



# Episcopal School of Los Angeles To Host Renowned Author and Speaker Susan Orlean

*Discussion Topic Will Be Her Book About the 1986 Los Angeles Public Library Fire*

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– The [Episcopal School of Los Angeles \(ESLA\)](#) community welcomes renowned author and speaker [Susan Orlean](#) to speak on January 15, 2020, at 6 p.m. at the Actors Co-op Theatre Company at 1760 North Gower Street. The Actors Theatre Company is housed within the First Presbyterian Church of Hollywood.

The topic of Orlean's appearance is *The Library Book*, her New York Times best seller about the Los Angeles Public Library fire and a "love letter" to one of the city's most renowned institutions. The book was the summer reading for the entire ESLA Upper School, and ESLA sophomore students Klara Kaupanger-Swacker and Georgia Davis-Bonk have been selected to help moderate the discussion.

On the morning of April 29, 1986, the fire alarm sounded at the central location of the Los Angeles Public Library. By the time the fire was finally extinguished seven hours later, it had destroyed four hundred thousand books and damaged seven hundred thousand more, and was the largest library fire in the history of the United States. In the aftermath of the blaze the library remained closed for seven years. While arson was suspected, no one was ever charged and the fire remains an unsolved mystery to this day.

"The life and times and near-death experience of the Los Angeles Public Library was a story that felt urgent to tell," says Orlean, "and gave me a chance to pay tribute to these marvelous places that have been such an essential part of my life."

Combining a lifelong love of books and reading with an investigation of the fire, the award-winning New Yorker reporter and New York Times best-selling author delivers, according to New York magazine, a "delightful...reflection on the past, present, and future of libraries in America" that also tells the broader story of libraries and librarians in a way that has never been done before.

Orlean's talk for the ESLA community is just six miles from the storied public institution featured in her book.

## ABOUT ES-LA

Incorporated in 2009, ESLA began by providing tuition-free after school programs that offered playful, project-based learning in the STEM fields (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics). In 2012 ESLA opened its doors to 28 full-time students in the Middle School—its first brave group of scholastic pioneers. Since then its community has expanded to include over 190 students in grades six through twelve, and the school has developed one of the most vibrant liberal arts curricula in the city. ESLA has proudly graduated two senior classes, and will grow to include 360 students—its target capacity—in the next five years.

ESLA's focus is on broad access, spirited study, and the most forward-thinking pedagogical

practices. Its emphasis is on community-building, social justice, and the highest academic standards. ESLA is dedicated to raising young people who understand the value of ethical self-reflection, rigorous inquiry, and generous civic engagement. Head of School is Peter McCormack.

<http://es-la.com>

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