

A Memorial Resolution Honoring Dr. Henrietta M. Smith

Whereas the American Library Association (ALA) and the broader library community lost a valued member, academic, librarian, storyteller, author, and trailblazer on April 21, 2021, with the *homegoing* of Dr. Henrietta M. Smith;

Whereas Dr. Henrietta M. Smith attended Columbia University and earned her B.S. (1946) and M.S. in Library Science (1959). In 1975, she completed her doctorate in curriculum and supervision at the University of Miami in Coral Gables, Florida;

Whereas Dr. Henrietta M. Smith in 1984 was a founding member and first president of the South Palm Beach Alumnae Chapter, Delta Sigma Theta Sorority;

Whereas Dr. Henrietta M. Smith taught at Florida Atlantic University as an instructor in the College of Education and in 1985 was recruited to teach at the University of South Florida School of Information where she was the first African American professor at the school;

Whereas Dr. Henrietta M. Smith upon her retirement from the University of South Florida, was honored as Emeritus Professor;

Whereas Dr. Henrietta M. Smith from 1989-1993 served as Chair of the Coretta Scott King Book Awards Task Force;

Whereas Dr. Henrietta M. Smith wrote *Poetry of the African Diaspora: In Search of Common Ground Between Anglo and Latin America*, in 2000 wrote the Introduction to *Lift Every Voice and Sing: A Pictorial Tribute to the Negro National Anthem*, and edited the *Coretta Scott King Awards Book: From Vision to Reality*, in 1994 covering the first 25 years of CSK award and honor winners, followed five years later by *The Coretta Scott King Awards Book 1970-1999*, followed ten years later by the 40th Anniversary Edition, *The Coretta Scott King Awards 1970-2009*;

Whereas in 2006, at the age of 84, Dr. Henrietta M. Smith traveled with a medical team down the Amazon River telling stories in the small villages of Ensenada, Itapiranga, and Espernaca;

Whereas Dr. Henrietta M. Smith, in 2008, was honored by the Association for Library Services to Children (ALSC) with the Distinguished Service Award;

Whereas Dr. Henrietta M. Smith was awarded the Coretta Scott King–Virginia Hamilton Award for Lifetime Achievement – Practitioner in 2011;

Whereas Dr. Henrietta M. Smith, in 2014, was honored by REFORMA, the National Association to Promote Library & Information Services to Latinos and the Spanish Speaking, and ALSC during the 20th anniversary of the Pura Belpré Award;

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2021 ALA Virtual Annual Conference

Whereas Dr. Henrietta M. Smith was recognized as a champion for diversity and representation in children’s literature by REFORMA and REFORMA de Florida long before #Own Voices was a hashtag or “We Need Diverse Books” was trending;

Whereas Dr. Henrietta M. Smith, in 2014, was the first librarian to receive the Carle Honors Mentor award from the Eric Carle Museum of Picture Book Art recognized for her contributions as an influential children’s librarian, scholar, author, and strong advocate for quality and diversity in children’s literature;

Whereas Dr. Henrietta M. Smith served on numerous ALA committees, including the book selection committees for the Pura Belpré, Newbery, Caldecott, and Coretta Scott King Book Awards;

Whereas Dr. Henrietta M. Smith and the Honorable Judge Isaiah C. Smith (deceased) celebrated a long and fulfilling marriage; and

Whereas she was a legendary pioneer whose contributions to our profession will never be forgotten; now, therefore be it

Resolved, that the American Library Association (ALA), on behalf of its members:

1. recognizes with admiration the significant contributions of Dr. Henrietta M. Smith over the course of her extraordinary career and mourns her passing; and
2. extends its sincerest condolences to Rev. Cynthia Smith Jackson (daughter), Robin Smith (son), extended family, her Delta Sigma Theta Sorority Sisters, and friends.

Mover:

Dr. Brenda Pruitt- Annisette, Councilor-at-Large and Chair, Coretta Scott King Book Awards Community

Seconders:

Dr. Daniella Smith, Councilor-at-Large

Kim Patton, ALSC Division Councilor

Version: May 3, 2021.