

In the Beginning: The San Carlos Branch Library



We asked if anyone in the Navajo Community knew the story of how, who, where and when the San Carlos Branch Library began. The call went out, and local Community Leader and author, Toni Noel, responded. Here is Toni's story of how our Library's site was chosen.

Toni tells us, "Late in 1969 or early in 1970 I was appointed Library Chairman of the San Carlos Community Council, which was the predecessor to the current community planning group. A local mother of Patrick Henry students appeared at a SCCC Board meeting and demanded to know what was being done to get the promised library built in San Carlos.

"I was one of the many local residents who bought their homes on the assurance the growing community would have schools, a fire station and a library. We were even shown a map with a space allotted for it. The fire station was built on that site and bulldozers were continually flattening the most desirable spots for apartments. Soon there would be no suitable site left.

"I learned from City Librarian Clara Breed, that unless pressure was brought on the San Diego City Council to purchase property and build a library in San Carlos, that PHHS parents and other San Carlos residents would have to continue driving to other communities for library services.

"Breed told me how to get the Council's attention and I applied a week ahead for my name to be placed on the docket for the following week's Council meeting. The Council members

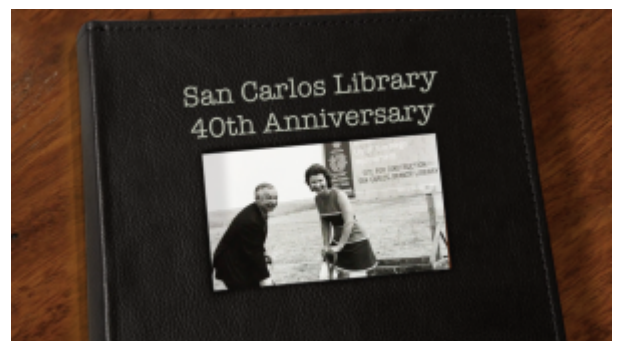
listened attentively, admitted they were sorely uninformed about our community's needs, and asked someone to look into the matter and bring it to the attention of the City Planning Commission.



“When the subject came up on the Planning Commission's docket a large group of San Carlos residents caravanned to the meeting and several of our group spoke before I made an impassioned plea for the Council

to select a site for the proposed library before the best sites were all snapped up for service stations. The interest of our residents turned Council heads. A week later, San Diego's Librarian Clara Breed called and asked if I would show her around the area. The site I thought best, next to our new fire station, had just been sold for a service station, so I drove Breed around the neighborhood in my VW bus, pointing out other likely sites. She preferred a location near a shopping center and the City soon purchased the present site on Jackson Drive.

“Because of my work to secure a library site, Alan Hitch, the Councilman for our District, invited me to turn the second shovel of dirt at the ground breaking ceremony for the new library. For a year prior to the opening of our San Carlos Branch Library local residents had been donating books for the proposed library and I had stacks of them in my garage. Prior to the opening the Librarian sent a truck to pick up the books which were sold by the first Friends of Library organization at the downtown library and the resulting funds used to purchase additional new books for the San Carlos Branch Library.”



Our Community spoke out, and its ideas were heard! What stories do you have to share?