

Tigard Public Library History Timeline

Updated October 7, 2014

Library History: From a small room in the old City Hall on Main Street to its current location in on Hall Blvd., the Tigard Library has had a colorful history complete with crashing ceilings and a pregnant cat.

1963: The Tigard Junior Women's Club promotes the idea of a public library. The community responded enthusiastically. On October 28, 1963, the City Council adopts an ordinance creating a public library. Merchants, organizations and residents support book drives and fundraising projects to get the new Library off the ground. The first Library is housed in the old City Hall at 12420 SW Main St.

1964: Tigard residents celebrate the opening of the Library on May 23, 1964. The 1963-64 budget contains no money for Library operations. It is run entirely by volunteers. The 1964-65 budget is \$175 for part-time staff. The Library has 1,011 books, mostly donated by the community.

1965: Library already outgrows space and moves to larger space at front of City Hall. Book budget is \$840.

1967: The Library moves to the former Sealy Mattress factory and meat locker at 12568 SW Main Street. A total of 1,762 library cards are issued and the library's collection grows to 5,158 books. Circulation is 12,678.

1972: The Library serves over 6,300 people and is still operated mainly by volunteers. A report to the State Library states, "The floor fell in twice, but has been repaired." The Friends of the Tigard Library was created and began holding book sales to raise money for the library.

1973: The Library Board discusses sites for a new library including a lot on Burnham, the post office and Fowler Jr. High School on Main Street.

1974: Library had no work room, staff room or place for story time. Flooring had dry rot.

1976: Tigard Library becomes a member of the newly formed Washington County Cooperative Library Services (WCCLS), whose mission is to provide free access to all citizens at all public libraries in the county. Friends of the Library receive \$250 bicentennial grant to create "an historical corner, repair a display case, add shelves and paint."

1976: The Tigard Junior Women's Club installed a furnace to heat the rear portion of the library. The Rotary club donated money for a couch and a large print book collection. The Friends of the Library donated an IBM Electric Executive typewriter. Circulation was 68,479. The Library operating budget was \$27,471. The book budget had grown to \$5,000.

1979: The Friends of the Library began a campaign to raise funds for a new library citing poor ventilation, inadequate parking, lack of shelf space for books among other factors. The Library's service population had grown to 24,000.

1982: A Tigard Times article noted that the Library experienced great jumps in circulation because of the recession. Requests for job hunting and how-to information, car repairs, inexpensive vacations and more recession-related topics grew. A citizen's committee studied sites and space needs and projected that the Library would need 18,900 square feet between then and 2000. Two bond measures for a new Civic Center that would include a new library failed.

1983: Library circulation surpasses 100,000 a year. City officials describe the Library as a "fire trap," noting that books were damaged because of a leaky roof and parts of the floor were replaced because of dry rot. Once again, a bond measure to construct a new Civic Center is narrowly defeated.

1984: On March 6, The Tigard Times reports, "Chunk of ceiling crashes at Library" narrowly missing a patron. On March 27, voters approved a \$2.2 million bond measure to construct a new Civic Center. The Tigard Rotary club contributes \$10,000 for a young adult area in the new library.

1985: The Friends of the Tigard Library hold a rummage sale and raise over \$6,000 for new furnishings and area rugs for the new library. Groundbreaking for the new Civic Center occurs in June. Tigard's population grows to 19,500, and the Library circulates 104,000 books.

1986: The new 11,400-square-foot library opens on May 17 with additional hours.

1988: A tortoise-shell cat adopts Library staff and volunteers, who name her Libby the Library cat.

1989: Library celebrates 25th anniversary.

1990: Libby blesses staff with four kittens, who she keeps on the workroom storage shelves with materials for Toddler Time story times.

1993: Tigard resident Mary Margaret Puett left \$72,800 to the library in her will. The money was used to construct a 1,345 square-foot addition.

1995: The Library is the first in the county to offer an annual Adult Reading Program.

1999: Washington County Cooperative Library Services implements the Polaris online catalog system throughout the county. It was considered a cutting-edge catalog and the first library system on the West Coast to implement it.

1999: Library receives a bequest of more than \$800,000 from Grace Tigard Houghton to be used for a reading room.

2002: Citizens approve a \$13 million bond measure to construct a new 48,000 square-foot library on Hall Blvd. at the intersection with Omara Street.

2004: Forty years after the Tigard Library first opened, it moves into its fourth location in a 48,000 square-foot building on a 14-acre natural site. It includes the Houghton Reading Room, which was constructed with the bequest from Grace Tigard Houghton.

2007: The library circulates over one million items for the first time.

2009: The Library celebrates the fifth year in its new building.

2012: The Tigard City Council passes a resolution to rename the Community Room in honor of George and Yvonne Burgess, longtime library volunteers and officers of the Friends of the Tigard Library.

2013: Library celebrates 50 years of service to the community. A total of 543 people attend the celebration.

2014: Library celebrates 10 years in its current library building. A total of 475 people join the party.