

MEMORIAL RESOLUTION FOR MAJOR OWENS

Whereas the library and education communities have lost an advocate and leader on October 21, 2013, with the death of Major Owens;

Whereas as a Congressman from New York from 1982 to 2006, he fought for aid to education and libraries;

Whereas together with other significant librarians from New York, he formed the New York Social Responsibilities Round Table (NYSRRT), which later became part of the New York Library Association;

Whereas Owens served as community information librarian on the streets of Brooklyn, placing Brooklyn Public Library collections in public places such as laundromats, stores, bars, and anywhere people gathered;

Whereas as Congressman, Owens was a floor manager of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, aimed at curbing discrimination against disabled people;

Whereas he also defended organized labor and supported proposals to prohibit the deportation of illegal immigrants who fell into various categories;

Whereas he was a leader in the U.S. Congress in championing library legislation, including support for public libraries, school libraries, and librarianship;

Whereas he worked tirelessly for education, for universal health care, for minimum-wage legislation, against poverty and against gun rights;

Whereas he was a published author of *The Peacock Elite: a Subjective Case Study of the Congressional Black Caucus and its Impact on National Politics* and other works;

Whereas he was among the first to define the important place of libraries in the struggle to provide the people with access to the information they would need to improve their lives, govern themselves, and build a just society;

Whereas he was a featured speaker at the White House Conference on Libraries in 1979 and 1991;

Whereas in 1996, Owens was awarded Honorary Membership, ALA's highest award; and

Whereas Owens was a low-key politician but had a colorful streak, writing and even performing rap lyrics, now, therefore, be it

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Resolved, that the American Library Association, on behalf of its members,

1. recognizes the significant contributions of Major Owens, also known as “The Librarian In Congress,” over the course of his distinguished career, mourns his death;
2. honors Major Owens for enhancing the lives of all Americans by bringing the highest values of librarianship to the Congress of the United States; and
3. extends deepest condolences to his wife Marie (Owens Family, 135 Eastern Parkway, Brooklyn, NY, 11238) and Chris Owens, 315 Flatbush Avenue, #521, Brooklyn, NY 11217-2813.

Adopted by the Council of the American Library Association
Tuesday, January 28, 2014, in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania



Keith Michael Fiels
ALA Executive Director and Secretary of the ALA Council