

NEWS FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Author Talk Celebrates Women's History Month

Hartford, Connecticut (March 2, 2011) Hartford Public Library will host an author talk by Barbara Sicherman, William R. Kenan Jr. Professor of American Institutions and Values, Emerita, at Trinity College, as the Library celebrates Women's History Month. On Sunday, March 13, from 2:00 to 3:00 p.m., Sicherman will discuss and sign her book, "Well-Read Lives: How Books Inspired a Generation of American Women" at the Downtown Library, Hartford History Center, 500 Main Street.

"Well-Read Lives" is an account of the generation of American women born in the years after the Civil War, who left an extraordinary record of public achievement – as physicians and scientists, educators and social workers, perhaps most of all as leaders of efforts to attain social justice in the early years of the twentieth century. Inspired by their reading (not only what they read but how and with whom), women as different as Jane Addams, Ida B. Wells, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, and M. Carey Thomas often lost – and found – themselves in books and worked out a life purpose around them.

Sicherman comments, "In the Gilded Age, reading was more obviously a social activity than it is today. Reading aloud in family circles, informal reading and writing groups, and more formal study clubs all flourished." During the period covered in her book, Sicherman argues, "Structures of reading intertwined with women's lives in ways that fostered a more direct connection between a seemingly private activity and women's entry into public life." This was a time when hundreds of libraries were founded across the nation, an estimated 75% of them by women.

"Well-Read Lives" is described by one reviewer as "Elegantly written and a delight to read." Joan Shelley Rubin, a history professor at the University of Rochester, writes of the book, "It is a rewarding exploration of the purposes reading served in the lives of prominent Progressive-era women, it also moves toward recovering the role of print in the lives of less-privileged individuals. We do not have another book like this."

The event is free and open to the public. If special accommodations to participate in this event are required, please contact Access Assistance at 860-695-6284 or TTY 860-722-6890, two weeks prior to the event.

For more information or to arrange an interview, please contact:

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About Hartford Public Library

The Hartford Public Library traces its roots to 1774. It operates 10 locations in the City of Hartford. The Library receives more than 850,000 visits per year. Services include access to a large collection of materials for reading and research, as well as music and video. Programs provide education, information and enrichment to the people of Hartford in such areas as citizenship training, literacy, business skills and cultural awareness. The mission of the Hartford Public Library is to provide free resources that inspire reading, guide learning, and encourage individual exploration.