

Brooklyn Libraries Facing Rudy's Budget Ax

By Craig McGuire

Outraged officials from the Brooklyn Public Library system and Borough President Howard Golden are denouncing Mayor Rudolph Giuliani's proposed reduction in funding to Brooklyn libraries.

While budget cuts will hit all three of the library systems in New York City, Brooklyn will absorb the largest hit.

Cutbacks threaten to eliminate or prevent expansion to six-day-a-week service at many of the 60 branch libraries in the borough.

"It is ironic that the area with the greatest need will be receiving the least assistance," said Golden at a March public hearing at Borough Hall.

Giuliani spokesman Forrest Taylor said the Brooklyn Public Library and the New York Public Library servicing Manhattan, the Bronx, and Staten Island would receive the bulk of the cuts due to mismanagement.

"Both the Brooklyn and New York public libraries were asked to operate as efficiently as the Queens system," said Taylor. "And because they haven't operated as efficiently as the Queens system, they will not re-

ceive all of the funds they have requested."

Brooklyn Public Libraries spokesman Donald Kaplan blasted Taylor's reasoning, calling it "completely flawed."

Said Kaplan, "It is difficult to create an efficiency standard that can measure the quality of library service. Libraries are not retail outlets. You do not measure the impact of library service by looking at circulation statistics."

He added, "How do you rate the efficiency of opening the world of knowledge to a child?"

Kaplan noted that when library service was extended to five days a week citywide, the Brooklyn Public Library added seven-hour days to its branches, while the other two systems added five-hour days. "So we were able to provide two additional hours of library service per day for the same amount of money," said the spokesman.

Brooklyn Public Library Director Larry Brandwein testified at a joint hearing of the New York City Borough Presidents held at City Hall.

Brandwein presented a statement of need that had been sent to Giuliani in

January, which was drafted and signed by the directors of all three systems.

According to Brandwein, the New York Public Library System would receive \$1,467,000 less than it needed, the Brooklyn Public Library \$2,017,000 less than it needed, and the Queens Borough Library received \$320,000 less than it needed.

"These differences alone should leap of the page for any fair-minded reader," commented Brandwein.

"Without substantial changes in Mayor Giuliani's proposed funding plan, the Bklyn Public Library cannot and will not be able to sustain the six-day service program for all of Bklyn's communities," said Bklyn Library Director, Larry Brandwein.

Brandwein explained that the original formula gave the New York Public Library 39 percent of allocated funds, 35 percent for the Brooklyn system, and 26 percent for the Queens system.

"After the budget battle of two years ago, I hoped

that this issue was behind us," said Brandwein.

"It is unfortunate that we have to be subjected to unfair formulas because there are people out there fighting for dollars they should not be," testified Golden.

"The borough with the most people and the greatest need should get the most dollars," the borough president added.

"Everybody has a wish list," said Taylor, "but because the mayor has to

"Without substantial changes in Mayor Giuliani's proposed funding plan, the Brooklyn Public Library cannot and will not be able to sustain the six-day service program for all of Brooklyn's communities," said Brandwein.

Other improvements that Brandwein hoped to begin implementing will also be frozen.

Last year, each library system requested additional funding for its Literacy Program. This year, the mayor's Office of Management and Budget proposed to give New York Library a \$6,047 increase, Queens, a \$14,000 increase, yet no increases are allocated for Brooklyn.

"This is despite the fact that the Brooklyn Public Library's literacy program was selected as one of 12

nationwide to be included in a study on the use of technology in literacy programs," said Brandwein.

Additionally, the Brooklyn libraries received a \$200,500 increase to its overall budget, while Queens received \$301,000, and the New York system received \$293,000.

Also, both the Brooklyn and Queens systems requested OMB to allocate capital funding for replacement of their book theft prevention system. Yet the mayor proposed \$400,000 for Queens and nothing for Brooklyn.

Brandwein noted that the Brooklyn Public Library receives 54 percent of its capital funding through the borough president's office, 30 percent from the City Council, and only 16 percent from OMB.

Fitness on the Mind

The Supreme Court and The Paerdegat Athletic Club will have a "Fitness Awareness Day." The events scheduled to take place will include: blood donations sponsored by The NY Blood Service; blood pressure testing; blood-sugar level testing; cholesterol testing; infor-

mation on first aid; Heimlich demonstrations; spinal screening; posture analysis; chiropractic information; oral hygiene information; teeth-bleaching tips.

It will be held on March 11, from 9 a.m. until 5 p.m. It is location is the Supreme Court Building on 360 Adams Street on the first floor.