Memorial Resolution Honoring James Henry Jacobs Jr.

Whereas the American Library Association (ALA) lost a valued colleague on May 24, 2023, with the death of James Henry Jacobs, Jr.

Whereas Jacobs received his associate degree at City College of San Francisco; Jacobs studied Japanese at the SF Buchanan St. YMCA; in 1958, Jacobs completed his undergraduate in Japanese Studies at UC Berkeley after transferring from UC Los Angeles; Jacobs obtained a Master of Library Science degree from UC Berkeley; Jacobs was the only African American student at the time;

Whereas Jacobs was drafted into the U.S. Army (20th division) during the Korean War in 1950s; in 1954, Jacobs was admitted to Army Language School at the Presidio Monterey and completed 12-month language training in 3 months; Jacobs served as an interpreter in Okinawa; in 1956, Jacobs was honorably discharged from activity duty as Specialist Second Class;

Whereas Jacobs became Berkeley Public Library's first African American Librarian in 1960s; Jacobs collaborated and spearheaded efforts to desegregate the Berkeley Public Library collections starting with Summer Reading Programs; Jacobs supported gender and cultural representations by featuring books with minoritized protagonists; Jacobs used songs and storytelling to teach literacy to many children; after 30 years of service to the community, Jacobs retired in 1990;

Whereas Jacobs achieved rank of 6th Degree Black Belt; Jacobs also served as a youth Judo coach;

Whereas Jacobs received a City of Berkeley Proclamation signed by the Mayor in October 2021 honoring him for his service and impact to Berkeley community; Jacobs was an extraordinary colleague, friend, and mentor to many; now therefore be it

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

1. recognizes the significant contributions and accomplishments of James Henry Jacobs Jr. over the course of his career and mourns his death; and
2. extends its sincerest condolences to his friends and family.

Adopted by the Council of the American Library Association
Monday, June 26, 2023, ALA Annual Conference, Chicago, IL

Tracie D. Hall, Executive Director, and Secretary of the ALA Council