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### Library Trustee Joseph S. Stern, Jr. Honored for 42 Years of Service Pledges \$1 Million in Library Support

On September 30, Joseph S. Stern, Jr. will retire from the Library Board of Trustees after 42 years of service. As a Member of the Board of Trustees, Mr. Stern used his business acumen, intellect, personal ties to the community, and lifelong love of books to provide guidance and input in making key decisions and setting policies that made and kept the Public Library of Cincinnati and Hamilton County one of the premier public libraries in the United States.

At the last Board meeting Mr. Stern attended as a Library Trustee on September 8, the Board of Trustees conferred upon him the lifetime honorary title of Trustee Emeritus in recognition for devoted service. He was also honored by both Congressmen Steve Chabot and Rob Portman with congratulatory letters, and further recognized by the Mayor of the City of Cincinnati and by the Board of Hamilton County Commissioners with proclamations declaring September 8 as Joseph S. Stern, Jr. Day.

As a strong affirmation of his continued support of the Library and its future, Mr. Stern pledged a planned gift of \$1 million for the Library's Foundation when its establishment is completed. He stated, "In making this lead gift, I hope it will encourage other individuals, companies and foundations to support and contribute to the Public Library Foundation." In speaking on behalf of the Board and staff, the Library's Executive Director Kimber L. Fender said, "We are deeply grateful for Mr. Stern's remarkable tenure on the Board and for his pledge of this spectacular gift. It will provide a lasting legacy to help ensure continuation of the Library's work to which he is so committed."

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Mr. Stern was first appointed to the Board of Trustees of the Public Library of Cincinnati and Hamilton County in October 1961 by the Board of County Commissioners of Hamilton County, and served as President in 1983, 1991 and 1998. He served as chairman and member of the various outstanding special committees of the Board and was appointed and served as the first Chairman of the Development Committee.

A great lover of books and supporter of the Public Library, Mr. Stern was one of the organizing members of the Friends of the Public Library in 1957, serving as its first Vice President and as President for two years. That fledgling group has grown to over 2,000 members, raising money for the Library through several annual used book sales, membership fees, and the Library Friends' Shop at the Main Library.

During his six seven-year terms of office, the Public Library has undergone phenomenal growth and successfully improved the collection, services, programs, and facilities of the Library for the benefit of all area residents by providing ideas, knowledge and information supporting research, popular needs and lifelong learning. From his appointment in 1961, the Library's collection has grown from two million books to a collection of over 10.2 million items in many formats. Circulation has skyrocketed from under 6 million a year to over 14.4 millions items borrowed in 2002. Library services have changed dramatically with the growth of technology. The Library is now completely computerized, has free Internet access available systemwide, and offers 250 research databases online 24 hours a day seven days a week. Programs once limited to weekly story hours have expanded to nearly 14,000 diverse free offerings serving nearly 300,000 of all ages from newborns to seniors.

Since Mr. Stern joined the Library Board, the Library has built 16 entirely new branches, built and later expanded five branches, tripled the size of the Main Library in two expansions in 1982 and 1997, enlarged six branch rental facilities, and totally renovated five branches. Despite a decline in the county's population over the past 40 years, there are now more active library card holders than ever before. Services for teens have expanded, with many branches offering separate teen areas and collections. The summer reading program, which just completed its 30<sup>th</sup> year, is open not only to children but teens and adults as well, with over 20,000 participating in *Readquest 2003*.