Memorial Resolution Honoring Menahem Schmelzer

Whereas the American Library Association (ALA) lost a valued colleague on December 10, 2022, with the death of Menahem Schmelzer;

Whereas Schmelzer was born in 1934 in Keel Hungary; with his family, they survived the Holocaust in labor camps; In 1961, he immigrated to New York where he joined The Jewish Theological Seminary;

Whereas Schmelzer graduated and received his academic trainings from the University of Budapest and The Jewish Theological Seminary of Hungary; Schmelzer earned his Master of Arts from Copenhagen University; and Library Diploma from the State Library School in Denmark (DHL); Schmelzer also attended the Spertus Institute of Jewish Studies;

Whereas Schmelzer was the Albert B. and Bernice Cohen Professor Emeritus of Medieval Hebrew Literature and Jewish Bibliography at The Jewish Theological Seminary; Schmelzer served as a full time faculty member in The Jewish Theological Seminary in 1961;

Whereas Schmelzer was librarian from 1964-1987 in The Jewish Theological Seminary; over two decades, he served many students and scholars; Schmelzer built and opened access to one of the world’s most important collections of Judaica; In 1966, Schmelzer was appointed head librarian; Schmelzer led the library’s recovery effort following a destructive fire in 1966; Schmelzer oversaw the renovation of the library which opened in a new building in 1982;

Whereas Schmelzer was a prolific and renown scholar; he published 11 books and over 70 articles and reviews focusing on a variety of topics from liturgy and Hebrew poetry to Jewish book culture and history; Schmelzer was very knowledgeable, generous, and had a great sense of humor; Schmelzer influenced generations of scholars and librarians; now, therefore, be it

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

1. recognizes the significant contributions and accomplishments of Menahem Schmelzer 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
Sunday, January 29, 2023, ALA LLX, New Orleans, LA

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