



Library podcast

Eulalie and Carlo Scandiuzzi

[00:00:00] Carlo Scandiuzzi: You were under the impression, you know, we were talking earlier about the bibliothèque, you know, in Geneva.

[00:00:05] Eulalie M. Scandiuzzi: Yes.

[00:00:06] CS: And that you couldn't check out books, or at least that was the feeling, that you couldn't really take books and check them out. Is that true?

[00:00:15] ES: Yeah, certainly in Geneva, the old town bibliothèque I wanted to take books out, and it was a very kind of austere place, and you know, very few citizens would be --

[00:00:28] CS: In it.

[00:00:29] ES: Yes. It seemed like the authorities, you know, were there and lawyers or doctors, researching. But it wasn't a lending library in the way that surprised me so much about Seattle Public Library when we first arrived here as newlyweds from Geneva -- you speaking French and Sebastian speaking French, who was three at that time.

[00:00:48] CS: No, it was a completely different experience, and that was the old Carnegie Library.

[00:00:52] ES: It was so welcoming. And we didn't really anchor a place to live. And I think that's why I loved the library so much is because we felt so foreign, and so in going to the library and finding books in French and my favorite poets and favorite films, the library had all of these resources for us. And it couldn't be a more soothing feeling -- we felt at home because the library had books in our language.

[00:01:20] CS: Mm-hmm. That's right.

[00:01:21] ES: And that's the thread that carries our focus and our investment and our love of the library all the way 'till today. The programs that we really love are the programs that, you know, are Living History programs and all of the programs for job training skills, computer skills, immigrant populations, and of course, we were so grateful and recognizant of how so many writers really gave us a sense of place and a sense of belonging when things were tough.

[00:01:58] CS: Oh, yeah, absolutely.

[00:01:59] ES: And I think that's really why we wanted to give to the Writer's Room.

[00:02:03] CS: Talk about that, the inception really. I mean, there was a Writer's Room, you know, in the old library.

[00:02:08] ES: In the Carnegie, yeah. It was a dark room, kind of in the back. And, you know, something that you might imagine Proust loving. And it was always a little bit sad. And some of the poets that really did touch me deeply and inspire me, I wanted to give a thanks back.

[00:02:27] CS: Mm-hmm.

[00:00:28] ES: And to create a place, to be part of creating a place, for writers to continue writing so that they could feed my soul. (laughs) There's a very selfish reason.

[00:02:35] CS: Yeah.

[00:02:36] ES: And I wanted them to live in the light and --

[00:02:40] CS: That's right. That was very important, I remember, so that there's no ceiling. I mean the ceiling goes all the way up, you know --

[00:02:45] ES: Up to the heavens.

[00:02:47] CS: To the heavens, and it's a quiet place full of resources for people to just, you know, do their research and do their writing and --

[00:02:53] ES: And Rem Koolhaas, you know, was so smart in putting the Writer's Room at the very top, "Closest to God," he would say.

[00:03:00] CS: Mm-hmm.

[00:03:01] ES: And I love that celebration of the writers.

[00:03:04] [MUSIC]