew on his life in Newark to inform several of his novels, including *Goodbye, Columbus*; *American Pastoral*; and *Nemesis*. "As a librarian I am thrilled with this incomparable gift of books that mattered to him -- books he read, wrote, loved, even disliked," said Joslyn Bowling Dixon, director of the library. She added, "He believed in the power of reading to educate, inspire and transport, and he wanted to share this with the people of Newark and others interested in his works."

At his death in 2018, Roth's estate created two endowments at the Community Foundation of New Jersey for the benefit of the Newark Public Library. Roth directed that interest from these endowments be used to support programs and services at both the Main Library and branches. Dixon said that interest from the endowments was already being used to meet community needs. "E-books have been incredibly popular and necessary during the pandemic and we foresee that usage only increasing. We have been able to acquire a digital media service (Hoopla) that will greatly expand our e-book offerings. Funds will also support library programs in general and those related specifically to the Philip Roth Personal Library."

Newark Mayor Ras Baraka commented, "Philip Roth wanted the Newark Public Library to thrive for the good of our community and he believed that through these major gifts he could best demonstrate his lifelong connection to Newark and its people. This gift will enable our library and our city to become an even more important global literary destination, encouraging people to visit Newark -- many for the first time -- as they discover the power of his words on his own native soil."

Lauren Wells, president of the library's board of trustees, said, "Philip Roth's gifts to the Newark Public Library will create many new opportunities for us to be a vital public space for local and statewide dialogue across race, culture, and class and to build our collections in ways that grow our reach and appeal. The Roth Personal Library will draw new patrons to our library and city, and our rich programming will keep them engaged beyond their visit."



*All photos © Maxim Ryazansky*

The library also received Roth's standing writing desk, Eames reading chair and other furniture from his writing studio in Connecticut, along with literary awards including his Pulitzer, an autograph book from elementary school, correspondence from other authors as well as typewriters, baseball caps, posters, and academic gowns. Nadine Sergejeff is supervising librarian and curator of the PRPL. It features space where researchers will be able to consult Roth's books and manuscript collections by appointment, as well as a gallery where the inaugural Philip Roth exhibit will be on view.

Working in partnership with Ann Beha Architects, Shawmut Design and Construction handled the renovation of the double-height room, adding new mechanical, electrical, plumbing and fire protection systems along with temperature and humidity controls. "It was so important to all of us to maintain the feel of the beautiful room while ensuring the integrity of the collection," said Ann Beha. "We believe we succeeded in creating space Roth would have been comfortable in while making it functionally modern and exceedingly useful."

Jonathan Alger, managing partner at C&G Partners, designers of the room's exhibition and graphics, said, "This project is particularly meaningful to us, because we are dedicated to design for culture, and Roth's cultural legacy in literature looms large." He added, "Our time spent inside his home assessing the collection directly inspired the notion of creating a room within a room, completely made of books. The signature book jacket designs of the key years of his influence are brought to life in the space, in a visible and colorful way, through the colors on the walls."

Rosemary Steinbaum, chairman of the Newark Public Library Foundation and instrumental in shepherding Roth's gifts to the library, said, "We are proud and honored to be the steward of Roth's extraordinarily generous gifts to Newark and the Newark Public Library."

### ***About the Newark Public Library***

Newark Public Library, home of the [Philip Roth Personal Library](#), is located at [5 Washington Street](#) in downtown Newark, NJ. Built in 1899 with a design inspired by a 15th century Florence palazzo, the library also includes an interactive art gallery, large-scale event space and an auditorium. The library's major departments include its [Reference Center](#); [Special Collections](#) which include graphic and visual arts; the [Charles F. Cummings New Jersey Information Center](#), providing research on all things related to the state; the [New Jersey Hispanic Research and Information Center](#) and the [James](#)

[Brown African American Room](#), noted for their collections of books and archives; and the [LGBTQ Resource Center](#).

The Newark Public Library • [5 Washington Street, Newark, NJ 07102](#)  
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