

## Santa Monica Library Board Applicant

**Ms. Laurel J Schmidt**

**Application Date:** 07/06/21

**Reside in Santa Monica:** yes

**If yes, number of years:** 30+

**Hold an elected position:** no

**If yes, please specify:**

### **INTERESTS AND EXPERIENCE**

**Current or prior service on city boards/commissions:**

I was a Landmarks Commissioner for 8 years and left because of term limits.

**Community activities:**

I have been deeply involved in historic preservation for decades. I am an active member of the Santa Monica Conservancy and served as a Board member for five years.

**Qualifications, experience, education, and technical or professional requirements:**

I am a lifelong educator, classroom and university teacher for 23 years, then an elementary principal and Director of Student Services for SMMUSD. I taught in ethnically diverse communities for most of my career. I also had a dual career in art education, working with major museums in Los Angeles and New York to develop curriculum and outreach programs for schools and the public, allowing them to increase community engagement. I was a freelance editor for Harcourt Brace Jovanovich and am the author of four non-fiction books on art, learning and brain development. I'm an avid reader and huge fan of our library system.

**Areas of demonstrated expertise:**

As Landmarks Commissioner, I worked to develop preservation policy for the city and meet with advocates and developers to craft solutions to disputes. In my role as Conservancy Board member, I worked for years to complete the restoration of the Shotgun House on 2nd Street, transforming it into a Preservation Education Center. I developed a curriculum for the docents and trained them to meet with visitors, as well as organized many public outreach events at the Shotgun House. As Principal and Director, I met with staff and community members to do strategic planning, implement policy, develop budgets, plan and execute fundraising events. I developed an in depth knowledge of Santa Monica and its history when I investigated local history with my student at SMASH. They even wrote a students' guide to Santa Monica history called 'From Villages to Verandas.'

**Goals:**

To support the Director of Library Services, enhance the work of this exceptional library system, continue to expand programs for diverse communities, to advocate for a budget that acknowledges the

importance of the library, and to explore technology innovations that streamline procedures and free staff to interact with the public.

**Vision:**

My vision is that this board will be an effective advocate for the outstanding library system that we have, bringing community needs to light and helping to innovate in the area of services so that all segments of our community will benefit from the rich resources of the library. Finally, to communicate to our City Council the importance of libraries and literacy as a foundation for a functional and just society.

**Personal Qualities:**

As I have indicated above, the entire focus of my professional career and volunteer work has been on working with diverse groups through educational outreach. Most of my teaching career was spent in diverse communities with up to 24 languages spoken by the students and their families. I was a leader in teaching English as a Second Language using art. As a Board member for the Conservancy I developed an innovative approach to docent training, helping them master inquiry techniques so that they could have interactive dialogues with visitors from all over the world, engaging people in conversations to help them learn about the history of Santa Monica. As a Director, I launched a Listening Tour with my colleagues, meeting with community group all over the city to hear their concerns about special education services and inequity/bias in our school practices that disadvantages students of color. I brought that information back to the district to help reform and refine policies, which I often wrote and presented to the Board of Education members for discussion, revision and implementation.

**Will you be able to commit the necessary time to perform your duties if appointed to the board?**

yes

**How did you learn about the vacancy in this board or commission? (select all that apply)**

Word of Mouth- Council or Board/Commission member, City Staff, neighborhood groups, etc.

**BUSINESS INFORMATION**

Occupation: Writer

Business name: Laurel Schmidt. com

Business address: 2432 7TH STREET

UNIT 5

Santa Monica, CA 90405

Business phone: 310 399-7664