

MIRIAM MATTHEWS BRANCH

LOS ANGELES PUBLIC LIBRARY

Miriam Matthews (1905 – 2003) was Los Angeles Public Library's first African American Librarian and an activist in information access. Matthews received a BA and certificate in librarianship in UC Berkeley in 1927. Matthews thrived in spite of barriers at LAPL; she built reference resources used by librarians throughout the nation, created a landmark archival collection of early Los Angeles African American history and promoted to become a regional library supervisor of 12 South Los Angeles library branches. Matthews is also known for her support of African American artists and the co-founding of the Associated Artists Gallery. After her retirement from LAPL, Matthews worked on California heritage preservation projects that resulted in the Los Pobladores monument located in El Pueblo de Los Angeles State Historic Park Plaza. Los Angeles was founded in 1781 by a group of 11 families of Mexicans of African, white and indigenous backgrounds known as "Los Pobladores". In 2004, in recognition of her trailblazing work, the Hyde Park Branch Library was renamed in her honor.

