

# University City Regional Library celebrates 25 years

THU, FEB 08, 2018 15:00 CET Join us for a day-long celebration of University City Regional Library's 25th anniversary - February 15

The day is February 14, 1993. It's Valentine's Day and Whitney Houston's *I Will Always Love You* can be heard playing at high volumes from local radio stations. It all seems very fitting that this would be the day that a University Area institution, one that has been loved and adored now for 25 years, opened its doors to the community for the very first time.

## Worth the wait

Although the planning and building of University City Regional took longer than expected, it was worth the wait. Before bonds were even approved by voters to begin the process of planning for a new library, University City residents had raised \$15,000 to buy books for the library they had long wished for. Finally, six years after the need for a library in the area had first been discussed by the Library Board of Trustees, the facility opened in 1993.

In the long history of Charlotte Mecklenburg Library, the 1990s can be viewed as the era of regional libraries. These larger branches were introduced to help the Library deliver services to wide expanses of the County. University City Regional was one of the first regionals in the system, and still proudly serves the northeast part of Mecklenburg County today with more than 20,000 visitors each month and 400,000 items checked out annually.

## The bird branch

Only six years after its opening, University City Regional closed its doors for renovation. When it re-opened, not only was it 60% larger (extending to 25,000 sq. ft.), it had birds! The installation of two aviaries in the children's area (seen in the image above from 1999) led to this branch being called the "bird branch." While it was fun having birds in the branch, and sometimes getting to see baby birds hatch, staff remember spending harrowing hours trying to find the savvy little birds who were hiding in the stacks after escaping their glass homes.

Even after the birds had been evicted (to a more peaceful place to live), University City Regional carried on the "bird branch" reputation. Colorful birds often hung from the ceiling or donned the service desk. There were even ceramic, white geese that were dressed in outfits according to holidays or events.

## An essential connector

University City Regional has always served as an essential connector for a thriving community of readers, leaders and learners, serving as a welcoming place for all who walk through the doors.

The Library regularly hosts programs for children, teens and adults with hundreds in attendance each week. Programs and services support literacy and learning from infancy to seniors through storytimes, Reading Buddies, ESL tutoring for adults, homework help for students, book clubs and 1-on-1 technology tutoring.

Moving beyond the Library's physical space, staff intertwine their work into their community.

You can often find University City Regional staff conducting technology classes at senior centers, discussing books at local schools, or sharing resources at Kid's Fest, Wine Fest and the YMCA Healthy Kids Day. University City Regional has even been a crucial element in at least one scavenger hunt that led to a proposal of marriage.

[Celebrate 25 years of service](#)

Join us on [Thursday, February 15, 2018](#), for a day of celebrating the 25th anniversary of University City Regional Library with stories, an author book signing, dance, food and prizes throughout the day.

10-11 a.m. – Storytelling with Mona and Amanda / Face painting with Hayley / Drama Games with Lonna

11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. – Afro House Dance with Lateefah Thompson

12-1 p.m. – Book talk and signing with Gail Martin

1-2 p.m. – Cake!

2-4 p.m. – Caricatures with Lena Janelle

2-4 p.m. – Face painting with Hayley

4-5 p.m. – Music and storytelling with Malcolm

5-6 p.m. – Storytelling with Elisha “Mother” Minter

Throughout the day, you can also enjoy a Digital Petting Zoo, raffle drawings, vendors and everything else this great library has to offer!

Attendance is FREE. We hope to see you there.