

People's History of the I.E.

Interview Summary

Item Number: 2025.001.001

Interviewee:

Judith Auth

Interviewer:

Catherine Gudis

Interview Date:

November 12, 2025

Interview Location:

Riverside, CA Riverside Main Library

Interview Summary completed by:

Catherine Gudis, 2026

Description:

Judith Auth is a librarian and community activist who spent 35 years (1971-2006) at the Riverside Public Library, rising from children's librarian to director. Born in Upland in 1943 to French immigrant heritage, she moved to Riverside after earning her MLS from UCLA. Her career encompassed managing 27 county branches and overseeing the library's transition to digital catalogs. Beyond her professional role, Auth was deeply engaged in Riverside's social justice movements. She served as secretary of Nosotros, a fine arts workshop led by activist Lear Larkins, supporting youth programs and civil rights initiatives. She also worked with the Inland Agency addressing gun violence on the East Side and helped preserve Evergreen Memorial Historic Cemetery as a historical resource. Auth co-founded Inlandia, celebrating regional writers, and remains active with the League of Women Voters, advocating for voter access and community engagement.

Subject Topic:

- Activism
- Library administration and management

- Civil rights
- Community arts and culture
- Gun violence prevention
- Cemetery preservation
- Digital technology in libraries
- Women's leadership
- East Side Riverside history
- Voter registration and civic engagement

Key Organizations:

- Riverside Public Library
- Nosotros Gallery
- Evergreen Cemetery
- Inlandia

Spatial Coverage:

Spatial coverage refers to the geography covered by the interview. Add general locations (street names, cities, areas, etc.) and addresses – use newspaper searches & google searches to find addresses when possible (but note source).

Name of Site (if relevant)	General Location/Address
University of California, Riverside	900 University Ave, Riverside, CA 92521
Nosotros Gallery	University Avenue (not extant)
Riverside Public Libraries	Multiple locations

Temporal Coverage: 1970s-present

Related Materials:

Women's History

Interview Index:

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Full Transcript:

Cathy Gudis [00:00:01] And I'm just going to just remind you on screen, so to speak, about the project. My name is Cathy Gudis, and I am conducting an interview that is for a people's history of the Inland Empire that will be shared with the city of Riverside for their Riverside Historic Context Statement that is focused on women. And so part of this interview will be related to places that we might be able to use as a means of talking about where significant events happened or where there are stories that may not seem significant, but that inform how we understand Riverside. So there are different ways we can go about it, but I'm also really interested in you and what you've experienced in the region. And so that's another, that's the big part of all of this. And so today is Wednesday, November 12, 2025, and I just want to confirm that you are okay with my recording this.

Judith Auth [00:01:09] Yes, I am.

Cathy Gudis [00:01:10] Thank you. Great. And so I just thought to start out. If you could just say your name and if you want to, the year and place where you were born.

Judith Auth [00:01:24] My name is Judith Roth and I was born in Upland, California in 1943.

Cathy Gudis [00:01:31] Great. And when did your parents come to Upland?

Judith Auth [00:01:37] Well, they came to Upland just after my father returned from the war. In 1945, they built a house on Third Avenue. Prior to that, my father's family had lived in Chino. My mother's family has lived in Ontario. But my father family were first generation immigrants from the south of France. And they had initially come to... Well, my grandfather came to San Francisco, and then he came down eventually to Kern County, where he worked as a baker in the company that serviced the oil fields and fellows. And while he was at fellows as a Baker, he met my grandmother, who was a maid coming also from France, but not the same exact location, working in the hotel that was... Owned by a French woman.

Cathy Gudis [00:02:38] What brought them further south?

Judith Auth [00:02:44] Well, they were looking for opportunity and they moved from there to Long Beach to Signal Hill and they were among those people who built a house and had a life and discovered that the small print and their deed did not allow them to take the mineral rights under their house. So they, along with a lot of other people, lost their... Homes to the syndicates that were drawing oil from their properties. And from there they came to Chino, Carbon Canyon, where my grandfather picked up the farming lifestyle that he'd left behind in the south of France, and grew grapes and had horses and that was where they were living when My father came back from the war and we were with them for a couple of years before the house was built in Upland.

Cathy Gudis [00:03:50] Yeah, that's interesting. I was going to ask about vineyards if he, you know, had that as a familiar agricultural arena. Yeah. So did you spend most of your life in the same neighborhood or street? Yes. When you go there now, what's striking to you about your memories of growing up and what you see?

Judith Auth [00:04:08] Well, my sister lives next door to the house we grew up in. The house we grow up in, my mother lived in until she was 100 years old, and then she passed and we sold the house. But in the interim, my sisters had bought the house next door, to raise her son in proximity to her parents, and she is still there, though she also has a house in the about the France that she has built on the land that was... Inherited from our grandmother.

Cathy Gudis [00:04:40] Oh, that's really interesting. So did it seem, like was it still agricultural when you lived there?

Judith Auth [00:04:47] Upland? Yes. Oh, it was all lemon groves, yes. But I did not know that our school was segregated. We went to Edison School and the Mexican workers and the Chinese workers did not also go to that school, but I was 30 years old before I understood that.

Cathy Gudis [00:05:09] Which school did they go to?

Judith Auth [00:05:11] I don't know what school they went to, but it was closer to the Groves. We were just three blocks from Euclid Avenue, which was that great invention by the Chaffey Brothers that went all the way from the San Antonio Heights down to the Prado Dam.

Cathy Gudis [00:05:29] So when you were a kid, did you play in the groves? Or what were places that were almost like, you know, like I remember a little candy shop I used to ride my bike to, but were there places like that for you?

Judith Auth [00:05:40] Well, Upland was a cute little village and my sister and I both liked to sew and we were allowed to go up to the little village, and there was a fabric store run by an old woman. I have no idea what her name is, but she was always very good to help us make selections, and if we wanted a piece of fabric and there were a little bit left on the roll, she was willing to give it to us for free.

Cathy Gudis [00:06:07] Oh, that's really sweet. And then when did you move to Riverside?

Judith Auth [00:06:12] I moved to Riverside in 1971.

Cathy Gudis [00:06:14] And how did you, how did that come about, why Riverside?

Judith Auth [00:06:18] I went to library school at UCLA in 1970 and I graduated in 1971 and I applied for a job at the Riverside Public Library. I'd also applied for a job at... One of the Cal State and trying to remember where no they were impressed with my scholastic record and they flew me up for an interview I was interviewing for a cataloger and they took me around and introduced me to everyone and I was sure that I had the job but when I came back I got a letter saying we're not going to hire you as a catalog or because we think you have. Skills that would make you a public service librarian, and they did me a great favor.

Cathy Gudis [00:07:11] So what drew you into the library work and you were here at the Riverside Public Library then for your career? Yes. And what's the tenure like, how many years was that?

Judith Auth [00:07:20] 35 years. And in 1971, I was hired to be the assistant librarian at the Marcy branch in charge of the children's services. I had been offered three jobs. I could have been a reference librarian, a cataloger, or the children's librarian, but because I had a young child and I liked working with children, I chose the children's librarian. And my husband had been teaching at Upland High School, and he... Resigned his position and came to Riverside and found us a place to live. I started working in October, it was Columbus Day, but of course, business wasn't open on Columbus Day. Then I was moved from the Marcy branch to the main library children's room, where I had a wonderful time. And then there were a number of retirements of senior librarians, so. I was invited to apply for a senior librarian position. I did and I was

appointed coordinator of children's services. Now at that time we were servicing the entire Riverside County because under a contract from 2008, no not 2008, it was an 80-year contract, it was 1900, the city of Riverside. Had been contracting with the County of Riverside to provide library services to the county. So every year the Board of Supervisors budgeted to fund their libraries, but they were managed through the City of Riverside and the Board Library Trustees for the Riverside Public Library. So I went from being the children's librarian at the main library to being the coordinator Children's Services in the 27 branches all the way out to Mecca down to Temecula. Up to Idledwild. And then I served as a branch supervisor, supervising the branches going down to Temeculeet, Paris and Lake Elsinore and Temecula. And then we needed a central library director, so I was appointed head of central library, and we needed an interim technical services director, and so I became the interim technical service director during the time when we went from microfiche to online catalogs. And then I was interviewed for the assistant library director. Which I got, and then when Linda Wood, who was the library director, resigned, retired, I was appointed librarian, and I was for 10 years librarian of the Riverside Public Library, the director.

Cathy Gudis [00:10:27] That sounds like a really big responsibility. And so were you active in the sort of issues around the site of the old main library where the Cheech is? Yes. Thank you so much. Did that pose additional challenges or were you game for a new building to be constructed?

Judith Auth [00:10:54] Well, I retired in January of 2006, but approaching that date, we were aware that we needed to do something with the main library. It was built in 1960, it needed attention. So I had hired, with the city's manager's permission, an architect from Boston to come out and do an assessment. He had done, and his architectural firm had. Remodeled a building very much like ours that was featured in the library journal, and he gave a very glowing report on the good bones that the building had, but the need to do something out front, the need repair the elevators, the needs to do something with it downstairs. I mean, we all knew where the problems were, but at that time the city manager was receptive, but he soon left. And the new city manager was not receptive. And so that was part of my decision that I've done what I could, my time is over, I'm taking the retirement.

Cathy Gudis [00:12:06] Yeah, I can understand that. Yeah, I went to some of the community meetings around that. It was, that was a very lengthy process though. Yeah. Now you had mentioned in the community meeting, that one site or story of Riverside related to the city librarian or the city's library system. Can you tell me about that? I think that was you. Let me see. The county library reference? That was you, though. That there is county library schools that trained young women.

Judith Auth [00:12:42] Oh, the Library Service School was initiated by Joseph Francis Daniels, who was a hotshot librarian brought in from Colorado. We're talking about the, uh-huh, 1910 maybe? And at that time, there was no training program for people to work in libraries. You. Learned on the job. So he set up the library service school and trained young women, primarily, I don't know that there were any men, to work in public libraries. And it functioned for several years. And he died unexpectedly of a heart attack, I think it was. And then the war came, and then the depression, And then I'll. Everything changed and eventually the Library Service School was closed.

Cathy Gudis [00:13:47] And do you know where it was? I mean, I can't remember. It was.

Judith Auth [00:13:50] It was out of the Carnegie Library.

Cathy Gudis [00:13:52] Oh it was and was it the only like was this a thing at that time or did he innovate something?

Judith Auth [00:13:58] It was very innovative and it has been written up and we do have all the documents in the local history collection of the Riverside Public Library because Ron Baker, who was hired as a local history librarian, took a special interest in this and he has created a very usable archive relating to the Library Service School including all the grade reports for students who attended.

Cathy Gudis [00:14:25] Oh wow. Yeah, that's interesting. Yeah I'm curious, when you went to library school, what the gender balance was?

Judith Auth [00:14:36] Well, obviously, it's way later, but yeah. Right, 1970. And the gender balance kind of depended upon the institution. That if you were academic, you were male. If you were public, you are female. But Andy Horne was the head of the library service, the UCLA School of Library Information Science. And he was a very generous and dynamic person. And, um... We got to meet Lawrence Clark Powell, after whom the UCLA library is named. And when I went to my first meeting, I looked at these people, and I thought, I like these people. I want to be part of this community.

Cathy Gudis [00:15:20] And when you were here, did you have a community among librarians that were in the area?

Judith Auth [00:15:27] Well, we had our own library system, which had the 27 branches, so there were over 100 employees. And then we had the Inland Library

System, which was a consortium of the libraries in the San Bernardino Riverside Inyo County area. And we had formalized into an administrative unit, and we were able to initiate things like film circuits where... 16Mm films could be rotated through the branches and foreign language materials could go through the branches. And the cooperative systems are still in place, but they are not so... They are not as important as they once were because now we have the State Library with internet access and most of what the cooperative systems were doing, the State library is now offering through its various programs.

Cathy Gudis [00:16:30] So when you were here and you're working, it's the 1970s, did you have an awareness of the women's movement? Was it percolating for you around Riverside or elsewhere?

Judith Auth [00:16:44] Yes. And I think that's when I read Kate Millett's Sexual Politics and I read Elizabeth Janeway and I read all of the classic authors. And the one book that really spoke to me was the book by the Soul on Ice. And the reason it spoke to me was because he characterized the racial situation in the United States as the super masculine menial, the, I don't remember what he called them, essentially the white rich man, and the ultra feminine doll, and the black woman. And everything that he said about the role of the ultra-feminine, I rejected. And began to see in my immediate surroundings how these roles played out and made me determined to be a more assertive, engaged, outspoken person.

Cathy Gudis [00:18:00] That's really interesting. Were there places of racial mixing where discussions around this might have taken place? Or was Riverside kind of segregated at that point in time in terms of where people chose to go?

Judith Auth [00:18:17] Well, in 1971, when I was at the branch as a children's librarian, there was a group of theater students who had put together something called Theater Workshop in the Streets. And they were working out of the back of a van. This was kind of the 60s carried on. And I loved it. And my husband and I met at Idlewild doing theater for junior players. So, they said, well, we've done... Riverside now we're going to have to move on because we don't have any money. So I made my first public appearance before the City Council asking that they fund through the Parks and Recreation this theater workshop in the street which was doing story theater and going to parks and they didn't do that. But what happened at that meeting was a man sat next to me, a beautiful black man Dressed all in white. And he said, do you have a job? And I said, proudly, yes. I'm the children's librarian at the Marcy Branch Library. And he says, you owe Nosotros \$10. And I say, what is Nosotros? Well, Nosotros was the fine arts workshop and gallery that he was running as the executive director on University

Avenue, and of which I became the secretary for the next 20 years. So I worked very closely with Lear Larkins as he established the programs at the Fine Arts Workshop and Gallery. We had some money from the city, and we had programs like the Summer Youth Employment, which led to my engagement with Evergreen, because as part of Summer Youth employment, He took them to the cemetery to show them that Well, there he lived on the east side. There were names on the stones in Evergreen Cemetery that related to the families that had come to Riverside and settled in the eastside, who were still living in the Eastside. And his basic program was to tell these young people from the East side that you have a right to be here. This is your city. And we went to the city hall. We met the mayor. We met George Brown. We met. People who were in high places, and it was an effort to give the young people a sense of their belonging. So he was refused to call it a black arts center. He did a black history program, he did other programs that clearly had focus on the blacks. He had actually come from civil rights demonstrations in the South. And he came here to teach in the Freedom School that was established when Lowell burned. And his goal was to make the tools of art available to everyone. And so we had a clay shop where we had wheels and he was a fine potter. And we had kiln and we had poetry readings and there were university students who were part of that poetry reading. Collective, and then we had painters, and Ed, I can't think of his last name, but he was a painter at UCR in the art department. So it was a very eclectic mix of people, and I loved it, and we did work with children, Then we did work with adults and then we did a senior workshop. With funding from the County Office of Aging, that my sister actually was the director, she herself being an artist and printmaker. So I was very involved from 71 on with all the racial issues affecting East Side, affecting Riverside. I also was part of the Inland Agency. And the Inland Agency was... Originally Linda Dunn was the founder and her goal was to put people in touch with opportunities and there was a special focus on the gun violence on the east side and so we did a number of programs relating to the treatment of gun violence as a political, as a public safety issue. And needing to inform elected officials and adults and the young people themselves that this was a terrible thing and we should stop. We had marches up and down Park Avenue.

Cathy Gudis [00:23:27] And that was through that group.

Judith Auth [00:23:29] This was through Inland Agency.

Cathy Gudis [00:23:30] Yes, I haven't heard of it. Was it operative as a non-profit or part of a...

Judith Auth [00:23:37] It was non-profit, and it had affiliation with the Visiting Nurses Association. And Linda Dunn is still living, but she is not fully aware. And so she was

just a dynamic person. She was a Quaker. And I served as president of their board for a couple of years. And was involved in the outreach programs, but I really can't... There were other aspects of the agency that I didn't have anything to do with.

Cathy Gudis [00:24:17] Yeah. Do you remember what some of the rallies or how the city and police were addressing the gun violence?

Judith Auth [00:24:33] Well, I pretty much kept my head down. I did not want to be caught in the fray. And Lear, being a black man and outspoken and brilliant, was often asked or caught. And these were just dicey times. At one point, he got hit at a parking lot, broke his leg. Another time the garden of Nosotros was destroyed.

Cathy Gudis [00:25:14] Yeah, that's, um, when did he, so, so um, so he was like, there were hate crime. I mean, now if someone got hit like that, it would be hate crime, right? Um, but he wasn't as active in the political mobilizing. No. Right.

Judith Auth [00:25:31] But he did encourage us to take part in the marches, and particularly the Cesar Chavez farm labor movement. I did not myself participate in those marches.

Cathy Gudis [00:25:47] And was Inland Agency sort of mixed racially or what was its constitution?

Judith Auth [00:25:55] I would say it was mixed, but I didn't see the clientele that benefited from the services that they offered. I was mostly concerned with the administration of the programs, and I know that there were several Latino women who were involved in the main office and the programs. But that's as far as I could say.

Cathy Gudis [00:26:20] Yeah. And no sotros. Do you happen to know how long it ran?

Judith Auth [00:26:26] It lasted as long as Lear lasted. He died in 91. And he was active up to the very end.

Cathy Gudis [00:26:40] Were there thoughts about continuing it?

Judith Auth [00:26:43] Well, we had a board of directors. We were a California 501c3, and we filed our annual reports. And we kept our minutes, and that was mostly my job. And we tried to reactivate the board, but all of us were 20 years older and in different places. And there was no real cohesion without Lear. Yeah, yeah Bill Medina was probably Lear's closest disciple, to use the term. And Bill went on to get a degree at

UCR and then to be active as an instructor in community colleges. And he carried forth Lear philosophy about making life better for everyone.

Cathy Gudis [00:27:39] I know that he and Susie talk about Nostros being their second home, that they came back and forth. That sounds like it was the spirit of the place. What was it like to be there?

Judith Auth [00:27:54] That was a big old home that had been broken up into various rooms. There was a library, and there was a kitchen, and there was the living room where we had the poetry readings, and I don't know whether Lear slept there or not. He was a very private man for all his public concern, and I beamed. Fully employed and having a family of my own, I went back and forth. And my staff often would caution me about going to the East Side. Are you sure you want to go to the east side? And I was never hassled. I was not worried. But one day, Lear often walked from Nosotros to the library and would meet me and we'd go to lunch. Someone said to me, I saw this old black man bothering you. Would you like me to get you some protection?" I had a couple of other encounters, one at the May Company restaurant where he and I sat down to lunch, and they did not see him. They did not speak to him, the waitress. There were places, he told me, we could not go together.

Cathy Gudis [00:29:16] At those places, do you remember?

Judith Auth [00:29:19] We went through the county, often went looking for clay or for free art supplies or to see someone that he had met. And he would just say, we can't go there.

Cathy Gudis [00:29:35] Right, I didn't realize that East Side was kind of configured that way, right, that people would think that, but I guess by the 80s it had a gang reputation, is that right? What were the reputations and then what did you see that was different?

Judith Auth [00:29:57] What I saw was that the university was expanding, and the city was pushing. And we had this freeway that was like a river that ran between the East Side and the City. And the houses that used to be grand houses were being broken up and used as rooming houses for students. And we also had immigrants coming in, workers in the groves, who would take rooms in these big houses. So we have this. Tumultuous mix of people and different classes and different expectations. And the gun violence between Casablanca mainly and East Side was real. And there were places that you didn't go. And I never was in a confrontation with the gangs, but I did participate in the program too. Help people see it as a public safety issue.

Cathy Gudis [00:30:55] Yeah.

Judith Auth [00:30:56] Public health issue.

Cathy Gudis [00:30:57] Yeah, which is, you know, that's really interesting. Was that, was the organizing around gun violence comprised of mostly women? Was it mixed? Yeah, what was that like? Well, it was mostly women.

Judith Auth [00:31:09] It was mostly Latino women who were either mothers or girlfriends, and they were concerned about their sons and their lovers, and wanted to do whatever could be done to stop this.

Cathy Gudis [00:31:30] Yeah, yeah, and did you see results?

Judith Auth [00:31:40] I don't know.

Cathy Gudis [00:31:43] Do you remember any of the names of the women who were involved? No. Yeah, I think, yeah, it's interesting because I haven't read it in the newspapers from the era very much about gun control, but now I'll look for it, obviously. Yeah, obviously it was needed because I know there were shootouts, yeah. So do you know about, like, was the area also under sort of more surveillance from, you know, were there more police cruisers or did it have like a more cop on the beat feel where people knew those who were assigned to the area.

Judith Auth [00:32:27] Well, we had a cop at the main library who was a security guard, and he was a very good guy, and was Latino. He would caution the women who worked in the library, and maybe the men too, if he knew there was going to be trouble or if he knew that some places were off limits. I grew up not trusting anybody. Someone said of my mother, she loved everybody, but she didn't trust anybody. And I didn't want to be involved with the police.

Cathy Gudis [00:33:11] And at Nosotros, were there all ages? You described it. I couldn't tell if maybe some were instructors and then some were the students who were part of different programs or. It was all.

Judith Auth [00:33:21] It was all that. The children in the neighborhood would come and work in clay. The teenagers often got interested in the photography and in the painting. And then the students from the university were involved in the poetry. And then we had adults who were working with wood and clay. And we had in this senior workshop, the women did tapestries. And we got rented sewing machines. Using cloth,

they made these wonderful banners. So it was all ages and we had a printing press and the fellow who ran the printing press would run off broad sides of Lear's work and also his own things that he wanted to have posted. So, it was a kind of community all ages. I got involved in Evergreen because the students we took to Evergreen, There was a photographer. Taking 1,000 pictures of the standing stones, because he said, if nobody intervenes, this is just going to be a dirt pile, and there's going to nothing left but the photographs that there were once stones here. And that initiated my concern. We put together a program about the standing stone. Title's just lost. But, um...

Cathy Gudis [00:34:49] Roughly when was this?

Judith Auth [00:34:51] About 1988, I went to the city council and I said that Evergreen Memorial Historic Cemetery should be an outdoor museum. It is the burial place of the founders of this city, and I had quite a spiel. And then my husband, who's a graphic artist, we put together a walking tour of Evergreen. And so when people wanted to know who was there, I could say, here's George, or here's on north and here's... Frank Miller. Here's half a dozen other notaries from the city. Well, I didn't get much traction, but in 2000, we decided to go for a library parcel tax, and I asked Vic Maselli if he would chair the campaign. Well Vic had just finished the restoration of the courthouse. He was known as a great arm twister. And he agreed to be chair of our library. What was his name? Vic Maselli, Judge Victor Masell. And we were successful. We got 67% for a \$19 per parcel fee. And it was renewed twice, I think. In any case, after the courthouse was finished and the library campaign was over, he turned to me and he said, now we're going to do Evergreen Cemetery. Okay, and he... Put together the coalition that was business and private people and the city that did affect the restoration. And I have been on that board for 20 years, but I have recently resigned from that board. But seeing the cemetery revitalized and as a source of living memory. Was important to me and to Vic, and it started with Lear.

Cathy Gudis [00:36:56] That's amazing. So parts of the cemetery were like where there would be a concentration. I know that like Japanese were in one area. Or am I thinking of olive wood? You're thinking of olive wood. Yeah. Yeah, so how is evergreen? Evergreen.

Judith Auth [00:37:11] Evergreen was laid out as a parcel in the... Original mile square. It was the most southeast, southwestern corner. And there were burials there from 1872 on, and it was formed as a corporation. And, there was a nationwide trend for what they called rural cemeteries, where instead of honoring the dead with them. Religious structures, they wanted to honor the dead with beauty, so it became what they called a garden cemetery, and there are famous ones in the East Coast, particularly, and in

Cleveland. Where was I going with the, oh, and so the first burial was a young girl who had died at home and was buried at home, but they moved her to the square. And in that first square, which is bounded now by 14th Street, 13th Street and I think with redwood. There are the earliest burials. Then they annexed the next square that went to Cedar. And that's where the Frank Miller family burials are. And there are burials from the Civil War. And there were burials of the Spanish-American War. And There are burials from the flu epidemic in, what is it, 1918. So we have created a database of the burials that we know something about. And it is online, and it can be accessed by name. And that will show the grave location. And in the process of restoring it, We put a fence around it. And ornamental gates and... Turned it into the garden.

Cathy Gudis [00:39:45] Did you consider yourself a preservationist when you were, you know, at work there, or were you in alliance with people who did call themselves preservationists?

Judith Auth [00:39:56] I didn't think of myself as a preservationist, but I did work with people who were preservationists. I did like the idea of keeping history alive, and there's something archival about a cemetery that appealed to me. I'm not particularly sensitive to the architectural structures and when we applied for nomination to the Historic Register, or to the Register of Historic Places. We hired Jennifer Murrill as an architectural historian because she could identify the architectural elements, but I was primarily concerned with the stories and the people and the connection with the living.

Cathy Gudis [00:40:45] Beautiful, that's exactly the way history ought to be, that we make some connections between past and present. Are there other groups or places where you found yourself investing time or attending the meetings, you know, related to other civic participatory.

Judith Auth [00:41:11] Well, at the turn of the century, 2000, we had separated from the county, which is a whole other story, and we were reinventing the city library now, just eight branches. And one of the things we wanted to do... Was to program now as a children's librarian. Programming was as important to me as the books on the shelf, because I would say the books on the shelves are like frozen foods in the freezer. But the programs, you take them out and you warm them up and you serve them to people. And we had done some wonderful programs when I was doing children's work. Well, when I no longer doing children's work and you hire the best people you can, but they have other interests, there was a lack of programming opportunity. I was able to hire Marion Mitchell Wilson, who had been working in the planning department, I think, redevelopment, and she was very eager to do programming, and so we did, together with Katherine Morton, a number of wonderful programs in the library. And then we met

Malcolm Margolin, who was running Hay Day Books and had just done project in Kern County. And he thought that Riverside County had a lot in common with Kern County in terms of the mix of the population, in terms the history. So he met with us to see if we'd be interested in organizing a literary salon, as it were, that would do readings and would celebrate writing about the area. And out of this grew Inlandia. And I have been involved. With Inlandia from that first meeting with Malcolm, sitting around the library table in the boardroom, listening to Marion Mitchell Wilson and Katherine Morton talk about what we could do with this idea of celebrating the writers and the performers in the inland area.

Cathy Gudis [00:43:27] And so were there parallel projects like Kern to Riverside?

Judith Auth [00:43:32] Well, there was a volume that was published of writing relating to Kern County. And that was the initial impetus for Malcolm, was to create some kind of an anthology. And so that was, the first production was an antholog of writing about the Inland Area, which included things like Joan Didion and some of the other famous people. And that has now continued to be. An annual anthology by local writers and author readings.

Cathy Gudis [00:44:06] Yeah, no, it's amazing. Yeah, and I remember that first book because when I first came here and was teaching, I was looking for materials and I found it and then it became my Christmas present for everyone or gift item for people. Yeah, really amazing. So did you have an active hand in like putting together programs for Inlandia?

Judith Auth [00:44:28] Well, I had hired Marianne Mitchell-Wilson. And then when the city was not very receptive to this idea, so eventually, Andlandia and Marianne left the city and formed a nonprofit. And I was not really involved in the formation of the nonprofit. But I was very interested in the programming. And so I... Worked on the program committee as we looked for opportunities to share the writing with the communities in the inland area. I've continued that through Katie Porter's tenure, and now Katie has announced her and I have announced mine.

Cathy Gudis [00:45:22] And were you also involved in the League of Women Voters? Yes. Yeah, tell me about that, because I've always heard the name, but I don't know much about it.

Judith Auth [00:45:31] Well, when Linda Wood was director, and she was an outstanding director. She steered us through the ruins of Prop 13. She's now in Palm Springs for the winter and in Portland, Oregon for the summers. She hired me as the

assistant library director, and she told me that one of the deciding factors in the interview with me was that I had been involved with Nosotros. And she and I worked well together. And she told me, you have to join the League of Women Voters, that as a public official, you need to know what's going on. And this is a great group to help you do that. So I joined the League Of Women Voters in 1991, and I have continued to work with them. I serve on the board. Of the local chapter as the secretary. And I feel very strongly that the core of our democracy is the vote. And I will work with the League to promote voter registration, access to materials about candidates. I have been an emcee at various... Candidate forums where we invite the candidates to respond to questions. I think they're still important, and we're now looking at cooperating with some other agencies that I have been involved with. The American Library Association is now interested in working with the League of Women Voters and promoting information for voters and voter rights, and the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom has a new executive director who is taking a really strong position. In favor of peace and justice, and I have been working to bring our League of Women Voters members aware of what the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom is doing. They are not specifically concerned with voting, but we share a lot of commonalities.

Cathy Gudis [00:48:01] Yeah, that's really interesting. If you were to sort of tell, like, the next generation what, I mean, you've been very, I mean the number of boards you've involved in and for a long time is really impressive. And I just, I think of that as, you know, how people make contributions to where they live. And I don't know what drove you to that and then what would you say to another generation who might not think about it. As a way to maybe inspire them to join.

Judith Auth [00:48:37] Okay, it was Todd Wingate's mother who told me, and another group of people, that volunteering is the price you pay for being in a community. And I really took that to heart, that we have a community, we have to take active part in the activities. We don't have to be paid for it. We all need a job, but... Volunteer activity is very important to me and I encourage everyone to find something that interests them so that they develop this group of like-minded people who can take action as a group. I feel very strongly that as a groups you are more powerful than as an individual. And we need to lend our individual voices to the group effort and we need promote the group effort. In the interest of the well-being of the community.

Cathy Gudis [00:49:43] Amazing, yeah. Are there other sort of action items that you've sort of dealt with? Because when you have a long tenure in an organization, you know, it sort of evens out, right? There's not always the highest points. But do you remember any of these moments of real, besides the nail, of real tumult?

Judith Auth [00:50:05] Well, Prop 13 was a real blow. It took 20% of our library revenue just out the door. And Linda Wood was the recently hired director. And she worked very closely with the county, as well as the city. And she steered us through that. And as a result of her work with the County, when money became available through redevelopment. She was able to ensure that there were libraries in all the plans, in the city plans and in the county plans, and all the new libraries in the county, the one in Temecula, the one in Cathedral City, the ones in Moreno Valley. All of these came about through her initiative insisting that libraries belong in the community development plans.

Cathy Gudis [00:51:00] Did you see a changing use of libraries while you were working either as the director or in other roles?

Judith Auth [00:51:10] I was there when we got the online catalog, and that was a revolution. We went from a microfiche, which is totally unworkable, a catalog where everything has to be looked at through a magnifier, to an online catalog. When I was at library school, I had a wonderful professor who was a mathematician who had chaired who had led the course on. Digitization. Well, we're talking 1971. I didn't know anything in 1971, but he had us work out some kind of a program, I don't remember what the assignment was, that could be applied to computers. And I chose to do a keyword search of Rilke's letters to a young poet. Now, I'm very fond of and keyword search was not a usual thing. But essentially an index, but on the computer screen, a keyword search. And he gave me a passing grade, but he kind of laughed at me. And I took that experience with me when I went to the job and saw that the computer had lots of potential. Meanwhile, my son, at 15, has taken the money I thought he was going to use to buy a car and he's bought a Mac, the first Mac. And not only has he bought it, but he's taken it home and he has disassembled it, cut it out so he can have two disk drives. And he put it all back together again. He had a wonderful teacher at Ramona High School. And, he told me that this was going to be important and I needed to know about it. I still didn't do anything until he came back from library school and he sat at our kitchen table and he plugged in his computer to the UCLA library computer. And then they went to Italy and the light bulb went off. This is how we will communicate. And then I became very involved in promoting it, and I was asked to write the user manual for the introduction of the circulation module at the public library. And so I spent every Friday for, it was to me, three, six months writing the user manual. And I came to the conclusion that either this is very simple or I've just totally lost it, but it's really quite simple, what I had to do. I didn't program. But I was then responsible for training all the circulation staff who were using the computer. And I only had one person who refused. She had beautiful, long fingernails. She could not use the keyboard and keep those fingernails, and she was on the verge of quitting, because she would not use a keyboard. But we used the analogy that the computer was for Women with the Colt

Revolver. Was for men. It's the great equalizer. They can't tell how old you are, they can't tell what you look like, and she cut her nails.

Cathy Gudis [00:54:44] That's amazing. So that's like a perfect story. Your analogy is beautiful right there. That's a feminist statement to me. I think it's really interesting. So that I am sort of a little more focused on the task of places that might help narrate stories. Now, I think the stuff you've talked about is fantastic for the historic context. No question about it. But can you think of places or other women's experiences? Because I know that the Riverside Historical Society book is really very much in the past. And so we have a really big gap. And I'm just wondering what you might offer up as sort of next steps of either research or trying to identify locations.

Judith Auth [00:55:42] Well, one group I didn't tell you about. I was a Girl Scout. And I was chosen to go to the Allstate encampment. And I chosen to to go the Roundup. And so I was with scouting through my senior year in high school. And I had a wonderful scout leader who talked to us about the importance of girls being independent, developing skills. And I likened it in a speech that I gave to a leadership conference to the difference between being treated as cattle on the hoof or being a person, and that when we went out into the woods and got our fingernails dirty and we dug our latrines and we pitched our tents, we became persons. And when we came back into the city. We were different, and I really treasure those experiences. And in my. Efforts at leadership training, that is what I've always encouraged, is that women have to think of themselves as individuals and they have to think about cultivating their skills and they need to find ways to relate and work with other people.

Cathy Gudis [00:57:09] Was there a central location where the Girl Scouts were located? I mean, I know now there's a zillion of them. Families can create one. But was there a center location or were they through?

Judith Auth [00:57:20] Well, I was part of the Scout Troop 80 in Upland and Ontario, and there was the national organization that sponsored these training opportunities.

Cathy Gudis [00:57:34] Yeah, I think that it's a different version of a woman's club, right, because it takes it to a different level. Any others that you can think of, or women that we might try to find out more about?

Judith Auth [00:57:51] Well, one of the women I made a list of who might be included, and people like Martha McLean have already been acknowledged in the Saving the Riverbottom, and people like Marsha McQuern taking over the Press Enterprise. And But one person that was very important to me was Barbara Steckl, who was treasurer

for the city of Riverside when the city and the county library system split after 80 years. She also was important in protecting Riverside from the fate of Orange County that had made terrible investments, and she sort of single-handedly steered the city away from those dangerous investments. And she left the city after her time here. I actually went to Ruth McCormick and asked for the newspaper articles about Barbara Steckle. Because in terms of the finances of the city, she was critical in salvaging them. She also salvaged the city library when the county withdrew. And we had to reallocate all of our resources. And she was brilliant. In terms of places... I was primarily focused on the library, so I think of the library service school and how important it was in that place. My own neighborhood which is by Ramona High School. Is pretty typical of what Riverside was. And you mentioned, asked, did the clientele for libraries change? Yes, they have changed dramatically. And... I think it's part of what's happened to the society as a whole that the real thoughtful scholarly people don't make as much use of libraries, and so libraries are now cultivating So. General reading public. And I think that's important. But we also lose the expertise. The Friends of the Library used to have professors from the university. And we would have wonderful coming together of backgrounds. And I the Public Library now is more homogenous. And I that the children are more homogeneous because the outreach to children is not as active.

Cathy Gudis [01:00:54] I see, so the outreach is in this actor, but when you say homogenous, you mean in terms of the... Class. Class, yeah, yeah. Right. Huh.

Judith Auth [01:01:03] When we were on... 7Th Street, there was a rule that children couldn't come into the library barefoot, which was really a way of telling the black children on the east side that you couldn't to the library. When we got rid of that, then the board wanted to think about, well, they can't come in unless there was somebody over 12. And knowing that lots of children run free, under 12. Finding somebody to come with you to the library, that really cuts into your choices. And now, like Halloween, nobody comes to neighborhoods on Halloween. They all go to the big mega churches or to the organizations or the parks because they say it's a safety issue. But it's not a safety, it's way of creating your own group and feeling comfortable in own group. And I think Unfortunately, libraries have become that kind of comfort zone, and I hope that the young people, particularly students, I was glad to see so many students here, are making use of the public library because it's a wonderful resource. But the outreach on the part of the Public Library to the adolescents and to the children is not as vigorous as it once was.

Cathy Gudis [01:02:34] Yeah, I think of public libraries as the public space. I spent so much time there as a kid. And now I know people seek refuge who are unhoused or

need to cool down. And so that's why I was also interested, because that would shift the job too.

Judith Auth [01:02:56] Well, I think it was a big mistake to put elevators at the point of entrance. The first principle of a public library is that it is accessible. And I know why it was done, for the same reason I know they said children can't come into the library barefoot. It was designed for safety of some people, but it cut out a lot of other people who could make use of the resources in this place.

Cathy Gudis [01:03:27] Brilliant. Yeah, I hadn't thought of it. I thought it was a strange design. But you're absolutely right. Now it makes much more sense. Yeah. I'm going to admit that I don't have any more questions for you, but I feel like every time I ask a little something, you have a really remarkable story. So I'm sort of scrambling in my head to figure Well, maybe I should ask you. So... What haven't I asked that I should have asked you?

Judith Auth [01:04:15] Well, you've pretty much covered my life experiences.

Cathy Gudis [01:04:20] Well, let me ask you a different question now. In terms of Nosotros and Lear Larkins, and it is plural, right? There's an S at the end? Do you still have those papers and records?

Judith Auth [01:04:35] I have some.

Cathy Gudis [01:04:36] And is that something that might go to the library or is it not of that sort of a record you would want to?

Judith Auth [01:04:44] I don't know.

Cathy Gudis [01:04:45] Yeah, yeah.

Judith Auth [01:04:47] It's a box. It's got the minutes of meetings, some correspondence. It's the contracts we had with the city for the summer youth employment. It's Good night.

Cathy Gudis [01:05:03] Photos? Any photos?

Judith Auth [01:05:06] Bill Medina has the photo.

Cathy Gudis [01:05:07] Oh, okay. So he has more he hasn't shared. I have a he shared a couple with me. Yeah. Yeah, I'll ask him. Yeah that's amazing. Yeah Well, I am I can't thank you enough and I know I'm gonna have more questions. I hope you won't mind if I call you gems, gems, I must say so thank you so much and I forgot to ask you right at the start Can you say your full name? And I don't know if you have a married name or a maiden name. So can you offer whatever you have? All of them in other words?

Judith Auth [01:05:45] My given name is Judith Marie Casenave, C-A-S-E-N-A V-E, and it came from the South of France with my grandfather. I married Philip Auth, A-U-T-H, and I use his name as my business name, Judith Auth.

Cathy Gudis [01:06:12] Perfect. Thank you so much. I really appreciate it.