

# New Canaan Library

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## **New Canaan Library Announces Elections of New Board Members**

**New Canaan, Conn, [February 11, 2021]** – New Canaan Library announces the election of seven new Board members: Rachel Baker, Gary Engle, Rob Lowe, Fatou Niang, Eileen Thomas, Anne Tseng, and Peter Ziesing.

“Our Board of Trustees is a uniquely dedicated team of community leaders committed to providing New Canaan with a world class library service for today and for the future,” said Executive Director, Lisa Oldham. Board President, Bob Butman, added “Over the past several months, we have been honored to welcome this great group and to harness their considerable talents and experience. They are joining the New Canaan Library Board at a very exciting and dynamic time, and we look forward to their valuable contributions.”

The Library Board can now seat up to 25 members, up from 18 seats in prior years, a recent change that reflects strong interest in Board membership and the widely recognized importance of the new Library building project. “We have been actively recruiting new Trustees and interest has been stronger than ever, given the widespread excitement about our building project,” stated Christine Seaver, Vice President.

**Rachel Baker** is a graduate of Ohio Wesleyan and Seton Hall Law School. She and her husband, Chris, are the parents of two daughters who both attended New Canaan Country School. She is a longtime community and Library volunteer, has been a board member of Ohio

Wesleyan University, and has been an active volunteer for Horizons, the New Canaan Charity League, the New Canaan Garden Club, and the Fresh Air Fund. Ms. Baker has taken on the role of Board Secretary, noting “This Library is a beacon for families – we could no sooner imagine a world without libraries than a world without schools. It has been more than a joy to be part of this mission and our family is grateful for the opportunity to serve and support this Library and the coming new building whose benefits we truly understand as something that will outlive our generation and reach far into the future.”

**Gary Engle**, CEO and Chairman Stoneleigh Capital. Mr. Engle has been an active and successful investor internationally across many industries including commercial shipping, equipment finance and real estate. He has held numerous corporate board positions. A graduate of U Mass - Amherst and Harvard Business School, Gary lives in New Canaan with his wife, Dao, and their middle-school age son; their older son is at Taft.

“I am honored to join the Board of the Library at this moment. As an avid reader of the classics, I believe in the value of open access to great literature for all. As a businessman, I cannot overstate my belief in the positive economic impact that this project will have on our downtown. What a well-timed lifeline for the community to have this major new attraction which should help lead our downtown businesses out of a challenging time.”

**Rob Lowe**, Managing Director of Allen & Company, and father of four, sees the strong interrelationship between the Library, families, and the community. “When the opportunity to join the Library Board was mentioned to me, I thought it could be perfect. The Library plays an important and different role for each of our children, and this has been my primary connection to it. The Library already provides a great service to the town and the new building plan represents a unique opportunity to enhance the quality and breadth of its programs and services. Further, I believe the proposed Library is the single greatest opportunity I have seen since moving here to enhance the already strong sense of community and energy in the town center. My wife Kaitlyn and I know that families in our age group willingly support sports and the schools, now I think we can all see that it is the Library’s turn in the spotlight.”

**Fatou Niang**, the Library’s newest board member, is a local realtor with William Pitt Sotheby’s International Realty and co-founder of a non-profit, Stand Together Against Racism (S.T.A.R.).

She and her husband, Nabi, have raised two sons whose lives have been shaped by the strong community connections she is committed to fostering through her volunteer work on several local boards. She notes “The Library is for everyone - I believe that with transparency and shared knowledge our world can be a better place. It is not hard to understand that this appealing new amenity will add to the attraction of our town and will make us even more competitive with young families and other homebuyers considering a relocation to lower Fairfield county. I am very proud to be asked to join a team that goes above and beyond, works tirelessly to serve our community, and that I know well. They have added so much to this community.”

**Eileen Thomas** grew up in New Canaan and has lived here with her husband, James, for most of her life. She has four children and brings two decades of board and volunteer leadership in various NYC and local nonprofits in our community including serving as Vice Chairman of NYC’s largest homeless advocacy organization, WIN (Women In Need). She is currently a board member of New Canaan Mounted Troop and the Congregational Church. A former McKinsey consultant and graduate of the University of Pennsylvania, with an MBA from the Wharton School, she joins the library with a plethora of experience. As newly elected Vice President of the Library Board, Chairman of the Governance Committee and a Co-Executive Chair of the Capital Campaign, Eileen remarks “I am committed to building a board that will embrace and build upon the bright future of our Library’s core mission: to be the center of lifelong learning and culture for our community. With the talent and committed leadership we have across the entire organization, I am confident that we will fulfill our mission and build a landmark that will inspire our community now and for the next 100 years.”

**Anne Tseng**, Senior Manager of Customer Service at Charter Communications, lives in New Canaan with her husband, Steven, and their middle-school age son. Anne has served at the intersection of technology and finance at various firms including PayPal and Merrill Lynch. “My husband and I are proud to call New Canaan home. Our family believes in the value of education and access – this new Library is going to be a strong reflection of our community’s pride in being the best.”

**Peter Ziesing** recently retired from Chubb Tempest Re after a 41-year career in reinsurance. A graduate of Trinity College, he and his wife, Jo, have three grown children all of whom

were raised in New Canaan. A self-described “card-carrying Library member,” Mr. Ziesing is a longtime New Canaan resident and active volunteer. During the 1990’s, Mr. Ziesing spent time on the board of the New Canaan YMCA serving as Board Chair (1999-2001) during their 1999-2003 Capital Campaign. He has also served on the Board of the Country Club of New Canaan in various roles. Mr. Ziesing observes, “The table has been set for the Library’s future by this talented group of professionals and volunteers. As a veteran of another major Capital Campaign here in town and a volunteer for Staying Put, which partners with the Library to serve our seniors, I am delighted to dedicate my experience to this historic project.”

To learn more about the Campaign for the *New New Canaan Library* visit [www.newcanaanewlibrary.org](http://www.newcanaanewlibrary.org)

***New Canaan Library** has been the community's intellectual and cultural center for more than a century. Today, the Library continues as a vibrant community resource for learning and innovation, offering an extraordinary print and electronic collection, dynamic programming, and up to the minute technology and maker spaces. Each day, up to 1,000 members come through the doors and thousands of visits are made to the website in search of knowledge, exploration, and entertainment.*

*New Canaan Library looks confidently towards the future, embracing its vision of being the community's source for innovation and discovery.*

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