

# ‘An ardent supporter of literacy’

## Library donation honors late literacy volunteer

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A rendering of the Reading and Conversation Lounge that is part of the Fitchburg Public Library renovation project. The room will be named after Anne Zarrella, the late sister of local businessman John Zarrella who recently made a \$100,000 donation to the OWL Capital Campaign, one of the project funding sources, in honor of her. (COURTESY TAPPÉ ARCHITECTS)

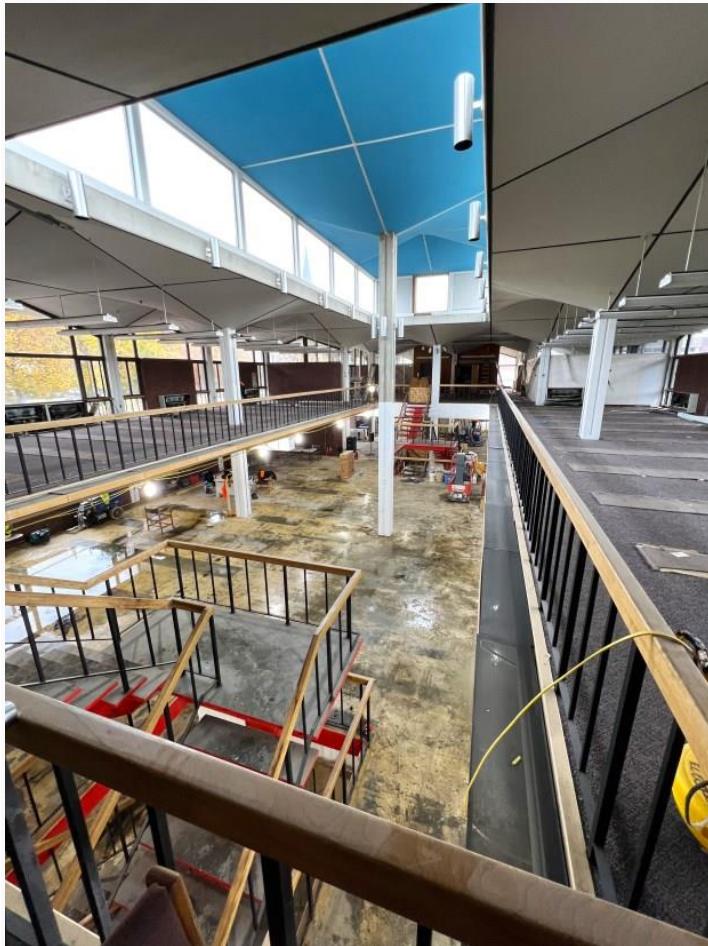
FITCHBURG – A generous donation to one of the funding sources helping to completely renovate the library has a very personal meaning behind it.

According to a press release, local businessman John Zarrella, president of city-based Research Results, recently donated \$100,000 to the [Fitchburg Public Library's](#) (FPL) OWL (Offering a World of Learning) Capital Campaign in memory of his sister, Anne Zarrella, who passed away in 2022 following a brief illness.

“My sister, Anne, was a talented, intuitive, and creative writer, a voracious reader, and served as a literacy volunteer in addition to advocating for women and children,” Zarrella said. “This donation will continue Anne’s legacy as an ardent supporter of literacy, youth services and writing while ensuring our city has a state-of-the-art library for the young and young at heart.”

FPL Director Deb Hinkle said they “are grateful for John’s meaningful support of our library project in memory of his sister,” funding that will specifically be used for a special spot that will be named after Anne.

“With this donation, our community will have the opportunity to find a comfortable place to read or catch up with friends in our new Reading and Conversation Lounge for years to come,” she said.



Construction activities began at the Fitchburg Public Library in Sept. and the timeline for the completion of the large scale renovation project is slated for the summer of 2026. (COURTESY FITCHBURG PUBLIC LIBRARY)

The [OWL Capital Campaign](#), a visionary initiative to enhance the facilities and services of the library, has garnered significant financial support from various community partners, including the Fitchburg Redevelopment Authority, Rollstone Bank & Trust, and the Wallace Foundation. The goal is to raise \$3.5 million through the OWL campaign to be used toward the design, construction, furnishings, and equipment as part of the total \$40 million FPL renovation project.

Additional support for the renovation project is being provided through a variety of funds from the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners through the Massachusetts Public Library Construction Program and a combination of the City of Fitchburg's American Rescue Plan Act funding and the City of Fitchburg. To learn more and for assistance in making a gift, email [owlcapitalcampaign@gmail.com](mailto:owlcapitalcampaign@gmail.com). The library has taken up temporary residence at 166 Boulder Dr. at Putnam Place during the renovation project that is slated to be completed in the summer of 2026. Construction activities began on the 610 Main St. library building in September and a groundbreaking took place on Oct. 8.

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