Place of Learning, Place of Dreams: A History of the Seattle Public Library (Mcelellan Book) by John Douglas Marshall

Seattle Public Library’s dazzling new Central Library, designed by renowned Dutch architect Rem Koolhaas, prompted international notice even before the doors opened to this $159 million showplace. Yet Seattle Public Library’s new prominence came after more than a century of tumult with many heroic struggles, from its itinerant existence in a pioneer boom town to its wired wonders in a world technology center. In Place of Learning, Place of Dreams John Douglas Marshall recounts the fascinating stories behind the books and buildings of Seattle Public Library. The suspicious fire that destroyed the library’s home in the historic Yesler mansion and led to a surprise rescue by Andrew Carnegie in the early 1900s. The library’s efforts through world wars, earthquakes, epidemic, and Depression. The Red Scares that claimed the jobs of two loyal library employees. The library’s stocking of a graphic sex education book that sparked a controversy reaching all the way to the U.S. Senate. The city book club born at Seattle Public Library and copied across the country. The landmark Libraries for All program to remake the entire Seattle Public Library system with a $196 million bond issue, the largest in American library history. Marshall also profiles many intriguing people who enlivened Seattle Public Library and its contributions to the city. Librarian Charles Wesley Smith withstood a charge that he set the Yesler mansion fire. Sculptor George Tsutakawa’s first fountain, for Seattle’s Central Library, led to scores of renowned fountains around the globe. Yesler branch librarian James Welch rescued a dying library in a black neighborhood with the help of activist Millie Russell. And maverick architect Rem Koolhaas won his important Seattle commission after a startling turnabout by library board members during a visit to Europe.
Place of Learning, Place of Dreams tells the human story of a beloved Seattle institution with drama, honesty, and flair.

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