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## Memories of Dorothy Gray

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*Memories, updated November 6*

**Mary Jane West:** I have known Dorothy for over 10 years, since the old RTD days. She has always exuded a gentle spirit, which I greatly admired. She was a true professional and she loved her job. When I brought my daughter, Jennifer, to work one day, Dorothy was one person I wanted her to meet. She had a way of making everyone feel special. She loved her son and she loved children. I won't be able to think of the Library without thinking of Dorothy. I believe naming the Library after Dorothy is a fitting tribute to a woman who dedicated her energies to making MTA's library what it is today.

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**Naomi Nightingale:** Dorothy was a very classy lady. Her quiet and professional demeanor belied the exciting and truly interesting life she led. I knew her to be a very humble person who did not volunteer much about herself, but if you engaged her in conversation, you walked away knowing you had received some insightful lessons on life. She was a true professional. She made a name for the MTA Library and anyone who walked through those doors knew instantly they were in a well-organized, professionally operated, and state-of-the-art transportation library. I will miss the education she gave us through the many timely displays and exhibits she constructed on the Plaza and 3rd Floors. I won't forget the contributions she made and the influence she had sometimes in the most subtle kind of way. Giving the Library her name would be a fitting tribute.

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**Janene Henderson:** I remember going into the library at lunch on several occasions. Dorothy was very helpful with assisting me when needed. She also gave me Words of Wisdom regarding school, and obtaining my Master's Degree. She will definitely be missed.

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**Diego Cardoso:** Dorothy was always very cordial and helpful in guiding my team and me when we needed assistance in our research. I will never forget the great visual and oral presentation she put together for the Technology and Innovation Symposium of December 7, 2000. Two days before the event I sat down with Dorothy and went over the presentation. As I watched the slides and listened to her narration of the history of the MTA and public transportation in Los Angeles, I knew we had a winner for the opening of the symposium. On the day of the event, she presented a series of historical photos depicting the gradual and dramatic transformation of public transit and transportation infrastructure in Los Angeles. Dorothy's presentation was very simple and very clear; using very low-tech presentation tools and a storytelling narrative she skillfully captured the attention of a very high tech audience and some high profile presenters, including science fiction writer Ray Bradbury. Dorothy made a difference in my life here in the MTA.

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**Mary Lee:** What I most appreciated about Dorothy was her energy, spirit, strength, positive attitude and fervor for life. We had many talks and shared greatly. We hailed from the same Mississippi roots which created a special bonding between us. I am thankful to have seen and spoke with her, on her last day here at the MTA. Even against all odds,

in a wheelchair and on oxygen, she still managed to smile and say her favorite line "hello love". Thanks Dorothy for being such a light for so many within the MTA community.

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**Mace Bethel:** I remember on Monday, November 6, 1989, RTD was celebrating its 25th anniversary. At the time, I was the Division Transportation Manager at Division 1 and John Adams was the Maintenance Manager. We were doing some research on the history of Division 1 for the 25th anniversary. So, I went to Dorothy to see if there was anything in the Library on Division 1. What I discovered was that Dorothy had the historical accounts for all of the Divisions.

I discovered that Division 1 was opened on November 7, 1899 and it was 90 years old. As a result, we celebrated the 25th anniversary of RTD on Monday and the 90th anniversary of Division 1 on Tuesday, November 7, 1989. Even the General Manager Alan Pegg attended the event. Over the years Dorothy has always been a source of information and inspiration.

I now manage Division 9 and with Dorothy's help last year, I discovered the history of Division 9 and that the division will be 50 years old on February 7, 2002. I have Dorothy to thank. She will be sorely missed.

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**Jim de la Loza** (remarks delivered at the October Board meeting): In the 13 years she worked for the MTA, she created a nationally renowned research library that's recognized by both the academic and transportation communities. Dorothy was well known in library circles for creating the library. She collected enough MTA and predecessor agencies memorabilia and artifacts to start a museum adjacent to the library. It was during this project that she became ill. Dorothy was a high-energy individual who was very well liked by people who worked with her. She was very helpful to both MTA Planning and Operations in getting materials on broad issues. She maintained a network of contacts across the country in the transportation field.... She was instrumental in providing information and documentation to support the MTA's position on legislation. On a personal level, Dorothy was an outgoing individual with friends all over the agency. She provided displays on cultural topics and issues for employees and the public, alike. Dorothy will be missed by the MTA family.

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**Mary Reyna:** I met Dorothy in the old RTD days. I was always taken with her sincere enthusiasm for learning new things and the way her eyes used to sparkle when discussing strategies for research. She also loved New York. What fun when she would tell me about spotting Jackie O on the streets of Manhattan or about work life at the New York Metropolitan Library. I always saw Dorothy as a fixture of the MTA, so much that I think I took her for granted. I just always expected her to be here because we relied on her in so many ways. I miss her a lot.

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**Brent Zerger:** Among these shared and truly heartwarming reflections of Dorothy Peyton Gray, I also wanted to add what a wonderful ambassador she was for the MTA. I first met Dorothy while seeking assistance with a community theater project many years before I became employed in the Metro Art Department. True to the testaments written here, her professionalism, intelligence, wit, and generosity left a lasting impression with me. I'm sure this was also the case for untold

numbers of historians, students, writers, and transportation enthusiasts who--from places far beyond Los Angeles County--came to know the character and quality of the MTA first through Dorothy Peyton Gray. Of course the library should be named in her honor. In any case, though, it's evident how strongly her spirit will live on.

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**Patrick Horton:** I was shocked and saddened to hear about Ms. Gray's passing. I remember meeting her when my research duties took me to the MTA library. She had a wonderful professional bearing, willingness to lend assistance and intimate knowledge of issues and materials relating to transportation. My job was made much easier and my work was more valuable because of her assistance and insights. I also remember her imparting wisdom on life and my future especially when she lent words of comfort when my father passed away after a long fight with cancer. She was my friend and colleague and she will be missed.

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**Susan Franklin:** I do hope our Board names our Library in honor of this nice, intelligent and always helpful women. She will be missed.

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**Thomas Traylor:** Being here at the MTA for just a short while, I did not get to know Dorothy personally. But, she impressed me from the very beginning as being a very classy lady. I would see her periodically setting up themed displays on the Plaza and third floor, beckoning me to visit the impressive library that resides here on the 15th floor. I am glad that this library will be named in her honor. She will be sorely missed. P.S. I loved her hats.

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**Elizabeth Preston:** Dorothy Gray was a soft spoken, warm, and open-minded person. She was always willing and able to assist anyone who needed help in a particular topic or subject matter in her domain and did not have any problem helping employees and her staff. I met Dorothy in 1988, and she always had that ray of sunshine and a nice smile on her face. Dorothy enjoyed what she was doing and was very good at it, and through her professionalism she dedicated her experience and knowledge in making our MTA Library what it is today. I am deeply touched by the loss of a friend and co-worker. Her life here has expired, but where she is going life is a new beginning. I feel that the MTA Library should be renamed in her honor.

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**Lynda Bybee:** I hope the MTA Board might consider a resolution to dedicate our library in Dorothy Gray's name. She was a terrific spirit in our organization and was always gracious, willing and highly competent in the services she provided. She also had a wonderful sense of humor, earthy and sharp. She was a credit to the virtue of knowledge in its broadest interpretation and application.

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**Jino Canizares:** I first met Dorothy when she was hired in 1988. I was hired a year earlier, but I already was a frequent visitor at the library when they had a temporary librarian. My office was literally just around the corner from the library in the old 425 building. I've seen how the library has evolved over the years. The library now is a far cry from when Dorothy first started. Although the SCRTD/MTA library's emphasis is regional transportation, it is just as competitive as the most modern local city library in terms of electronic card catalogs and internet access and audio/visual aids. I've seen Dorothy solicit from retired and active employees personal collections, photographs and anything related to the ever-evolving mass transit in L.A. The collections are shared by placing them in public viewing. Dorothy always set up themed displays for important occasions and holidays, which made the library a place to

visit. Dorothy was such a warm person. She almost always had visitors drop by her office to talk. The library today is Dorothy Gray's vision of service and is a repository of historical transportation information.

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**Cheryl Brown:** Dorothy will be missed. She encouraged and welcomed me to study in the library during lunch while I was enrolled in law school. She told me positive stories regarding how her sister met the challenge and completed law school. I am grateful to have known her and her memories will always serve as a source of inspiration.

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**John Stesney:** Heaven's going to have one heck of a transit library now. Even though the MTA can't compete with Heaven as an employer (I understand their benefits are excellent), from a purely selfish standpoint I wish we could have held on to Dorothy. I will miss her.

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**Donna Finn:** I agree with Sheila and Marta about memorializing Dorothy by renaming the MTA library the "Dorothy Gray Memorial Transportation Library". She was one of the guiding lights in this agency, and brought so much creativity and enthusiasm to everything she touched. The Library was her legacy to us and to the public we serve. Without Dorothy, we wouldn't have it today. She was one of a kind and will be sorely missed.

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**Gary Spivack:** Dorothy Gray was the force behind bringing the MTA library into the 21st century. I hired Dorothy when we first moved into the new library at the 425 building. She was a dedicated and loyal employee and sought to advance the MTA.

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**Laurie Garris:** When I heard that Dorothy Gray had died, I realized the great impact of having lost this friend and I felt deeply saddened. I tried to understand why her death, and her life, affected me so deeply. Maybe it was because Dorothy was a tremendous fighter, and I wondered why, with all the strength she exuded, she couldn't win this battle against her own disease. Perhaps it was simply because she was unique in this huge and oftentimes anonymous family we know as the MTA, and she influenced me in ways that I hadn't realized before now. She had intelligence, wit, charm, and style; that along with her tenaciousness, beauty, spirit, depth, and empathy were all wrapped up in a petite, compact and quite formidable package. Her strong beliefs in everything from spiritual enlightenment to trains kept the MTA library alive, and her spirit will always be in that place. Dorothy was a person who listened with her heart: she was a truly caring person whose comments were never without strong conviction. She was an undeniable presence whose presence will surely be missed by many.

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**Andre Villasenor:** She was awesome! I often went to her for research assistance, and she always made herself available to help me. She wore great hats to work. May she rest in peace.

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**Art Henry:** Dorothy Gray is a special spirit. I say "is" because I believe her spirit remains even though physically she has passed away. Dorothy was always ready to assist and guide when there were professional issues I needed to research. But more important than that, I valued the discussions we had about issues that were spiritual in nature. It is that connection that I truly miss.

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**Sheila Badji:** I, like most people, was very saddened to hear of the death of Dorothy Gray. She was such a wonderful person. I was wondering, since there will never be anyone else like her, and since the

library was her life, is there any chance of renaming it in her honor (i.e. The Dorothy Gray Memorial Library)? I really think something like that would pay the highest honor to her memory that could be made.

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**Joe Simpson:** I have been with the agency for over ten years, and I had the pleasure - or should I say honor - to work with Dorothy on a number of occasions. I can only say that in that time, she was one of those unforgettable personalities that make an imprint on you that leaps the professional boundaries of the office.

She was such a kind and giving spirit that each time I dealt with her, either as a customer doing research in the Library or on a project for her, such as her web content, a warmth and professionalism shone like the sun.

I am deeply saddened and would like to express my sympathies to her family in their time of loss. She will be sorely missed.

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**Jimmy Chen:** I was extremely saddened to learn about the passing of Dorothy Gray, at such a young age of 58. I knew Dorothy dating back to the old RTD days. For the past 10 years, I personally received a lot of useful help from Dorothy. Her professional dedication and tremendous contribution to MTA's library services will be deeply missed by all MTA staff. The loss to this agency is huge. I believe that MTA should hold a memorial service in honor of her and openly commend her. May she rest eternally in heaven!

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**Susan Phifer:** I agree with Marta's comment about memorializing Dorothy. She was a very special person, and brought so much energy and creativity to the MTA through her service here. She certainly will be missed.

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**Rick Hittinger:** I am extremely sad to hear this. I knew that Dorothy was ill, and stopped by the library on Thursday to leave a note for her and check on her. She and I first met during the '94 strike, when she came to Division 5 as a volunteer. She sat at the ERS desk and answered phones during the labor action. I was working with her on funding for the restoration project on the old Double Decker coach. What a wonderful person, and what a loss to our agency! I will miss her personally and professionally! So very, very sad.

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**Marta Maestas:** I would hope MTA as an agency would acknowledge this outstanding woman not only for her unparalleled professionalism, but also for all the enlightenment her dedicated work brought to MTA. Dorothy was always a ray of sunshine and the loveliest of ladies. The MTA Library should be renamed "The Dorothy Gray Memorial Transportation Library" in her honor.

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