

Memorial Resolution Honoring John Spears

Whereas, the library community and the American Library Association mourn the loss of John Spears, who died on July 20, 2025, at the age of 51, following a period of illness with cancer; and

Whereas, John Spears served with distinction as Director of the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library System from April 2022 until his passing, bringing more than 25 years of library leadership experience from institutions across Colorado, Missouri, Illinois, and Utah; and

Whereas, John Spears was a steadfast champion of intellectual freedom and a tireless advocate for ensuring that libraries remain spaces of free, equal, and equitable access to information for all people, regardless of background or circumstance; and

Whereas, he was deeply committed to the professional development of his staff, encouraging and supporting their engagement with both the American Library Association (ALA) and the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) to foster learning, leadership, and global perspective; and

Whereas, John Spears believed in the power of libraries to build and strengthen communities, and demonstrated this through his leadership in Buffalo—where he addressed public safety concerns with compassion and innovation—and in Colorado Springs, where he forged strong partnerships with academic institutions and civic organizations; and

Whereas, he was a valued member of ALA President Loida Garcia-Febo's Presidential Advisory Board and hosted the inaugural stop of the *Libraries = Strong Communities* national advocacy tour, helping to elevate the visibility and impact of libraries across the country; and

Whereas, John Spears contributed significantly to the international library community through his service on IFLA's Advisory Committee on Freedom of Access to Information and Freedom of Expression (FAIFE) and his active participation in the Metropolitan Libraries Section (MetLib), including international conferences and professional learning circles; and

Whereas, he was recognized in 2024 with the Mary Bobinski Innovative Public Library Director Award by the New York Library Association for his visionary leadership and his success in fostering meaningful relationships across diverse communities; and

Whereas, John Spears held numerous leadership roles within the American Library Association, including service on the ALA Professional Ethics Committee, Intellectual Freedom Committee, APA Certification Program Committee, and the 2018 ALA Nominating Committee, as well as extensive leadership within the Library Leadership and Management Association (LLAMA), where he served as President (2016–2017) and contributed to multiple committees and task forces; and

Whereas, he also contributed to the Public Library Association (PLA) through service on the Public Library Advisory Committee, PLDS Statistical Report Advisory Committee, and the Leadership Development Committee; and

Whereas, John Spears was a frequent speaker, writer, and advocate for libraries through his work with the Western New York Library Resources Council, the New York Library Association, the International Federation of Library Associations, and *Public Libraries* magazine; and

Whereas, John Spears became an active member of the Buffalo Quaker community, where he offered thoughtful ministry, served on the Ministry and Counsel Committee, and contributed to the Library Committee by helping preserve meaningful texts and guiding its stewardship with care and discernment; and

Whereas, John Spears is remembered not only for his professional accomplishments but also for his warmth, integrity, grace, generosity, and the deep impact he had on colleagues, friends, and the communities he served; now, therefore, be it

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

1. recognizes the outstanding contributions of John Spears to the library profession and to the mission and values of the American Library Association;
2. honors his unwavering commitment to intellectual freedom, equitable access, professional mentorship, and community engagement;
3. directs that a copy of this resolution be sent to his family, Buffalo & Erie County Public Library; and
4. extends its deepest sympathy to his husband, Brian Dimit, his family, friends, and colleagues.

Mover: Erin Jones, Rainbow Round Table Councilor

Seconders: Deb Sica, Public Library Association Councilor

Julia Warga, International Relations Round Table Councilor

**2025-2026 Memorial #1
2026 ALA Winter Meeting**

Amanda Jones, Louisiana Chapter Councilor

Sam Helmick, ALA President

Alexandra Rivera, Councilor-at-Large

Anchalee Panigabutra-Roberts, Councilor-at-Large

Jennifer Ferriss, SustainRT Councilor

Mario Gonzalez, Councilor-at-Large

Maria McCauley, ALA President Elect

Nick Buron, ALA Executive Board

Gladys Smiley Bell, Councilor-at-Large

Endorsers:

Core

International Relations Round Table

Public Library Association

Rainbow Round Table