



THE  
PROVIDENCE  
ATHENÆUM

## PRESS RELEASE

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### LIBRARY RESTORES LEGENDARY FOUNTAIN TO OPERATION; PUBLIC CELEBRATION PLANNED FOR MAY 20<sup>th</sup>

**PROVIDENCE, RI-** The Providence Athenæum has restored the Richmond Fountain to operation. Donated by Anna Richmond and designed by renowned Boston architects Ware & Van Brunt in 1873, the Richmond Fountain on Benefit Street was likely the first public drinking fountain in Providence and one of the first in the entire country. For generations, a local legend persisted that if you drank from the fountain, you would always return to Providence. The fountain has been dormant for at least a decade, after it fell into disrepair. Generous donations from longtime Athenæum supporters Dick Gilbane and Candy Adriance made the restoration possible.

The Athenæum will host a public **Garden Party & Open House on Sunday, May 20, 2-4pm**, at which time the fountain will be turned on again. All are welcome to attend.

“Like the Athenæum itself, the Richmond Fountain was a gift to the citizens of Providence. For generations it served both as a beautiful drinking fountain, and also as a powerful symbol for all this library stands for. As Brown University President Francis Wayland remarked at the Athenæum’s opening in 1838, the founders intended to create ‘a fountain of living water, at which the intellectual thirst of the community may be slaked,’ said Matt Burriesci, Executive Director. “Now, perhaps more than ever, both fountains must flow.”

Public tours of the library will be offered at 2pm and 3pm. Following brief remarks from Matt Burriesci, the fountain will be restarted and a prosecco toast raised at 2:30pm. All are welcome and all ages are encouraged to this free event. Live jazz will be performed by the Antonio Forte Trio. A drop-in children’s art activity will be offered, and light refreshments will be provided. Rain or shine. Registration at [provath.org/calendar](http://provath.org/calendar).

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About the Providence Athenæum: *The Providence Athenæum is an independent, member-supported library and cultural center located on Providence’s historic Benefit Street. Over its nearly 200 years of existence, the library has welcomed illustrious writers, spirited thinkers, and energetic community members through its doors to engage in reading, conversation, and debate. At its heart, the Athenæum encourages a love of reading and learning to all. Learn more at [provath.org](http://provath.org).*