



Resolution on Renaming the Melvil Dewey Medal

Whereas the American Library Association awards the Melvil Dewey Medal to recognize librarians for achievement for recent creative leadership of high order;¹

Whereas the resort owned by Melvil Dewey and his wife Annie Roberts Godfrey did not permit Jewish people, African Americans, or other minorities admittance;²

Whereas he was censured by the New York State Board of Regents for his refusal to admit Jews to his resort, whereupon he resigned as New York State Librarian;³

Whereas Dewey made numerous inappropriate physical advances toward women he worked with and wielded professional power over;

Whereas during the 1906 ALA conference there was a movement to censure Dewey after four women came forward to accuse him of sexual impropriety, and he was ostracized from the organization for decades;⁴

Whereas the behavior demonstrated for decades by Dewey does not represent the stated fundamental values of ALA in equity, diversity, and inclusion; now therefore be it

Resolved, that the American Library Association

On behalf of its members, rename the Melvil Dewey Medal to remove Melvil Dewey's association with the award. The Resolution will go to the Awards Committee for renaming and any structural changes to the award that need to be made.

Adopted by the Council of the American Library Association
Sunday, June 23, 2019, in Washington, DC.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mary W. Ghikas".

Mary W. Ghikas, Executive Director
and Secretary of the ALA Council

¹ <http://www.ala.org/awardsgrants/melvil-dewey-medal>

² "Ask Regents to Depose State Librarian Dewey: His Company Runs Hotel, Called a Club, Which Bars Jews. Office as Advertisement So Used in Circulars Sent Out Describing Enterprise, the Petitioners Allege." *New York Times* (1857-1922), Jan 21, 1905.

³ "Prof. Melvil Dewey Resigns.: Secretary of the State Board Of Regents of the University Gives Up His Office." *New York Times* (1857-1922), Dec 23, 1899.

⁴ Beck, Clare. "A "Private" Grievance against Dewey." *American Libraries* 27, no. 1 (1996): 62-64.