

### **A Memorial Resolution Honoring Betty-Carol Sellen**

Whereas the American Library Association (ALA) lost a valued colleague on November 26, 2023, with the death of Betty-Carol Sellen;

Whereas Betty-Carol Sellen was a librarian and a collector of American folk and outsider art;

Whereas Betty-Carol Sellen attended the University of Washington for her Bachelor's Degree in 1956 and Master's of Library Science Degree in 1959; she also obtained a Master's degree from New York University in 1974; at the University of Washington, Betty-Carol Sellen collaborated with the student government to encourage and pressure the university to offer housing for students of color, especially students from Africa; there was a media campaign that raised awareness of discriminatory city housing practices that impacted students;

Betty-Carol Sellen held numerous positions in the field; Betty-Carol Sellen worked at the Brooklyn Public Library from 1959-1960; she worked at the University of Washington Law Library from 1960-1963; Betty-Carol Sellen worked at the City University of New York (CUNY) - Brooklyn College from 1964-1990 where she retired as an Associate Librarian for Public Services;

Whereas Betty-Carol Sellen was active in the American Library Association, particularly on feminist issues in the profession;

Whereas Betty-Carol Sellen was one of the founders of the New York Social Responsibilities Round Table (NYSRRT) and the ALA Social Responsibilities Round Table (SRRT)

Whereas Betty-Carol Sellen co-founded and served as chair of the ALA Feminist Task Force, and later chair of the Committee on the Status of Women in Librarianship<sup>(1)</sup>;

Whereas Betty-Carol Sellen collaborated with others to organize the first ALA Preconference on the Status of Women in Librarianship (sponsored by SRRT Task Force on the Status of Women in 1974 in Rutgers University); this conference also generated resolutions that were presented to ALA in 1974 involving critical issues such as childcare services, sexist terminology, support for affirmative action, women in ALA Council positions and more<sup>(2)</sup>;

Whereas Betty-Carol Sellen served as President of the Library Association of the City of University of New York (LACUNY) from 1969-1971; as co-chair of the 1968 LACUNY Conference, she helped shape the foundation for the CUNY union catalog and collections partnership among CUNY libraries;

Whereas Betty-Carol Sellen received the ALA Equality Award in 1990 for her outstanding contribution and service in supporting sex and racial equality in the field and tireless work and labor as a leader through conference organizing and coalition building;

Whereas Betty-Carol Sellen was a valued friend, colleague, and collaborator to many members of the profession, and was involved in mentoring activities supporting many younger librarians;

Whereas Betty-Carol Sellen was a prolific writer and published several books such as *The Librarian's Cookbook* in 1990; *The Bottom Line Reader: A Financial Handbook for Librarians* in 1990; *The Collection Building Reader* in 1992; *What Else You Can Do With a Library Degree* in 1997; *20th Century American Folk, Self-Taught, and Outsider Art* in 1993; *Outsider, Self-Taught, and American Folk Art: Annotated Bibliography* in 2002 with Cynthia Johanson; *Art Centers: American Studios and Galleries for Artists with Developmental or Mental Disabilities* in 2008; *Self-Taught, Outsider and Folk Art: A Guide to American Artists, Locations, and Resources* in 2016; *Women in a Women's Profession: Strategies Proceedings of the Pre-Conference on the Status of Women in Librarianship* by Marshall J., and Sellen, B. in 1975, published by the American Library Association;

Whereas Betty-Carol Sellen was one of the foremost experts on outsider art and a collector; after her retirement, Betty-Carol Sellen ran a B&B in New Orleans that hosted many librarians and she devoted time to collecting and documenting outsider artists;

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

1. recognizes the significant contributions and accomplishments of Betty-Carol Sellen and mourns her death; and
2. extends its sincerest condolences to her wife Marti Burt, her family, and her many friends and colleagues

Mover: Raymond Pun, CALA Councilor

Seconder: Mandy Nasr, ALA Councilor at Large

Endorsed:

Anchalee Panigabutra-Roberts, ALA Councilor at Large

Ana Elisa de Campos Salles, ALA Executive Board Member

Adriana Blancarte-Hayward, ALA Councilor at Large

Diedre Conkling, ALA Member including member of SRRT Feminist Task Force

Patricia Glass Schuman, ALA Past President and Honorary Member

Version: January 11th, 2023

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<sup>[1]</sup> Thistlethwaite, P. (2018, March 23). "Betty-Carol 'BC' Sellen." Women of Library History. <https://womenoflibraryhistory.tumblr.com/post/172169472685/betty-carol-bc-sellen>

<sup>[2]</sup> Marshall J., & Sellen, B. (1975). Women in a women's profession: strategies proceedings of the pre-conference on the status of women in librarianship. American Library Association.n.