

Knight Memorial Library offers:

- **Books for all ages and interests**
- **Computers with high-speed Internet and individualized computer instruction**
- **WiFi access**
- **Spanish language materials**
- **GED classes in Spanish**
- **ESL for adults**
- **Programs and classes for all ages**
- **DVD movies, audio books, eBooks, streaming video and Kindles loaded with books**
- **Information to help you throughout your life**
- **Fax transmission service (outgoing)**
- **Se habla español / Spanish spoken**
- **Meeting room space**
- **Hot spots to check out**
- **Friends of KML Book Sales**
- **Homework help**
- **Notary service**



Knight Memorial Library

PROVIDENCE COMMUNITY LIBRARY

275 Elmwood Ave • Providence, Rhode Island 02907

401-467-2625



Monday, Wednesday 12:00–8:00 pm*

Tuesday, Thursday 9:30 am–6:00 pm

Friday & Saturday 12:00–6:00 pm

*Because of the lack of air-conditioning, Wednesday hours during the summer are 9:30 am–6 pm.

“The death of democracy is not likely to be an assassination from ambush. It will be a slow extinction from apathy, indifference, and undernourishment.”

—Robert Maynard Hutchins (1899–1977), from *The Great Conversation: The Substance of a Liberal Education*, 1952

History

Because children in the Elmwood neighborhood of Providence were not reading at the expected level, Emma Shaw (wife of a local contractor) spearheaded the efforts of a group of women to establish a library for the Elmwood neighborhood. They knocked on doors throughout the area, soliciting enough small donations from a large number of supportive community members to open the Elmwood Library in 1915 at the Greenwich Street Fire Station for the use and education of patrons of all ages.

The library building has a surprising connection to underwear. The B.B. and R. Knight and Company, founded in 1851 in Rhode Island by two brothers, opened its first mill and began producing quality cotton cloth and textiles, including the famed “Fruit of the Loom” brand. Robert Knight married Josephine Louisa Webster. He and his family lived on Elmwood Avenue and in the surrounding Elmwood neighborhood. Robert and Josephine’s children financed the construction of a new home for the Elmwood Library on property that was part of Robert Knight’s estate, and this became Knight Memorial Library.

Knight Memorial Library, designed by noted library architect Edward Tilton, opened in 1924 to house the services of the Elmwood Public Library Association while the building was maintained by the Knight family.

“Noted as both an architect and classical scholar, Edward Tilton specialized in the design of library buildings and other public and educational buildings. At the time of his death, he was regarded as one of the foremost library architects in the country. He was a classicist, inspired in his early work by the Italian Renaissance and in his later work by ancient Greece and Rome, and synthesizing classical detail and modern needs.

Tilton studied architecture under a private tutor and began working as a draftsman in the office of McKim, Mead and White at the age of twenty. From 1887 to 1890 Tilton studied at the École des Beaux-Arts in Paris along with his friend and future architectural partner, William A. Boring. After traveling in Europe, Boring and Tilton returned to New York in 1890 to the office of McKim, Mead and White. At the time, the firm was working on the plans for the Boston Public Library, which was to become a landmark in the

history of American library design. In the early 20th century Tilton’s general expertise in the design of classically-detailed public buildings increasingly developed into a more specific interest in library design. During his career, Tilton is credited with more than one hundred libraries in the United States and Canada.”

—From *Edward Lippincott Tilton: A Monograph on His Architectural Practice*, researched and written by Lisa B. Mausolf with Elizabeth Durfee Hengen for The Currier Museum of Art, 2007.

Through the first half of the 20th century, the Elmwood Library Association operated the library service. Management of the library was transferred to the Providence Public Library in 1962, and it became a full branch of PPL in 1994. An agreement was reached in December 2011, for the transfer of the building to the City of Providence. Library service at Knight Memorial Library has been provided by the Providence Community Library since July 1, 2009.

The library contains the following special or in-depth collections:

- James N. Arnold collection of genealogical materials, especially the cemetery records that he documented.
- The Rhode Island Collection contains older historical materials about the state, some of which are fairly rare.
- Early 20th century fiction.

