

Memorial Resolution Honoring Charles L. Blockson

Whereas the American Library Association (ALA) lost a valued colleague on June 14, 2023, with the death of Charles L. Blockson;

Whereas Blockson was an American historian, writer, educator, collector of books, historical documents and material culture related to the history and culture of African Americans, continental Africans, and the African diaspora globally;

Whereas Blockson was the curator and curator emeritus at Temple University; Blockson retired from Temple University in 2006; Blockson's collections, over 700,000 items, are globally known as the Charles L. Blockson Afro-American Collection (Temple University) and the Charles L. Blockson Collection of African-Americana and the African Diaspora (Pennsylvania State University);

Whereas Blockson contributed collections to the National Museum of African American History and Culture (NMAAHC) including 39 items owned by Harriet Tubman that were given to him by her grandniece, Merlie Wilkins;

Whereas Blockson was a co-founder of the African American Museum in Philadelphia; a founding member of the Pennsylvania Black History Committee of the Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission; Blockson served as the past president of the Pennsylvania Abolition Society and former chairperson of the National Park Service Underground Railroad Advisory Committee; Blockson was the former director of the Philadelphia African American Pennsylvania State Marker Project;

Whereas Blockson proudly spearheaded and personally paid for the Pennsylvania Slave Trade marker commemorating enslaved Africans who arrived as early as 1639 at Penn's Landing near Independence Seaport Museum which was unveiled in 2016;

Whereas Blockson was educated in Norristown Area School District; graduated from Penn State University in 1956; Blockson was awarded three honorary doctorate degrees from Lincoln University, Holy Family University, and Villanova University; Blockson was the 96th recipient of the Philadelphia Award in 2017;

Whereas Blockson was known as a kind friend, colleague, 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 Charles L. Blockson over the course of his career and mourns his death; and
2. extends its sincerest condolences to his friends and family.

Mover: Raymond Pun, ALA Councilor at Large

Seconder: Twanna Hodge, ALA Councilor at Large

Version: June 22, 2023, 3:30 pm.