



*A Celebration to Benefit the  
New Haven Free Public Library*

TUESDAY, MARCH 4, 2025

*Hosted by*

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# Mardi Gras

## Library Champions

*Award for Community Service*

**Alder Honda Smith**

*for her unwavering commitment to our community and for exemplifying the very best of civic leadership, advocacy, and service.*



*Award for Lifetime Achievement*

**Brad Gallant**

*for his years of service to the Boards of the New Haven Free Public Library and the New Haven Free Public Library Foundation.*



## ~Schedule of Events~

**5:30 PM**

Cocktail Hour

Featuring Timmy Maia

**6:00 PM**

Welcome Remarks

Dr. Mary Ellen Savage, President

New Haven Free Public Library Foundation Board of Directors

Honorable Justin Elicker

Mayor, City of New Haven

Andrew Giering, President

New Haven Free Public Library Board of Directors

Maria Bernhey

City Librarian and Director

New Haven Free Public Library

### **Honoring**

#### **Library Champion Award for Community Service**

Presented To: Alder Honda Smith (Ward 30)

Introduced by: Lindy Lee Gold, Member

New Haven Free Public Library Foundation Board of Directors

#### **Library Champion Award for Lifetime Achievement**

Presented To: Brad Gallant

Introduced by: Dr. Mary Ellen Savage, President

New Haven Free Public Library Foundation Board of Directors

**6:30 PM**

Dinner Music and Dancing

**8 - 8:30 PM**

Final Dance and Goodbye

A decorative border of yellow roses and lilies with green leaves, framing the text. The roses are large and detailed, while the lilies are smaller and more delicate. The leaves are small and green, adding to the natural feel of the border.

## **In Memoriam: Dr. Edward C. Harris**

The New Haven Free Public Library Foundation honors the life and legacy of Dr. Edward C. Harris, whose dedicated service on our Board enriched our library and community.

His unwavering commitment to equity, education, and access leaves an enduring impact on all who walk through our library's doors. We are grateful for his leadership, vision, and generosity, which continue to inspire us.

With deep appreciation, we celebrate Dr. Harris's legacy and extend our heartfelt condolences to his family and loved ones.

# Welcome to Mardi Gras

at the

## New Haven Free Public Library

Dear Friends,

On behalf of the New Haven Free Public Library, it is my great pleasure to welcome you to this special evening where we transform our Ives Main Library into “The Big Easy” at our annual Mardi Gras celebration. Tonight, we gather not only to celebrate the power of knowledge and community but also to recognize the generosity of supporters like you for your unwavering commitment to enriching lives through literacy, learning, and access to knowledge.

The New Haven Free Public Library is more than just a place for books; it is a vibrant hub where curiosity thrives, innovation blossoms, and connections are forged. With bustling branches across the city and a dynamic team dedicated to serving our diverse community, we continue to evolve as a lifeline for lifelong learning. Your generosity helps us expand and sustain essential programs—early literacy initiatives, workforce development, technology access, and cultural enrichment opportunities—that empower individuals and strengthen neighborhoods.

This evening is a testament to the impact of our shared commitment to education and opportunity. As you enjoy the company of fellow advocates, engage with our dedicated library staff, and witness the stories of those whose lives have been transformed, we hope you feel the deep gratitude that our entire community holds for you.

As we look ahead, we remain committed to ensuring that our libraries continue to serve as accessible and welcoming spaces for learning, creativity, and connection. With your continued support, we can further our mission and connect with even more neighbors in our community.

To our cherished donors and sponsors, I extend heartfelt thanks for your generous contributions to the New Haven Free Public Library Foundation. Your support is not just an investment in books and resources; it is an investment in the future of our city.

Thank you for being an important part of our library family. Enjoy this special evening and know that your generosity is making a lasting difference.

Warm regards,



Maria Bernhey  
City Librarian and Director  
New Haven Free Public Library

# Honoring

## Alder Honda Smith

### Library Champion Award for Community Service



Alder Honda Smith, a lifelong resident of New Haven, has dedicated her life to community service and uplifting the West Rock neighborhood. At 16, she discovered her passion for civic engagement while assisting her brother on U.S. Congresswoman Rosa DeLauro's campaign, setting the stage for decades of impactful work. After moving to West Rock in 1997, Honda quickly became a leader, serving as President of the West Hills Neighborhood Corporation, housed in the community hub affectionately known as "The Shack." Through her leadership, she spearheaded initiatives to rebuild the Brookside and Rockview areas, develop senior housing, and provide resources like fresh produce and healthcare access. Honda's signature programs, including the Winter Wonderland holiday celebration and mentoring initiatives like H.O.L.L.A. (Helping Our Ladies Learn and Achieve) and W.R.A.P. (West Rock Arts Program) have brought joy and opportunities to thousands of families and youth. Even in retirement, Honda remains the heart of her community, transforming The Shack into a vibrant center for advocacy and support. Recognized as the New Haven Independent's New Havener of the Year in 2022, Honda continues to inspire hope and pride in her neighborhood.

# Honoring Brad Gallant Library Champion Award for Lifetime Achievement



Brad has deep roots in New Haven, where he was born and has spent much of his life. The son of a lawyer and a social worker, he developed a strong commitment to public service early on. His dedication to the New Haven Free Public Library began over 20 years ago when he joined the Library Board, later serving four terms as President. In partnership with the late City Librarian Jim Welbourne, he helped steer the library through the early digital age and its evolving role as a community hub. Brad continued his service by joining the Library Foundation Board, where he remained an invaluable member until 2024.

A distinguished Trusts and Estates attorney, Brad practiced in New Haven for 45 years, primarily at Day Pitney LLP. Brad's legal practice encompassed traditional estate planning and administration while also pioneering specialized areas such as special needs planning — where he was among the first U.S. lawyers recognized as an expert. His expertise extended to cy-pres actions, incapacity planning, and estate planning for LGBTQ+ families.

Beyond his practice, Brad was the President of the Connecticut Bar Association and has held leadership roles in the American Bar Association and American College of Trust & Estate Counsel.

Brad remains deeply engaged in the community through the Amour Propre Fund, which he co-runs with philanthropist friend Lindy Lee Gold. He and his wife, Joanna Waley-Cohen, a distinguished professor of Chinese history, have two children – Kit and Isabel

An avid reader, Brad enjoys spending time in Maine, fitness, good food and drinks, and his beloved rescue dog, Sadie.

*Mardi  
Gras*

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*Dr. Mary Ellen Savage*



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*Mr. Sean Koehler*



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 and our colleague  
**Alder Honda Smith**



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