

# Heritage



June 2008



(Photo courtesy of the Los Angeles Police Historical Society)

**Ervis Lester**  
Former LAPD  
Deputy Chief

## Principle, Character, Justice and Honor...

These are words that Ervis Lester never took lightly. And after a lifetime of service these are the words that best sum up the man.

In 1923 work was in short supply in his home state of Oklahoma, so Ervis and his new bride traveled west to California where he took the LAPD entrance exam, scoring highest of all applicants.

Ervis had found his calling. He quickly worked his way up through the force—Lieutenant, Captain, Inspector and, finally, Deputy Chief—devoting himself to cleaning up the corruption in the city. His strong moral principles earned him the reputation as a man of integrity and foresight. It was these principles that led him into a life of public service that went beyond just the police force, including an appointment to the California Adult Authority and co-founding the Delinquency Control Institute at USC.

It was during his early days of public service that Ervis first encountered a tall, striking, ex-cowboy named J. Robert Atkinson, who happened to be blind. A fellow unshakable man of principle, and the founder of a growing organization called Braille Institute, the

two became fast friends and mainstays at the influential L.A. Breakfast Club.

“Atkinson was a man you wouldn’t soon forget,” Ervis remembered. “He wore big boots and a big hat. When he entered the room he would let out his famous Montana roar. And once you got to know the man, you soon forgot he was blind.”

After nearly 50 years of public service in California, Ervis finally retired and returned to Oklahoma. There he continued to serve his community for another 30 plus years through volunteer work at his church and local Lions Club. And he never forgot his friends.

Ervis remembered the friendship with J. Robert Atkinson that had begun over half a century earlier through more than 30 years of donations to Braille Institute and a Braille Institute Charitable Gift Annuity. And that friendship came full circle recently when Ervis passed away at 105 and left a bequest to Braille Institute—a legacy that will help ensure that his old friend’s vision of independence for visually impaired people continues for generations to come.

For information about how you can make a bequest to Braille Institute or about the **J. Robert Atkinson Heritage Society**, which honors those who have remembered Braille Institute in their estate plans, call our Planned Giving Office at 1-800-BRAILLE (272-4553), Ext. 1256, or return the enclosed reply card.



## Do You Own Your Home And Need Extra Income?

If you're 70 or older, you can receive guaranteed income for life and immediate income tax savings through a

### Braille Institute Life Estate Gift Annuity

Outshines the benefits of a reverse mortgage

- Enjoy living in your home for as long as you wish
- Guaranteed annual income of \$20,000, \$30,000 or more for the rest of your life **even if you decide to move from your home**
- Receive a significant **immediate** income tax charitable deduction
- Maximum benefits for older annuitants

For more information, please call Suzanne at 1-800-BRAILLE (272-4553), Ext. 3155, or simply return the enclosed reply card to receive our free brochure, *The Braille Institute Life Estate Gift Annuity Program*.

## By Selling Your Home, You Could Be Selling Yourself Short

Even with the current drop in real estate values, if you have owned your home, vacation home, commercial property or other real estate for a long time, there is no doubt that it has increased in value appreciably.

Perhaps you are thinking of selling your real estate because you are ready to move into a smaller house, a condominium or a retirement home. Maybe you would like to give up city life for a place in the country. Or perhaps you just want to get out from under the burden of all the expenses and maintenance involved with owning your property.

**What happens if you sell your property?** In many circumstances, should you not meet the requirements of available tax breaks, you must pay capital gains tax on the property's appreciation. Plus, marketing and selling real estate takes time and effort, even if you use professional assistance.

By donating your property to Braille Institute, either now or whenever you no longer need it, you can take advantage of the many tax breaks available with gifts of real estate. And your property opens the door to helping blind and visually impaired people in ways you never

thought possible—by making a larger gift than you ever thought possible.

**See the next page for the many ways you can use real estate to make a gift to Braille Institute.**

### Implications of a Sale Versus a Gift

When you sell your home, you can exclude up to \$250,000 of gain (\$500,000 if you're married), as long as the home was your principal residence for two of the past five years. This exclusion, however, isn't available for a second home or a vacation home. Moreover, your gain on a sale may exceed this amount, thereby generating some taxable capital gains.

Furthermore, a sale option does not generate a charitable deduction as a gift to Braille Institute does. When you give Braille Institute real estate, you know your gift will serve our long-term goals while meeting your short- and long-term desires.

For more information, please call Suzanne in our Planned Giving Office at 1-800-BRAILLE (272-4553), Ext. 3155. Or return the enclosed reply card for a free copy of the booklet, *Your Guide to Gifts of Real Estate*.

**When a major contribution of cash, securities or other liquid assets isn't practical, real estate may be a viable alternative.**

# There's Still Plenty of Value in Real Estate

Now that the real estate bubble has burst, why not consider the many advantages you can reap by gifting your property to Braille Institute?

Making a gift of real estate—such as a vacation home, commercial property, apartment building or even your own home—is an excellent way to gain considerable tax advantages while providing for the future of Braille Institute. Your gift of real estate may be given during your lifetime or as a bequest.

Perhaps the most common and easiest way to give real estate to Braille Institute is through a bequest in your will or trust. This method allows you to leave a substantial legacy even if you can't make a large gift during your lifetime.

Another way to donate is through a simple current gift. You may transfer title to Braille Institute now and take the full appraised value of the property as

a tax deduction, eliminating agents' commissions, closing costs and, of course, capital gains taxes. Concurrently, you may also use part of your tax savings to purchase wealth-replacement life insurance that will protect the financial interests of your heirs.

There are also gift options that help you diversify your assets and establish an income stream that will last for your lifetime. These include gifting property to fund a Charitable Gift Annuity or a Charitable Remainder Trust.

Because of tax and other implications, we recommend that you consult with an accountant or attorney when considering any type of real estate donation. For more information, please call Suzanne in our Planned Giving Office at 1-800-272-4553, Ext. 3155. Or return the enclosed reply card for a free copy of the booklet, *How to Realize Maximum Benefits from Your Real Estate*.

## Some Potential Benefits of Donating Real Estate

- Attain a level of giving to Braille Institute that you might never have thought possible.
- Diversify your assets and establish an income stream for your lifetime.
- Retain the right to the continued use of the property for the rest of your life.
- Receive the maximum tax deduction allowed by law.



## How to Make a Bequest to Braille Institute

Bequests have long been one of the easiest and most beneficial ways of supporting Braille Institute. Leaving a bequest is easy—simply include the following language in your estate plan:

*I give (X percent or X dollars or all of the residue of my estate) to Braille Institute of America, Inc., a California Nonprofit Corporation with principal offices located at 741 North Vermont Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90029-3594.*

If you have already made a bequest provision for Braille Institute, we thank you for your thoughtful and generous support.



# Jean Arley: An Eye for Talent



## Jean Arley

“I’m grateful that I have the means to help make a difference. And I truly get as much back as I give.”

## Receive Income for Life from a Braille Institute Charitable Gift Annuity

**New Rates**  
Effective July 1, 2008

ONE LIFE		TWO LIVES	
Age	Rate	Ages	Rate
60	5.5%	60/65	5.3%
65	5.7%	65/70	5.5%
70	6.1%	70/75	5.8%
75	6.7%	75/80	6.2%
80	7.6%	80/85	6.9%
85	8.9%	85/90	7.9%
90+	10.5%	90/95+	9.4%

Call for rates on other ages

Growing up in San Francisco, Jean Arley had big dreams of a career in the theater. A gifted actress and student, she was accepted at prestigious Stanford University where she made history by becoming the first woman to direct the Gaieties, Stanford’s preeminent musical theater troupe. And it was while at Stanford that Jean was inducted into one of Stanford’s oldest organizations, the Cap & Gown Society. Through this organization, which brings together Stanford’s junior and senior women in service to the community, Jean developed what became a lifelong commitment to helping others.

Upon graduation she followed her dreams to New York City where she plied her craft as an actress. But she soon turned her attention to casting. Jean steadily worked her way to the top of East Coast casting for CBS and crafted lineups for popular soap operas including *The Young & the Restless*. But again Jean’s dreams took her even further. She risked her stable casting career and made the switch to producing such classic hits as *All My Children* and *One Life to Live*.

Despite her busy career, Jean was never too busy to help others. Early on Jean began working with visually impaired people, volunteering her time as a reader for the blind at

Lighthouse International. “I’ve always loved books. And I got great satisfaction from my listeners’ satisfaction,” she remembered.

Eventually life in New York lost its appeal. “I had a great run,” Jean said with a smile. “It was time to move on.” So she retired to Palm Desert and turned her attention to her beloved hobbies—sculpting, photography and volunteerism. Nearly 15 years ago she visited Braille Institute where she knew instantly she wanted to be involved and began working in the library. “I have no intention of going anywhere,” Jean said. “I love what I’m doing.”

Her strong belief in Braille Institute—and the security of knowing that the income she receives will not go up or down with the volatile financial markets—led her to take out her first Braille Institute Charitable Gift Annuity in 1996. Every few years since then she has taken advantage of the fact that rates of return go up as you get older by adding another gift annuity. “I’m grateful that I have the means to help make a difference,” she remarked. “And I truly get as much back as I give.”

For more information about a Braille Institute Charitable Gift Annuity, please call our Planned Giving Office at 1-800-BRAILLE (272-4553), Ext. 1256. Or simply return the enclosed card for your free copy of the brochure, *Your Guide to Charitable Gift Annuities*.



## BRAILLE INSTITUTE

*Serving blind and visually impaired people since 1919*

741 N. Vermont Avenue • Los Angeles, CA 90029

1-800-BRAILLE (272-4553), Ext. 1256 • [www.brailleinstitute.org](http://www.brailleinstitute.org)

The information in this publication is not intended as legal or tax advice. A prospective donor should seek the advice of a qualified estate and/or tax professional to determine the consequences of his or her gift.