



MINNESOTA LIBRARY
ASSOCIATION

Minnesota Library Association

Board Meeting Minutes

Monday, June 18, 2018

Electronic Vote

This was an electronic vote to approve the “Resolution to Honor African Americans Who Fought Library Segregation”.

Original emails sent to Committee Members by the ALA Chapter Councilor, Sara Ring:

“As mentioned at Friday's board meeting, can we discuss and vote on the attached resolution via email? If it passes, I would like to let the authors know yet this week (before ALA Annual if possible).”

Resolution attached as Addendum A.

Motion

“I (Sara Ring) make a motion that MLA endorse in principle the Resolution to Honor African Americans Who Fought Library Segregation.”

Responses to Motion

Ann Walker Smalley

Second the motion. And vote yes.

Jim Weygand

Aye

Anne Hatinen

Aye

Jonathan Carlson

Aye

Tasha Nins

Aye

Jill Smith

Aye

Ryan McCormick

Aye

Sarah Hawkins

Aye

Kirsten Clark

I also vote aye with the following comment.

For the 6th resolved (copied below), I would like to have a footnote directing to where the EDI principles are to be found. They are mentioned as part of the EDI Implementation Working Group recommendations only, or at least what I can find in a quick search of the ALA website, but I can't find anything more specific than that.

(6) Will review policy documents and internal procedures to ensure Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) principles are reflected throughout, and;

Response from Sara to Kirsten's comment: I will pass this suggested amendment along to the authors of this resolution, and bring it up in Council Forum (pre-business meeting gathering to offer input on resolutions). I think this resolved clause is intended to be general as I'm not aware of any one document that contains a set of EDI principles. In any case, it's not clear either way.

Phil Dudas

Aye

Amy Boese

Aye

Motion that MLA endorse in principle the "Resolution to Honor African Americans Who Fought Library Segregation" was approved unanimously.

Addendum A

Resolution to Honor African Americans Who Fought Library Segregation

Whereas the system of “Jim Crow” laws and customs officially existed into the 1960s—a century after the official end of slavery in the United States;^{1 2}

Whereas virulent racism, disenfranchisement, Black Codes, and racial segregation laws imposed a rigid system of officially sanctioned racial segregation in virtually all areas of life, including access to public libraries;^{1 2}

Whereas, despite the work of African American librarians, including but not limited to Clara Stanton Jones, E.J. Josey, Albert P. Marshall and Virginia Lacy Jones, and the allies who stood with them to fight segregation, a large majority of the nation’s library community failed to address the injustices of segregated library services until the 1960s;³

Whereas, in many cases the American Library Association participated, both passively and actively, in the disenfranchisement of African American librarians, depriving them of the resources of professional association;

Whereas the American Library Association continued to accept segregated public libraries as members into the 1960s;³

Whereas the American Library Association filed no amicus curiae briefs in any of the local, state, and national lawsuits filed in the 1950s and 1960s to desegregate public libraries;³

Whereas the nation’s library press reported nothing about the 1939 Alexandria (VA) Public Library sit-in by five young African Americans that took place two months after the American Library Association passed a Library Bill of Rights;³

Whereas a sincere and heartfelt apology is an important and necessary first step in the process of reconciliation;

Whereas an apology for decades of injustices cannot erase the past, but a recognition of the wrongs committed and injustices ignored can help the nation’s library community confront the ghosts of its past: Now, therefore, be it

¹ United States. Cong. House. Apologizing for the Enslavement and Racial Segregation of African-Americans. 110th Cong. 2nd sess. H. Res. 194. (2007-2008). 154 Cong. Rec. H7224. Washington: GPO, 2008.

² United States. Cong. Senate. Apologizing for the Enslavement and Racial Segregation of African-Americans. 111th Cong. 1st sess. S. Res. 26. (2009-2010). 155 Cong. Rec. S6761. Washington: GPO, 2009.

³ Shirley A. Wiegand and Wayne A. Wiegand, *The Desegregation of Public Libraries in the Jim Crow South: Civil Rights and Local Activism*, (Baton Rouge, 2018), LSU Press.

Resolved, That the American Library Association

- (1) Acknowledges the fundamental injustice, cruelty, and inhumanity of racially segregated libraries;
- (2) Apologizes to African Americans for wrongs committed against them in segregated public libraries;
- (3) Commends African Americans who risked their lives to integrate public libraries for their bravery and courage in challenging segregation in public libraries and in forcing public libraries to live up to the rhetoric of their ideals;
- (4) Welcomes all African Americans to libraries, recognizing in particular those who were forced to use segregated libraries;
- (5) Encourages libraries to defend, in their policies and in their actions, the *ALA Code of Ethics* principle 1 – “We provide the highest level of service to all library users through appropriate and usefully organized resources; equitable access; and accurate, unbiased, and courteous responses to all requests;”⁴
- (6) Will review policy documents and internal procedures to ensure Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) principles are reflected throughout, and;
- (7) And be it further resolved that this resolution be printed in full in American Libraries and publicize widely via all media channels.

⁴ Code of Ethics of the American Library Association.