

This memorial resolution was adopted by the ALA Council on Tuesday, January 24, 2017

MEMORIAL RESOLUTION COMMENDING RUTH GORDON

Whereas Ruth Gordon was an exemplary librarian, passionate teacher, prolific writer, and fierce civil liberties supporter throughout her 60-year career;

Whereas she achieved scholarly success through undergraduate and graduate degrees from Tufts University, Brown University, and the University of California, Berkeley and teaching positions at the University of San Francisco and the University of Maryland;

Whereas she devoted her school library career to students in rural areas of northern California, including Lassen County, Cloverdale, and Petaluma; and

Whereas she invested deeply in each child with whom she worked, reflecting her belief that reading and libraries could be refuges for those whose lives were chaotic and gateways to the wider world for those whose geography or circumstances were limited;

Whereas she served two terms on ALA Council advocating tirelessly for quality library services to children according to the maxim “to comfort the afflicted and afflict the comfortable,” a drive manifesting in her comments both at the Council microphone and in print;

Whereas she modeled ALA’s values of equity, diversity, and inclusion by taking a strong stand as an ALA Councilor against the discriminatory practices of the Boy Scouts of America and by passionately advocating for their acceptance of gay teens and gay scout masters;

Whereas she empowered librarians of all backgrounds and experiences to embrace their roles as change agents as both a founding and active member of the Social Responsibilities Round Table (SRRT);

Whereas she engaged actively with the Association for Library Service to Children (ALSC) as Board of Directors member; Priority Group Consultant; Chair of the Newbery Award and Notable Books for Children committees; member of the Caldecott, Sibert, and Batchelder Award committees; and member of the Intellectual Freedom and Organization and Bylaws process committees;

Whereas she championed The Association of Children’s Librarians of Northern California (ACL) throughout her professional career in roles as President, Chair of Social Responsibilities, copy editor, and mentor to many new librarians;

Whereas she served as editor of several collections of poetry published by HarperCollins; a freelance editor of nonfiction; the fiction selector for *Elementary School Library Collection*; reviewer for *Kirkus*, *New York Times Book Review*, *School Library Journal*, and *BayViews*;

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Whereas she recruited legions of members to both ALA and ALSC through her supportive and generous mentoring of young professionals over many decades;

Whereas she regularly and respectfully stung the organization with disturbing questions, unanticipated petitions, and unsettling proposals as self-appointed ALA and ALSC “gadfly”;

Whereas she ignited the hearts, minds, and voices of a generation with her keen sense of humor, warm collegiality, biting wit, and unparalleled zeal for social justice, civil liberty, and the transformative power of libraries; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the American Library Association, on behalf of its members:

1. highly commends Ruth Gordon for her ardent advocacy on behalf of library service to children in both schools and communities and her inspiring mentorship of librarians throughout the United States;
2. recognizes Ruth Gordon posthumously as “ALA Gadfly” with full appreciation for her contributions to the organization; and
3. extends its deepest sympathy to her beloved wife, Victoria Marugg; her dear, long-time friend, Linda Perkins; her nieces Janet Booth, Gail Kavalier, and Robin Strawbridge; and her five grandnieces and grandnephews, Julianna Booth, Angus Strawbridge, Aaron Kavalier, Forrest Strawbridge, and Natalie Kavalier.

Adopted by the Council of the American Library Association
Tuesday, January 24, 2017, in Atlanta, Georgia



Keith Michael Fiels
Executive Director and Secretary of the ALA Council