

BOARD OF LIBRARY TRUSTEES
SEPTEMBER 26, 2018
Consideration for
Rebecca Coder
West End Library Wall of Honor

District of Columbia Public Library Executive Director Richard Reyes-Gavilan recommends Rebecca Coder for consideration onto the Wall of Honor at the West End Library.

Recommendation supported by the following:

- Served as the Chair of Advisory Neighborhood Commission 2A and was a steadfast supporter of the West End Library project.
- Worked diligently to make the new West End Library a reality since it was first imagined in 2009 and serving as the Single Member District Commissioner of ANC 2A02 since 2010.
- Widely recognized for her efforts in shepherding the West End Library and Police Station through the complex approval process.
- Was instrumental in having a small park near the West End birthplace of jazz legend Duke Ellington named officially—by the District of Columbia and the U.S. Congress—as Duke Ellington Park.
- Became a founding board member of another non-profit, local organization: The Foggy Bottom/West End Village, which continues to assist its members to age in place.
- Dedicated countless hours on the mundane, and often overlooked items such as: public-space hearings, zoning variances, liquor-license applications and challenges.
- Served as a community activist and since 2007 until her passing on May 1, 2018, at the age of 49.

As Mayor Muriel Bowser has said of Rebecca, **“a generous, caring and thoughtful woman who was always willing to help out in the community in any way possible.”**

The Library recommends the Board of Library Trustees approve the selection of Rebecca Coder onto the Wall of Honor at the West End Library.



Foggy Bottom West End Village
Extend a Hand, Stay Connected, Live Well at Home



July 10, 2018

Richard Reyes-Gavilan, Executive Director
District of Columbia Public Library
1990 K St. NW
Washington DC 20006

Dear Rich:

We are writing to request that the name of Rebecca Coder be considered as the second honoree for the Wall of Honor at the West End Library.

Rebecca Coder died on May 1, 2018, at the age of 49. During her final decade of life—a time of great change in the West End neighborhood—she was an energetic community leader and public servant.

A resident of the District of Columbia from childhood, she grew up in the Chevy Chase neighborhood of the District, and attended Woodrow Wilson High School, from which she was graduated in 1987.

She received a Bachelor of Science degree from the University of Wisconsin-Madison in 1990 and returned to the District to begin a career in banking, initially at the American Security Bank. She joined the National Cooperative Bank in 1996 and was a senior vice president there at the time of her death.

In 2002 she married Christopher Haspel, and the couple purchased a condominium in the West End. In 2003, she began writing for the *West End Guide*, a local publication, mostly about art exhibits and nearby galleries.

Her first big neighborhood project, beginning in 2007, was the improvement of Francis Field, a neglected public recreation space. As a founder and the first president of the non-profit Friends of Francis Field, she shepherded a landscape architecture plan through the zoning and approval process. That began the transformation of a neighborhood nuisance into a community asset. She remained active in that group until her death and played a major role in the planting 43 trees in May 2017.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE WEST END LIBRARY FRIENDS

Susan Haight, President

Robert Haas, Vice President * Gregory Snyder, Treasurer * Vacant, Secretary * John Gizzi, Outreach Chair

Her interest in the neighborhood and improving the field led to a suggestion by her neighbors that she run for election to the non-paid, non-partisan Advisory Neighborhood Commission (ANC) so that the West End might be better represented. She did so in 2008, defeating an incumbent, winning 82 percent of the votes cast. She was re-elected in 2010, 2012, 2014, and 2016, and was serving in her tenth year at the time of her death.

The West End Library was in her single-member district. Its redevelopment became one of the projects that she steadfastly supported from the time of its initial suggestion in 2009.

Her ANC colleagues elected her chairperson in January 2010. During that crucial time of regulatory hearings for the library redevelopment, she testified in several proceedings, including the District Council.

As chair of the ANC, she introduced the resolution in favor of the library plan proposed by a local development team. That passed unanimously and became the crucial grass-roots foundation for community support of the West End Library project—support that stood up during a long and complicated process of regulation and legal challenges by interest groups located outside the neighborhood and outside the District.

The redevelopment of the West End Fire station was another of the projects she championed.

In 2009, she was also instrumental in having a small park near the West End birthplace of jazz legend Duke Ellington named officially—by the District of Columbia and the U.S. Congress—as Duke Ellington Park.

In 2013, at the age of 44, she became a founding board member of another non-profit, local organization: The Foggy Bottom/West End Village, which continues to assist its members to age in place.

Rebecca Coder was a leader who seemed to personify the neighborhood that the West End was becoming in the last decade: smart, young, interesting, and upbeat.

She was a superb example of a good neighbor. In addition to the large and visible projects she supported and advocated, she spent countless hours in her ANC role, attending mundane hearings before District agencies that were little noticed by the general public but meant the world to some unsung constituent or another.

Despite her 13-year battle with ovarian cancer, Rebecca always found time to help others.

One of her ANC colleagues noted after her death: “Rebecca was the most poised person I’ve known ... she never got flustered and she was such a generous, fun, soul.”

Her intelligence, her graceful style, and her generosity with her time and resources, were noted by many.

Mayor Muriel Bowser described her as “a generous, caring and thoughtful woman who was always willing to help out in the community in any way possible.”



Foggy Bottom West End Village
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Recognition of Rebecca Coder's service on the Wall of Honor in the West End Library would be an appropriate and lasting honor.

Thank you in advance,

Susan B. Haight
President
West End Library Friends

Marina Streznewski
President
Foggy Bottom Association

William Kennedy Smith, MD
Chairperson
ANC 2A04

Sara Maddux
President
West End Citizens Association

Gary Griffith
President
Friends of Francis Field

Jane Selby
President
Foggy Bottom West End Village

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