



Friends of the Sun City Libraries, Inc. History



1960 Del Webb opened the first five model homes in Sun City, the world's first master planned retirement community. After record first year home sales, the need for a library to serve the community's cultural, educational and recreational needs was recognized. Sun City gave 820 square feet in the Town Hall Center, now the Fairway Recreation Center site, for use as Sun City's first library, a mini-library open three days a week. Records were kept in shoeboxes. Maricopa County Library supplied the initial inventory of 2,500 books. Eight volunteers ran it.

1961 An informal "Friends of the Library" group was organized to raise money and to serve as volunteers. The following year, the "Friends" recognized the need for, and created, a Library Operating Board.

1971 The Sun City Library, Inc. was formed as a nonprofit, tax exempt corporation, which controlled of the Library until 2009.

1972 The Webb Corporation made 2,500 square feet available at the Lakeview Recreation Center, for a much needed move to larger facilities. The first paid librarian was hired, aided by a volunteer staff of 30.

1974 The Webb Corporation made space available in the Fairway Center for a Branch Library. At the same time, planning was underway for a new Bell Recreation Center. The plans included space for a 10,250 square foot library, with room for a 5,430 square foot expansion.

1976 The Bell Center Library opened.

1982 The Library expanded to 50,000 volumes, serving 43,000 patrons, with 275 volunteers, who gave 49,989 hours of service.

1984 Always in need of financial support, the Friends of the Library used a large variety of fund raising methods, including an organized annual bridge marathon. The Library didn't just offer books, but also included "Books on Wheels", cassettes, jigsaw puzzles, and large type books. Polaroid cameras were available for check out.



1963: Jerry Costin is checking out books to Charles Nearman. Photo courtesy of the Sun City Area Historical Museum

2008 Facing continual financial challenges (even a controversial fee for library cards did not meet the needs), the Sun City Library voted to pursue becoming part of the Maricopa County Library District (MCLD).

2009 The Sun City Libraries became part of the MCLD, closed for a brief time for renovations, and then reopened in the summer. To reflect their new role of support, the nonprofit "The Sun City Library, Inc." was amended to become "Friends of the Sun City Libraries, Inc." Its mission was and is to **ENHANCE THE COMMUNITY THROUGH SUPPORT FOR THE SUN CITY LIBRARIES.**

2009 The "Books Around the Corner" Bookstore opened in the old Hoover Room of the Bell Library. Proceeds (over \$38,000 a year in 2015) from the 100% volunteer operation supported the Libraries with materials, equipment, and program needs.



1976: The Bell library on opening day. Photo courtesy of the Sun City Area Historical Museum

home bound individuals. The MCLD managed Sun City Libraries have **677,494** items available to every card holder, including printed books, audio books, DVDs, CDS, magazines, and even ukuleles. We've come a long way since 1960, but one thing has remained consistent: Sun City and the Friends of the Sun City Libraries, Inc. know the immeasurable value of a great community library.

Today The Friends of the Sun City Libraries, Inc. has over 90 volunteers serving on the Board of Directors, in the Libraries, in the Books Around the Corner Bookstore, and as Book Buddies who deliver materials to