

SPOTLIGHT ON.... OUR LOCAL AUTHOR, ELAINE RUSSELL

Sacramento Branch of AAUW Presents
Elaine Russell to Discuss Her Book When the Tamarind Tree Blooms
Along with Our Annual Holiday Luncheon



Saturday, December 13, 2025
10 a.m. – 1 p.m.
North Ridge Country Club
7600 Madison Avenue, Fair Oaks

PLEASE CHECK OUT THE PROGRAM ARTICLE TO MAKE YOUR LUNCHEON RESERVATIONS!



Elaine Russell, a resident of Fair Oaks, is the author of three historical novels and six children's books, which have won numerous awards. We will learn about her most recent book When the Tamarind Tree Blooms (2024). Kirkus Reviews describes this book as, "A richly sensory narrative set in Laos during the period of French rule."

Geneviève Dubois, a métisse - half-Lao/half-French - turns 18 and leaves the French orphanage in Vientiane where she has been trapped for 14 unhappy years. With only a distant memory of being torn from her mother's arms at age 4, she is determined to uncover what happened to her parents and locate her missing twin brother. But where to start? Orphanage and government officials refuse to reveal her origins. She leaves her strict, Catholic upbringing behind and emerges into the deeply divided world of 1931 French colonial Laos. Neither French colons nor native Lao readily accept her mixed heritage. Where does she fit in as she navigates her way, one foot stuck in each world? She is grateful for the kindness of her former French teacher, who offers her shelter and support. But she meets with prejudice, mistreatment, and rejection at every turn. Even falling in love is fraught with the cultural restrictions of two dissonant societies. A long circuitous route leads her to the past and a way forward to a better future, one where she is proud of who she is and rightfully claims her life as her own.