

Brian Castagne

April 7, 1960 – September 15, 2026



Beloved colleague and staff member Brian Castagne passed away in September 2026 after three years with cancer. He had been on hospice care in his home since August and was surrounded by friends and family until the very end.

Brian retired in June 2023, after spending some 23 years working for San Francisco Public Library's Project Read adult literacy program and the Bridge at Main Literacy and Learning Center.

Brian's long career with Project Read was instrumental in helping thousands of adult learners identify their personal learning goals, build the skills needed to help attain those goals, and gain the confidence to pursue their lifelong interests and professional goals. He was also a great connector with the library's volunteer cohort, creating new pathways for connection with SFPL for legions of volunteers, including some who used this first touchpoint with SFPL to land a

library career.

When plans began for Project Read to move from the second floor of the Main Library to the fifth floor, Brian was a leader in an internal task force that ensured the welcoming "hearth" and warm family atmosphere of Project Read continued in its new site at the Bridge at Main. When Covid closed all library locations, Brian was asked to step in and work at the city's Covid Command Center at Moscone Center, helping San Franciscan's stay safe and withstand the pandemic.

Brian considered his mission at the library to "provide a place in the world" for all patrons but especially those people who often pushed aside or left behind: adults with low print and/or digital literacy.

He was a beloved mentor, colleague and friend who had a devoted following of patrons who waited for Brian's assistance because they appreciated his gentle and patient support. He also served as an "unofficial" photographer at SFPL and many have felt truly seen by Brian's skilled

camerawork. Thankfully, we have his son, Kit Castagne, carrying on that tradition in his capacity as a professional photographer.

An epicure and a gentleman, he was a bon vivant who could be found out and about at arts, culture and music venues throughout San Francisco, or riding his vespa around the city and beyond.

A delightful colleague to everyone at SFPL, Brian will always be remembered for his wonderful quick wit and his wordsmithing skills. He was called upon countless times to help name library services, including coining the apt title for the Spoke N Word book bike.

A taste of his humor from his farewell message upon retirement:

After 23+ years of literacy and learning service at San Francisco Public Library, I am retiring from SFPL today, June 30, 2023. Yup, I'm going to scram, amscray, take a powder, hit the bricks, hit the trail make like a tree and leave, make myself scarce, and vamoose. This daddy-o is about to skedaddle.

I am grateful to have worked with you all in public services that so clearly strengthen our society. ... I plan to remain nestled in San Francisco and increase the time spent astride my vintage Vespa scooter, alighting at cafes, restaurants, museums, and music venues. I also look forward to freely employing the order, clarity, and casual simplicity of the Oxford/serial comma.

Brian's family is planning a memorial party on November 8, 3-6 p.m. at one of his favorite venues, The Deluxe, 1511 Haight Street.