

A Memorial Resolution Honoring William G. Asp

Whereas the library community lost a valued, forward-thinking leader on June 16, 2021, with the passing of William G. Asp (“Bill”);

Whereas Bill Asp was an active and involved member of the American Library Association for over a half century with his many roles including membership in the ALA Legacy Society, being Minnesota Chapter Councilor, serving as President of the Association for Special, Government and Cooperative Library Agencies and engaging in numerous ALA committees, including the joint Public Library Administrators Certification Committee and the ALA Committee on Committees;

Whereas Bill Asp directed the East Central (MN) Regional Library from 1967 to 1970 where he extended public library visibility and services in 6 counties;

Whereas Bill Asp served as an Instructor at the School of Library and information Sciences at the University of Iowa in Iowa City, IA from 1970 to 1975 where he inspired many of his students to pursue work in public libraries;

Whereas Bill Asp was the Minnesota State Librarian from 1975 to 1996, leading the creation and successful operation of a broad range of library services for state residents including:

- expansion of public library services to all residents of the State of Minnesota through 12 regional public library systems;
- establishment of a state-wide network of reciprocal borrowing among Minnesota libraries;
- development of the 7 Minnesota multi-type library systems to facilitate resource sharing between school, academic, public and special libraries;
- development of legislation creating a state grant fund to assist with the construction and renovation of Minnesota public library buildings;
- successful and cheerful management of the demanding political and bureaucratic challenges of his position by being consistently so well-prepared, and of such impeccable integrity, that state legislators had unqualified confidence in his policy and funding proposals, and;
- leadership in the development of several state plans for library services while organizing two Minnesota Governor’s Pre-White House Conferences on Library and Information Services;

Whereas Bill Asp served on the Minitex Policy Advisory Council from 1975 to 1995 and the Joint Standards Review Task Force that created standards and guidelines for early automation in Minnesota;

Whereas Bill Asp, as Director of Dakota County (MN) Library from 1996 to 2003 established email services, expanded youth services, inaugurated a successful multicultural program designed to reach out to serve diverse communities, led the introduction of new formats for circulation, increased access to public internet, championed the installation of major infrastructure providing robust electronic resources, constructed two branch libraries, and worked with community leaders to establish the Dakota County Library Foundation;

2020-2021 ALA M#23 (Memorial)
2021 ALA Virtual Membership Meeting and Annual Council Meeting

Whereas Bill Asp's many professional contributions and his innovative leadership in the development of libraries and the improvement of library services in Minnesota and throughout the country were honored when the Minnesota Library Association established the annual William G. Asp Distinguished Career Award and named Bill as the first recipient; and

Whereas Bill Asp's collegiality, integrity, optimism, and personal warmth created a true sense of community and purpose among all types of libraries within the state of Minnesota and among his ALA colleagues; now, therefore, be it

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

1. mourns the passing of William G. Asp on June 16, 2021, and;
2. honors his memory by expressing profound appreciation for his countless outstanding accomplishments, for his loyalty to the profession, and for his friendship.

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