

June 2019

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 Melvil Dewey did not permit Jewish people, African Americans, or other minorities admittance to the resort owned by Dewey and his wife;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 (ALA), on behalf of its members, rename the Melvil Dewey Medal to remove Melvil Dewey's association with the award.

Mover: Sherre Harrington, 706-409-6300

Seconder: Ahliah Bratzler, 317-603-3781

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 *New York Times*. "State Librarian Dewey Is Rebuked by Regents: Must Quit Countenancing Anti-Jewish Campaign or Resign. Act in Lake Placid Case Dewey Repeats Promise to Give Up Trusteeship of Club Which Issued Circulars Offensive to Jews," Feb 16, 1905.

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