

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-2506

June 16, 2025

Dr. Ray Liu
Chair the Library Board of Trustees
The Boston Public Library
700 Boylston St.
Boston, MA 02116

Dear Chair Liu,

I am writing to express my support for the renaming of the Roxbury Branch of the Boston Library in honor of Sarah-Ann Shaw.

Sarah-Ann Shaw was a lifelong resident of Roxbury, a pioneering journalist and activist, and the first black woman television reporter in the City of Boston. She made appearances on shows like *Say Brother*, and after numerous appearances on the show, was hired by WBZ-TV as Boston's first female African American reporter in 1969. Shaw strived to combat stereotypes by featuring special reports that emphasized contributions made by diverse communities across the Commonwealth.

Shaw cared about our community and was deeply involved in the civil rights movement. Her work extended far beyond journalism, as she actively supported various social and educational causes, including the Freedom House and the National Association of Black Journalists (NABJ). During her tenure at WBZ-TV, Shaw became a prominent figure, especially for her coverage of Boston's school desegregation.

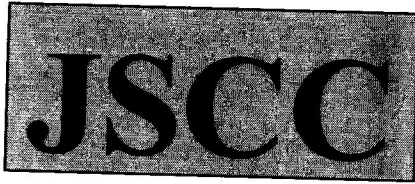
Renaming the Roxbury Branch of the Boston Library to the Shaw Roxbury Branch Library at Nubian Square would be inspiring to every member of our community. Being able to see her name would be a reminder of the tremendous leader that she was, and it would be an amazing symbol of her legacy.

I advocate on behalf of the community that understands what Sarah-Ann Shaw meant to us and ask that you support this effort. Thank you for your time and your consideration.

Sincerely,



Ayanna Pressley
Member of Congress



J ohn S helburne C ommunity C ouncil

2730 Washington St. Roxbury, Mass 02119

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C. Vincent Haynes
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6/16/2025

To: BPL-Chairperson,

We the Shelburne Council members are writing in support of changing the name of the Roxbury Library Branch to the Shaw Roxbury Branch.

Most of our members grew up with Ms. Shaw and knew her both personally and professionally throughout there years, what a great honor this is.

Yours in Community

*Alfreda Harris
Chairperson*

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **ALMA WRIGHT** <wrightalma44@comcast.net>

Date: Tue, Jun 17, 2025 at 8:23 AM

Subject: Roxbury Library

To: Dion.irish@boston.gov <Dion.irish@boston.gov>

I am emailing you to let you know that I support the Roxbury Library having Sarah Ann Shaw name on the building. She was very active volunteering at the library. She also visiting schools in the area encouraging students to apply for Library Cards. As a teacher in the BPS for 56 years, I have observed Ms. Shaw dedications and support at the Roxbury Library.

Alma Wright

I'm sorry not sure how to do this. I'm in support of rename the Roxbury library after Miss Shaw

Curtis Alan Bell

6/16/2025

To: BTL-Board Chair

My name is Diane Galloway, and I'm a lifelong resident of Roxbury, Mass. I support the re-naming of the Roxbury Branch Library to the Shaw Roxbury Branch.

Thanking You in Advance

Diane Galloway

From: [Dion Irish](#)
To: [Pamela Carver](#)
Cc: [David Leonard](#); [José Massó](#)
Subject: Fwd: Renaming Roxbury Public Library
Date: Monday, June 16, 2025 4:12:49 PM

Good Afternoon Pamela,

Sharing the email in support of the Shaw Roxbury Branch Library. More emails will follow.

Thanks,

Dion

Dion Irish, Chief of Operations

City of Boston, Michelle Wu, Mayor
One City Hall Square, 5th Floor | Boston, MA 02201 | [617.635.4624](tel:617.635.4624)

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **AR Drayton** <alisa.drayton@gmail.com>
Date: Mon, Jun 16, 2025 at 2:12 PM
Subject: Renaming Roxbury Public Library
To: <dion.irish@boston.gov>
Cc: <operationscabinet@boston.gov>

Good afternoon Mr. Irish,

As a third generation native Roxbury and resident of Boston, I am writing to support renaming the name of the Roxbury Branch of the Boston Public Library, located in Dudley/Square to the Sarah-Ann Shaw Boston Public Library.

Ms. Shaw was a trailblazing Roxbury native and transformational leader who was an unapologetic steward of our city, patriot for her community of Roxbury, and champion for people of color and women. She generously and tirelessly dedicated her intellect, voice and other talents to uplift and enrich the City of Boston. Boston is a better city because of Sarah-Ann Shaw. Her legacy deserves to be celebrated by renaming the Roxbury Branch of the Boston Public Library the Sarah-Ann Shaw Boston Public Library.

Sincerely,
Alisa R. Drayton
173 Ruthven St.
Boston, MA 02121

Sent from ARD's iPhone

From: **Evelyn Thorpe**

Date: Tue, Jun 17, 2025 at 10:16 AM

Subject: BPL chairperson

To: <Dion.irish@boston.gov>

My name is Evelyn and I'am a life long resident of Roxbury. I would like to support changing the name of the Roxbury Branch Library to the

SHAW ROXBURY BRANCH LIBRARY

Truly yours

Evelyn Thorpe

From: [Dion Irish](#)
To: [Pamela Carver](#)
Cc: [David Leonard](#); [José Massó](#)
Subject: Fwd: Renaming of Roxbury Branch Public Library
Date: Monday, June 16, 2025 4:15:03 PM

FYI.

Dion Irish, Chief of Operations

City of Boston, Michelle Wu, Mayor
One City Hall Square, 5th Floor | Boston, MA 02201 | [617.635.4624](tel:617.635.4624)

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Gail Forbes** <gailforbes10@gmail.com>
Date: Mon, Jun 16, 2025 at 4:02 PM
Subject: Renaming of Roxbury Branch Public Library
To: <dion.irish@boston.gov>

To Whom It May Concern.

I Gail Forbes Harris support the renaming of the Roxbury Branch Public Library to the Sarah Ann Shaw Public Library of Roxbury.

Thank you

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Haywood Fennell** <haywoodfennell3@gmail.com>

Date: Tue, Jun 17, 2025 at 5:04 AM

Subject: Letter in Support naming the Roxbury Branch of the Boston Public Library in Honor of the late Sarah Ann Shaw

To: Dion Irish <Dion.irish@boston.gov>, Brianna Millor <brianna.millor@boston.gov>

Greetings,

Blessings. I am a user of various branches in the Boston Public Library system. Over the years and up until now I have witnessed changes that have been made to various branches particularly when it comes to the Roxbury branch that represents so much in terms of how it was developed and how it became what it has become. The development and the creation for this library's internal development required leadership on every level for creating a library that meets its community's needs with spaces set aside for education and cultural events.

Sarah Ann Shaw, a community concerned leader was focused as a leader for changes made providing a role that was needed that better defined our culture and learning capabilities. Libraries are places of welcome. Effects of her commitment and leadership brought about an increase in membership and a broader inventory of books by non white authors. Her dedication has shown visitors that libraries are places of value to mental and spiritual growth in a community.

She was a leader of consensus as a member of the community and known for her services to the library. The use and increase of membership was impacted when she was alive creating other committees that took on the task that has made our library a place of welcome and a place for learning. I can vividly recall seeing her at the library speaking to folks sometimes about how proud that they were as changes were made making our library what it has become, a place worthy to honor the dedication and commitment of Sarah Ann Shaw.

Thank you.

--

Haywood Fennell Sr.

June 17, 2021

Ray Liu, Chair
Board of Trustees
Boston Public Library

Dear Chair Liu:

I am writing in support of naming the Roxbury Branch Library after Sarah Ann Shaw, a heroic Black woman who opened doors in journalism and TV news reporting in Boston during a time when there were no Black news reporters in our local media. Sarah Ann Shaw lived in Roxbury and was deeply committed to her community, where she actively advocated for civil rights and education. As a retired educator and a Boston resident, I can attest to her passion for not only reporting factual news but also highlighting the positive events occurring in the community as much as possible. She would often visit and volunteer to speak with students at my school and at the various elementary schools near her home. Sarah encouraged our students to focus on their studies and grades and aspire them to pursue higher education. Sarah Ann Shaw was an active member of the Roxbury community, often attending community meetings as a mother and concerned neighbor.

She was also encouraging and supportive of educators like me when I first started and did what she could to help during the difficult years of busing and afterwards. Shara Ann Shaw was there, encouraging and engaged in the difficult work of community building. Sarah Ann lived right down the street from Warren Street, not far from the Roxbury Library Branch and the Roxbury Boys and Girls Club. Sarah Ann always made herself available and never shied away from taking a stand when it came to doing what was right. I developed the utmost respect for her as both a news reporter and a community activist for education and civil rights.

Therefore, I ask for your consideration in naming the Roxbury Branch of the Boston Public Library after Sarah Ann Shaw, a pioneer who opened doors of opportunity for Black and minority individuals in the local broadcasting industry, as well as a community activist in education and civil rights.

Sincerely,

Dr. Albert D Holland
Retired Educator

CC Mayor Wu
Board of Trustees
Dion Irish

Jose Lopez
2 Wakullah Street
Roxbury, MA 02119
Sent via email to pcarver@bpl.org

June 17, 2025

Trustees of the Public Library
City of Boston
1 City Hall Square
Boston, MA 02201-2013

Dear Chair Ray Liu, Vice Chair Evelyn Arana-Ortiz, and Members of the Board of Trustees,

I am writing on behalf of myself and my family, Kathy, Amaru and Joaquin to express our enthusiastic and wholehearted support for naming the Roxbury branch of the Boston Public Library in honor of Sarah-Ann Shaw.

Ms. Shaw was a Roxbury icon and a Boston treasure. As a pioneering journalist, lifelong community advocate, and steadfast champion of civil rights, she represents the very best of our city. Her life and legacy are inseparable from the fabric of Roxbury—woven through decades of public service, activism, mentorship, and love for our neighborhoods and our children.

While I only learned of Sarah-Ann after moving to Boston in 2005, a mentee of Amanda V. Houston made sure to tell me that I needed to meet Sarah-Ann—and others like her—for a proper orientation to Boston, vis-à-vis Roxbury. That orientation proved pivotal to my understanding of the place I had found myself in—a place I would come to choose as home, where I would plant roots, purchase a house, and raise my family.

Sarah-Ann Shaw stood shoulder to shoulder with other legendary Roxbury matriarchs such as Melnea Cass and Elma Lewis—women whose moral authority and civic vision reshaped Boston and elevated the voices of those too often left unheard. Like them, Ms. Shaw believed deeply in the power of education, culture, and literacy to transform lives and communities. Her work—both in front of the camera and behind the scenes—embodied that belief, as she continually invested in the next generation with wisdom, grace, and determination.

As a parent raising children in Roxbury, I am especially moved by the symbolism of this naming. Our family regularly patrons the Roxbury branch of the BPL. To be able to bring my children to a library that bears the name of Sarah-Ann Shaw—someone I had the personal honor of knowing—is a source of joy and pride. It is a reminder to my children that leadership, integrity, and service begin right here in their own community.

Libraries are sanctuaries of learning, imagination, and empowerment. Naming this branch after Sarah-Ann Shaw will be a powerful affirmation of the values she stood for and the dreams she helped cultivate across generations of Roxbury residents.

We earnestly and respectfully urge the Board to approve this naming and honor a woman who honored us all with her presence, voice, and example.


Con el más profundo respeto y aprecio,




José López



Amaru López (5 years old)



Katherine López



Joaquin López (2.5 years old)

C.C. Honorable Mayor Michelle Wu
Dion Irish, Chief of Operations
José Massó, Chief of Human Services
David Leonard, President

WLANA



Handwritten text, possibly a signature or name, in blue ink.

Dr. Ray Liu

Chair, Boston Public Library Board of Directors

700 Boylston St,

Boston, MA 02116

Dear Dr. Liu,

On behalf of the Shaw family, I would like to thank you and your Boston Public Library (BPL) Board colleagues for considering a name change to the Roxbury Branch Library that would honor my mother, Sarah-Ann Shaw. This is a complicated process at a time when even positive changes will become politicized; and I appreciate the effort of the BPL Trustees and the Mayor's office. However, she would not have wanted this to be a divisive course for Roxbury.

A little bit about my Mom. A Boston native she was born in 1933, into a city that often-limited full participation for Black people. With a lot of support, hard work, and divine intervention, she was able to become successful. She was a tireless advocate for Roxbury/ South Dorchester, and she was dedicated to promoting equity for all people. That fierce dedication was particularly used to advance people of color and others who were marginalized. Mom viewed education and literacy as critical factors for success in life. Much of her achievement she credited to the Higginson School, Girl's Latin School, and to parents who made books and culture available at all times. This evolved into her support for the Roxbury Branch Library where she played many key roles.

Even before her retirement she spent weekend hours at the branch attending meetings, checking out dozens of books at a time, or enjoying programs. After retirement, she had the bandwidth to participate on committees such as the Dudley Master Plan and the Friends of the Roxbury Branch Library which resulted in a beautiful building and a renewed mission. As you know, while healthy, she was also eager to be a contributing member of the Community Engagement Subcommittee of the Roxbury Fellowes Fund. The public role was obvious, but I have also found many fundraising tickets, leaflets, proposals, and other tokens of her internal work for the Roxbury branch. She would roll up her sleeves for scholarship drives, bake sales, and educational programs for children. These tokens speak to her devotion to the Friends of the library, and the branch in tangible, less public ways. Her efforts were selfless contributions for the public good and the uplift of the next generation.

This possibility would be a true joy to a woman who loved the library and the Roxbury community. Hopefully, this legacy will inspire younger Bostonians to learn more about her and become inspired. Thank you once again.

Sincerely,



Klare Shaw

36 Wenonah St.

Dorchester, MA 02121

Good morning BPL Chairperson, please consider my support of changing the name of Roxbury Branch library, to the "**Shaw Roxbury Branch Library**"
Thank you in advance for your consideration in this matter. Sara Ann was an advocate in the Roxbury community for change..

Marsha Colbert, Mattapan

Jeri Robinson
4 Lingard St
Dorchester MA 02125
jerirob49@me.com

June 16, 2025

Dear Mayor Wu and Dr. Ray Liu,

I am writing to you today to express my enthusiastic support to rename the Roxbury/ Dudley/ Nubian Sq. Branch of the Boston Public Library in honor of Roxbury native, Sarah Ann Shaw. Throughout her life she served her community in many capacities as an activist, leading objects on voter registration and education, housing rights and more. During her career as WBZ's first black female reporter, she worked to focus on positive, uplifting stories to combat the often racially charged negative stories about Boston's black community.

Most importantly, Sarah Ann loved learning and was an avid reader. She could often be seen making her way down Warren St with an armload or bag of books to be returned to her beloved library branch at Dudley. She encouraged everyone she knew to get a library card and to borrow books, especially from Dudley. In addition for many years, she served as a leader and member of the Friends of the Dudley Library. Through this group, many innovative programs and projects were brought to this community to broaden the experiences of her community's residents.

I truly believe it is fitting to rename this branch in honor of Sarah Ann Shaw and enable her contributions and commitment to making Roxbury a better place for all

Sincerely,
Jeri Robinson

From: [Dion Irish](#)
To: [Pamela Carver](#)
Cc: [David Leonard](#); [José Massó](#)
Subject: Fwd: Renaming of the Roxbury branch library
Date: Monday, June 16, 2025 4:17:01 PM

FYI.

Dion Irish, Chief of Operations

City of Boston, Michelle Wu, Mayor
One City Hall Square, 5th Floor | Boston, MA 02201 | [617.635.4624](tel:617.635.4624)

----- Forwarded message -----

From: cl.wcope@verizon.net <cl.wcope@verizon.net>
Date: Mon, Jun 16, 2025 at 1:42 PM
Subject: Renaming of the Roxbury branch library
To: <dion.irish@boston.gov>

Dear BPL-Chairperson,

It is with great honor that I write to propose renaming the Roxbury branch library to the Shaw Roxbury Library. I have had the privilege of knowing Ms. Shaw for the past sixty years. She was an unwavering pillar of the Roxbury and Boston communities. Her remarkable ability to report the news and her unwavering dedication to giving back to her community are truly commendable and deserve this honor.

**Sincerely,
Cherie Webb-Cope**

[Sent from the all new AOL app for iOS](#)