

Memorial Resolution Honoring Mary Jo Lynch

Whereas the American Library Association (ALA) and the library community lost a valued member, colleague, and leader on February 26, 2020, with the death of Mary Jo Lynch.

Whereas Mary Jo Lynch served as Director of the ALA Office for Research and Statistics from 1978 to 2003, during which time she was recognized as a national authority on library statistics.

Whereas former ALA Executive Director Keith Michael Fiels said “Mary Jo’s fingerprints are on almost every major piece of library statistical information produced in the last two decades ... Her contributions have supported ALA’s advocacy [and] media and educational efforts ... as we have worked to communicate the value of libraries and librarians. The statistics she has provided have been quoted by millions and have helped to define and dramatize the issues facing libraries of all types.”

Whereas she received Distinguished Alumna Awards from the University of Michigan School of Library Sciences, where she earned an A.M.L.S. degree, and Rutgers University where she earned a Ph.D. in Library Science in 1977.

Whereas she served as a university reference librarian at the University of Massachusetts (Amherst) and the University of Detroit, and conducted seminal research evaluating the research interview process, including her doctoral dissertation.

Whereas she served as an OCLC Visiting Scholar from 1983 to 1984.

Whereas she was a leading collaborator (with Charles R. McClure, Amy Owen, Eleanor Jo Rodger, Nancy A. Van House, and Douglas L. Zweizig) in the development of the Public Library Association’s Public Library Development Program, including co-authoring *Planning and Role-Setting for Public Libraries: A Manual of Options and Procedures* and *Output Measures for Public Libraries: A Manual of Standardized Procedures* (both 1987) and designing the annual *Public Library Data Service Statistical Report* (from 1989).

Whereas she was a major force in the establishment of the Federal-State Cooperative System (FSCS) for Public Library Data—a collaboration of the National Center for Education Statistics and the U. S. National Commission on Libraries and Information Science (today’s Public Library Survey (PLS) project at the federal Institute of Museum and Library Services)—and served on its Steering Committee for 20 years.

Whereas she served on other committees of the National Center for Education Statistics, including those for the Academic Library Survey (IPEDS) and the State Library Agency (StLA) Survey.

Whereas she coordinated the popular and frequently updated *Quotable Facts about America’s Libraries* and directed and authored the annual *ALA Survey of Librarian Salaries* (from 1982).

Whereas she authored or co-authored more than 80 articles and research reports relating to public and academic libraries, reference service, and research about libraries and library statistics, and appearing in *American Libraries*, *The Bookmark*, *The Bowker Annual*, *C&RL News*, *Information Technology and Libraries*, *Journal of Education for Library and Information Science*, *Library and Information Science Research*, *Library Journal*, *Library Personnel News*, *Library Quarterly*, *Library Trends*, *Public Libraries*, and *Wilson Library Bulletin*.

Whereas she was a frequent and popular speaker at library association conferences (e.g., ALA—and its divisions PLA, ACRL, LAMA, AASL—as well as Massachusetts, New Jersey, and Florida) and library school events (e.g., Ball State, Illinois, McGill, North Carolina).

Whereas she is remembered “with gratitude and respect” by her colleagues and proteges as “a fun, wonderful, intelligent lady,” “an impressive woman and library leader,” “an inspiration ... [who] always conducted herself with grace and dignity,” and “an amazing person,” who “left quite a legacy” and “will not be forgotten.”

Whereas she always advised colleagues inclined to assume too strict compliance with statistical definitions when debating the fine points of data quality (smiling, with twinkling eyes, and raising an index finger) “Remember ... the night watchman writes down what he [darn] well pleases.”

Whereas she saved her colleagues countless hours of restaurant bill parsing by teaching them “The Mary Jo Rule” (pay according to the number of people at the table, not who ate or drank what). (It’s the social cost of eating out in a large group, especially when it’s holding up everyone’s arrival at a much-anticipated conference reception—i.e., personal networking opportunity.) And

Whereas her leadership, common-sense/cut-to-the-chase incisiveness, and indomitable good humor inspired several generations of library leaders, now, therefore, be it

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

1. recognizes the significant contributions of Mary Jo Lynch over the course of her career and mourns her death; and
2. extends its sincerest condolences to her friends and family.

Mover: Keith Curry Lance, ALA Member, keithlance@comcast.net

Seconder: Nancy Bolt, former member ALA Executive Board, nancybolt@earthlink.net

Nann Hilyard, former member ALA Executive Board

Jim Rettig, former President, American Library Association

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Michael Golrick, ASGCLA Division Councilor, former member ALA Executive Board

Diane Chen, AASL Division Councilor, former member ALA Executive Board

Molly Raphael, former President, American Library Association

Betty Turock, former President, American Library Association

Barbara Ford, former President, American Library Association

James Neal, former President, American Library Association

Roberta Stevens, former President, American Library Association

Barbara Stripling, former President, American Library Association

Ann Symons, former Treasurer and former President, American Library Association

Carol Brey, former President, American Library Association

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