



# ***Collection Development and Maintenance Policy***

## **Purpose and Scope of the Collection**

The James Blackstone Memorial Library (“the Library”) inspires and enriches curious minds, welcomes and connects community to community, and helps our community learn, succeed, and thrive by providing essential access to information, resources, and unique shared experiences. The Library is a free public library whose aim is to provide a useful collection of materials for the interest, information, and enlightenment of all residents. In developing and adopting this policy, the Board of Trustees recognizes the importance of the Library as a place for voluntary inquiry, the dissemination of information and ideas, and the promotion of free expression and free access to ideas by the community.

Care is taken to assure that the collection, as a whole, represents a wide range of varied and diverging viewpoints, both with respect to authors and creators of materials, and to the users with their divergent interests and information needs. The staff must select materials reflecting the scope of user needs and interests. Selection must be customized to the community of users served rather than be a reflection of the tastes, views, and interests of the individual selector.

## **Intellectual Freedom and Censorship**

The Library adheres to the principles of intellectual freedom adopted by the American Library Association as expressed in its Library Bill of Rights (see APPENDIX A), Access to Library Resources and Services for Minors: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights (see APPENDIX B), Freedom to Read (see APPENDIX C), and Freedom to View (see APPENDIX D) statements. No library material, display or program shall be removed, or programs be cancelled, because of origin, background or viewpoints expressed in such material, display, or program or because of the origin, background, or viewpoints of the creator of such material, display or program.

## **Controversial Materials**

The library recognizes not all users will greet all materials with the same degree of enthusiasm and regard. Some materials selected for the collections may seem controversial, contrary to the mainstream culture and even distasteful to some library users. It is the right of the individual not to read, view, or hear materials that the individual considers objectionable. It is never the right of any library user or users to deny access to library materials to others.

## **Responsibility for Selection**

Librarians responsible for the selection of library materials are professionally trained to curate and develop a collection that provides residents with the widest array of informational, educational, and entertaining materials. The ultimate responsibility for materials chosen and

resource access lies with the Library Director. All staff members are encouraged to participate in the selection of Library resources.

### **General Selection Criteria**

The Blackstone Library selects, acquires, organizes, and preserves library materials both of current interest and of permanent value. Content, quality of writing, and readability are major considerations. The following criteria constitute general guidelines for consideration in purchasing all materials. Included in the collections are monographs (print), periodicals, DVDs, and books on CDs, music CDs, electronic resources, and realia. The criteria are not intended to exclude consideration of standards appropriate to particular formats of materials. While a single standard cannot be applied to each work, the following general criteria are professionally accepted standards and are used in selecting materials for purchase or subscription by the Blackstone Library:

- Importance and value to the collection;
- Reputation, credibility, and/or authoritativeness of the author, artist, publisher, or producer;
- Current appeal, popular demand, and timeliness;
- Significance of the subject matter;
- Local interest;
- Availability or scarcity of materials on the subject;
- Cost (under predetermined maximum by type of item and budgeting limitations);
- Level of difficulty and specialization;
- Reviews, summaries, and descriptions of materials;
- Format suitability;
- Space availability/constraints;
- Availability of materials within the LION consortium;
- Physical quality and level of durability;
- Inclusion in indexes, bibliographies, and standard lists.

Some of the materials not collected: abridged books and text books. All library materials are evaluated and made accessible in accordance with the protections against discrimination set forth in section 46a-64 of the CT General Statutes, including, but not limited to, discrimination on the basis of race, color, sex, gender identity, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, or disability.

### **The Library Collections**

The Library develops and maintains the following six collections in line with its core mission and the purpose for which each collection exists.

#### **ADULT COLLECTIONS (non-fiction and fiction)**

**Purpose:** The Adult Collections are developed to meet the diverse needs and interests of the community with preference given to materials that are positively reviewed in standard selection tools.

**Popular Materials:** The library responds to public demand for popular materials by featuring current, high-demand, high-interest materials in a variety of formats for persons of all ages. The library promotes browsing and easy access to popular materials. Staff are knowledgeable about current popular interests, publishing trends, and “hot” titles.

**Non-Fiction:** The library acquires materials which provide a core of basic knowledge. In addition, the library selects, makes accessible, and promotes the use of materials which address contemporary issues, provide self-help information, facilitate continuing education, enhance job-related knowledge and skills, increase knowledge of affairs of the community, the country, and the world, support undergraduate course work, support business, cultural, recreational and civic interests in the community, nourish intellectual, aesthetic, creative, and spiritual growth, and present different viewpoints on issues.

**Sources:** Primary selection sources for adult materials include, but are not limited to *Library Journal*, *New York Times Book Review*, *Publishers Weekly*, online review sources and standard bestseller lists including those appearing in the *New York Times Book Review*. The Library will consider materials that are in advance demand prior to review, especially upon recommendation by library users and when such materials fall into the categories of high-interest topics, such as those heavily promoted through media.

**Formats:** Included are hardcover and softcover books, periodicals, DVDs, books on CD, eBooks, eAudio and other electronic resources. The formats chosen depend upon affordability, popularity, availability through the consortium, and patron preference.

**Priorities for Purchase:** The fiction collection focuses on, but is not limited to, general fiction, mysteries, science fiction, short stories, Westerns, large print, honor paperbacks (which may be borrowed without a library card), “hot picks,” and book club sets. The non-fiction collection includes, but is not limited to, materials from each of the Dewey subject areas and “hot picks.” From time to time, social change or community interests will impact upon collection development and certain areas of the collection will receive high priority emphasis.

## **YOUNG ADULT COLLECTION**

**Purpose:** The Young Adult Collection bridges the gap in reading and interest levels between the Children and Adult Collections. It is intended to fulfill the needs of young adults for popular, recreational, developmental, and topical reading that may be related to the needs of students, but does not include school textbooks.

**Sources:** Selection is made on the basis of positive reviews from standard library reviewing sources, some of which are dedicated solely to the review of materials for young adult users. Other sources include publisher catalogs, requests and suggestions from the collection’s users. Standard reviewing sources include, but are not limited to *School Library Journal* and *VOYA (Voice of Youth Advocates)*.

**Formats:** Fiction and non-fiction print collections in hardcover, softcover, graphic novels, books on CD, eBooks, eAudio, and other electronic resources are included.

**Priorities for Purchase:** This is a collection oriented to selections of popular material. Fiction, in both hardcover and softcover editions, and titles from the Branford High School Summer Reading list are generally a priority. However, the interests of young adults may result in other priorities being chosen.

**Users:** Materials in the Young Adult Collection are of interest to those twelve to eighteen years of age (grades six through twelve).

### **CHILDREN'S COLLECTIONS (non-fiction and fiction)**

The library encourages families to develop an interest in reading, learning, and library use by providing services and collections for children and young adults, including developmental materials and children's/parents' literature. The library promotes early reading, acceptance of reading, and stresses lifelong learning and use of libraries.

**Purpose:** The Children's Collections contain materials appropriate to the needs and interests of children from infancy through sixth grade. The collections also include materials of interest to adults concerned with these age groups. The collections strive to present a variety of points of view to enable children to better understand their world. Materials are selected to reflect the wide spectra of reading, comprehension, and maturity levels present in this population, as well as for cultural diversity. Not every item in these collections is appropriate for every child. However, the Library cannot act "in loco parentis." It is the responsibility of the parent or guardian to guide the selection of materials by their children.

**Sources:** Selection of materials is primarily made on the basis of positive reviews from standard library reviewing sources (e.g. *Publishers Weekly*, *School Library Journal*, etc.) Some materials are selected from vendors' or publishers' catalogs or websites when no reviews are readily available. This is especially true of non-print items. When there are no reviews available, the other general selection criteria are used. Patron suggestions are given serious consideration.

**Formats:** The Children's Collections include: books, books on CD, eBooks, eAudio, graphic novels, toys, DVDs, and other electronic resources.

**Priorities:** Materials are selected to meet the Children's Collection Purpose stated above. While materials are selected that help fulfill the needs of elementary aged students, the Library does not interpret curriculum support as a role. Thus, textbooks (often found in school media centers) are not purchased.

**Users:** The primary users are children. Users also include family members, those working with children, children's caretakers, and students of children's literature.

### **THE REFERENCE COLLECTION**

The library stresses convenient, timely access to quality information needed for daily living and decision-making for community residents for all ages and reading levels. The collection emphasizes informational materials to satisfy individual, business, and community needs.

**Purpose:** The Reference Collection contains a wide range of material in all of the Dewey classifications. Materials are classified "Reference" because of the recurring demand for the

information they contain. The collection has been developed to meet the broad informational needs of the community, but is not intended to serve as an academic or research collection.

The scarcity of some information and/or the demand for it requires that a reference depository be maintained where certain information is always available to the staff and public. The high cost of some printed sources makes the purchase of multiple copies unrealistic.

**Sources:** Criteria used in developing the collection may include: ease of use, authority and reputation of author and publisher, as well as cost. Input from staff and public help shape the development of the reference collection. Standard collection tools for selection are used. Company representatives, brochures, websites, and catalogs are also consulted when selecting reference materials.

**Formats:** The Reference Collection contains print materials and other formats including online databases.

**Priorities:** The focus is on providing “the best and most important” information of a reference nature. The emphasis in developing the Reference Collection is to build and strengthen the quality of the collection in order to answer questions received in-person, by telephone, through the mail, email and interlibrary loan. Individual, business and community needs for information are a priority consideration. Priorities also include works that provide broad, in-depth, current and retrospective coverage. Frequently demanded topics are considered as much a priority as are scholarly topics of reference.

**Users:** The Collection serves the information needs of the general reader.

## **THE NON-PRINT COLLECTION**

**Purpose:** The Blackstone Library, in order to serve the community needs and interests for educational, informational, and entertainment materials in non-print formats, selects, makes available and encourages the use of DVDs, streaming services, music CDs, eBooks, eAudio, books on CD, and other resources. Materials in all genres/subjects, by many different artists/producers, will be collected as long as the subject material and its treatment is deemed suitable to its particular format. The Library does not acquire materials specifically for school or college curriculum use. Rather, emphasis has been placed on developing a general collection of DVDs, streaming services, CDs, books on CD, eBooks and eAudio, and items/equipment with wide appeal.

**Selection Criteria:** The selection of these non-print materials follows the same standards as those for print materials. However, this material is recognized to have some fundamental differences and should be evaluated accordingly.

Films and TV programs are evaluated as a whole and not on the basis of particular scenes or segments.

Music will also be evaluated as a whole and not on the basis of a particular piece of music/song or songs.

A work will not be excluded from the collection because it presents an aspect of life honestly or because it exhibits frankness of expression. An item need not meet all of the criteria to be acceptable. In some cases, materials will be judged primarily on the following:

- Artistic merit;
- Scholarship;
- Availability at other LION consortium libraries;
- Value as a historic record;
- As critical to the information needs of the community;
- Substantial demand.

Some items are judged primarily in terms of artistic merit or documentation of the times, while others are selected to satisfy the recreational and informational needs of the community. If an artist, in seeking realistic representation of the human condition, includes material that is candid or contains dialogue with vulgar or offensive language, such inclusion will not be considered reason for rejection if the material otherwise meets standards for acquisition.

**Sources:** Selection is based upon reviews in professional review sources, such as respected online reviews and *Library Journal*.

**Evaluation:** The collection is continually evaluated in terms of circulation performance, currency, content inclusion, scope, depth of coverage, and popularity. The collection as a whole is continually analyzed for subject strengths, weaknesses, and omissions. Continuous weeding and responsible replacement of damaged/lost material aid in maintaining a collection that reflects changing community needs and Library goals.

## **DIGITAL COLLECTIONS/DATABASES**

Wherever possible, the Library makes electronic information available in the Library and remotely. In choosing to purchase or license electronic databases, the Library applies the same standards for selection as for print materials. However, the Library recognizes that it does not have the same control over electronic databases as it has over its in-house print materials. The Library will make every effort to provide assistance and ensure that the public learns how to use its electronic databases.

## **BRANFORD HISTORY COLLECTION**

**Purpose:** The Branford History Collection is the Town of Branford's local history/archival collection.

**Sources:** Sources for selections to the collection may include: Branford family genealogies and family papers, Branford town information, selected Connecticut information, suggestions from colleagues, patron requests, and local publications.

**Selection Criteria:** Since this collection is archival and has historical value, selections are not generally subject to external reviewing. Additions are made to the collection if the Library believes they are or will be of historical interest.

## **DEACCESSIONING IN LIBRARY COLLECTIONS**

Systematic removal of materials is essential in order to maintain the quality, currency, and purpose of Library collections. Each separate collection within the Blackstone Library has predetermined formulas for weeding (removal of library items from the collections). Factors considered in the examination of materials for removal include:

- *Accuracy*: currently misleading or inaccurate;
- *Physical condition*: poor condition and not repairable;
- *Dated*: superseded by a new edition or by newer and better information on the subject;
- *Significance*: no discernible merit;
- *Relevancy*: is irrelevant in this collection,
- *Space constraints*: availability at other LION consortium libraries or statewide,
- *Circulation*: not been used for a long time.

## **GIFTS AND DONATIONS TO THE COLLECTION**

The Library accepts donations of books and other materials that are in good condition. The Library determines which materials it will accept. This determination may vary according to current need.

Generally, these donations are accepted without restrictions and are considered outright gifts to be used at the Library's discretion. In the case of valuable donations, the Donor and the Library Director may agree to conditions under which such donations are received by the Library and under what circumstances the conditional donation would be returned to the Donor.

Donations that are not added to the collection will be sent to the Friends of the Blackstone Library for resale.

## **TAX DEDUCTIONS AND APPRAISALS**

Donors of materials to the Library may receive a tax deduction; but the Library is prohibited by law from assuming the responsibility for determining valuations. The Library Staff is not permitted to provide appraisals nor establish values of donations. Rather, the donor is responsible for evaluating proposed gifts of materials that may have considerable value.

## **LIBRARY PATRON SUGGESTIONS ABOUT THE COLLECTIONS**

The Blackstone Library Board of Trustees recognizes the importance of hearing from the public regarding material selection. User recommendations are seriously considered, and are judged using the selection criteria above. If the Library determines not to acquire the item for the collection because of cost, format, or degree of technicality, etc., an attempt will be made to borrow it for the patron through the interlibrary loan network.

## **PROCESS FOR RECOMMENDATION OR RECONSIDERATION OF PURCHASE OF LIBRARY MATERIALS**

The Library limits consideration of requests to reconsider materials, displays, or programs to individual residents of Branford. If you wish to recommend materials for purchase or request reconsideration of library resources, please review the Library's Materials Review and Reconsideration Policy.

*Adopted by the Board of Trustees September 22, 2011*

*Amended by the Board of Trustees May 6, 2020; July 13, 2022; September 7, 2022; September 3, 2025*



## APPENDIX A

### THE LIBRARY BILL OF RIGHTS

The American Library Association affirms that all libraries are forums for information and ideas, and that the following basic policies should guide their services.

- I. Books and other library resources should be provided for the interest, information, and enlightenment of all people of the community the library serves. Materials should not be excluded because of the origin, age, background, or views of those contributing to their creation.
- II. Libraries should provide materials and information presenting all points of view on current and historical issues. Materials should not be proscribed or removed because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval.
- III. Libraries should challenge censorship in the fulfillment of their responsibility to provide information and enlightenment.
- IV. Libraries should cooperate with all persons and groups concerned with resisting abridgment of free expression and free access to ideas.
- V. A person's right to use a library should not be denied or abridged because of origin, age, background, or views.
- VI. Libraries which make exhibit spaces and meeting rooms available to the public they serve should make such facilities available on an equitable basis, regardless of the beliefs or affiliations of individuals or groups requesting their use.
- VII. All people, regardless of origin, age, background, or views, possess a right to privacy and confidentiality in their library use. Libraries should advocate for, educate about, and protect people's privacy, safeguarding all library use data, including personally identifiable information.

Adopted June 19, 1939, by the ALA Council; amended October 14, 1944; June 18, 1948; February 2, 1961; June 27, 1967; January 23, 1980; January 29, 2019.

Inclusion of "age" reaffirmed January 23, 1996.

## APPENDIX B

### ACCESS TO LIBRARY RESOURCES AND SERVICES FOR MINORS: AN INTERPRETATION OF THE LIBRARY BILL OF RIGHTS

The American Library Association supports equal and equitable access to all library resources and services by users of all ages. Library policies and procedures that effectively deny minors equal and equitable access to all library resources and services available to other users is in violation of the American Library Association's *Library* [NOTE: I italicized the preceding word, but that format change didn't show up as marked.] *Bill of Rights*. The American Library Association opposes all attempts to restrict access to library services, materials, and facilities based on the age of library users.

Article V of the *Library Bill of Rights* states, "A person's right to use a library should not be denied or abridged because of origin, age, background, or views." The right to use a library includes free access to, and unrestricted use of, all the services, materials, and facilities the library has to offer. Every restriction on access to, and use of, library resources, based solely on the chronological age, apparent maturity, educational level, literacy skills, emancipatory or other legal status of users violates Article V. This includes minors who do not have a parent or guardian available to sign a library card application or permission slip. Unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness should be able to obtain a library card regardless of library policies related to chronological age.

School and public libraries are charged with the mission of providing services and resources to meet the diverse interests and informational needs of the communities they serve. Services, materials, and facilities that fulfill the needs and interests of library users at different stages in their personal development are a necessary part of providing library services and should be determined on an individual basis. Equitable access to all library resources and services should not be abridged based on chronological age, apparent maturity, educational level, literacy skills, legal status, or through restrictive scheduling and use policies.

Libraries should not limit the selection and development of library resources simply because minors will have access to them. A library's failure to acquire materials on the grounds that minors may be able to access those materials diminishes the credibility of the library in the community and restricts access for all library users.

Children and young adults unquestionably possess First Amendment rights, including the right to receive information through the library in print, sound, images, data, social media, online applications, games, technologies, programming, and other formats.<sup>1</sup> Constitutionally protected speech cannot be suppressed solely to protect children or young adults from ideas or images a legislative body believes to be unsuitable for them.<sup>2</sup> Libraries and their library governing bodies should not resort to age restrictions in an effort to avoid actual or anticipated objections, because only a court of law can determine whether or not content is constitutionally protected.

Article VII of the *Library Bill of Rights* states, "All people, regardless of origin, age, background, or views, possess a right to privacy and confidentiality in their library use." This includes students and minors, who have a right to be free from any unreasonable intrusion into or surveillance of their lawful library use.<sup>3</sup>

The mission, goals, and objectives of libraries cannot authorize libraries and their governing bodies to assume, abrogate, or overrule the rights and responsibilities of parents and guardians. As “Libraries: An American Value” states, “We affirm the responsibility and the right of all parents and guardians to guide their own children’s use of the library and its resources and services.”<sup>4</sup> Libraries and their governing bodies cannot assume the role of parents or the functions of parental authority in the private relationship between parent and child. Libraries and their governing bodies shall ensure that only parents and guardians have the right and the responsibility to determine their children’s—and only their children’s—access to library resources. Parents and guardians who do not want their children to have access to specific library services, materials, or facilities should so advise their own children. Libraries and library governing bodies should not use rating systems to inhibit a minor’s access to materials.<sup>5</sup>

Libraries and their governing bodies have a legal and professional obligation to ensure that all members of the communities they serve have free and equitable access to a diverse range of library resources and services that is inclusive, regardless of content, approach, or format. This principle of library service applies equally to all users, minors as well as adults. Lack of access to information can be harmful to minors. Libraries and their governing bodies must uphold this principle in order to provide adequate and effective service to minors.

<sup>1</sup> *Brown v. Entertainment Merchant’s Association, et al.* 564 U.S. 08-1448 (2011).

<sup>2</sup> *Erznoznik v. City of Jacksonville*, 422 U.S. 205 (1975): “Speech that is neither obscene as to youths nor subject to some other legitimate proscription cannot be suppressed solely to protect the young from ideas or images that a legislative body thinks unsuitable for them. In most circumstances, the values protected by the First Amendment are no less applicable when government seeks to control the flow of information to minors.” See also *Tinker v. Des Moines School Dist.*, 393 U.S.503 (1969); *West Virginia Bd. of Ed. v. Barnette*, 319 U.S. 624 (1943); *AAMA v. Kendrick*, 244 F.3d 572 (7th Cir. 2001).

<sup>3</sup> “[Privacy: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights](#),” adopted June 19, 2002, by the ALA Council; amended July 1, 2014; and June 24, 2019.

<sup>4</sup> “[Libraries: An American Value](#),” adopted on February 3, 1999, by ALA Council.

<sup>5</sup> “[Rating Systems: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights](#),” adopted on June 30, 2015, by ALA Council; amended June 25, 2019.

Adopted June 30, 1972, by the ALA Council; amended July 1, 1981; July 3, 1991; June 30, 2004; July 2, 2008 *under previous name* “Free Access to Libraries for Minors”; July 1, 2014; and June 25, 2019.

## **APPENDIX C**

### **THE FREEDOM TO READ STATEMENT**

The freedom to read is essential to our democracy. It is continuously under attack. Private groups and public authorities in various parts of the country are working to remove or limit access to reading materials, to censor content in schools, to label "controversial" views, to distribute lists of "objectionable" books or authors, and to purge libraries. These actions apparently rise from a view that our national tradition of free expression is no longer valid; that censorship and suppression are needed to counter threats to safety or national security, as well as to avoid the subversion of politics and the corruption of morals. We, as individuals devoted to reading and as librarians and publishers responsible for disseminating ideas, wish to assert the public interest in the preservation of the freedom to read.

Most attempts at suppression rest on a denial of the fundamental premise of democracy: that the ordinary individual, by exercising critical judgment, will select the good and reject the bad. We trust Americans to recognize propaganda and misinformation, and to make their own decisions about what they read and believe. We do not believe they are prepared to sacrifice their heritage of a free press in order to be "protected" against what others think may be bad for them. We believe they still favor free enterprise in ideas and expression.

These efforts at suppression are related to a larger pattern of pressures being brought against education, the press, art and images, films, broadcast media, and the Internet. The problem is not only one of actual censorship. The shadow of fear cast by these pressures leads, we suspect, to an even larger voluntary curtailment of expression by those who seek to avoid controversy or unwelcome scrutiny by government officials.

Such pressure toward conformity is perhaps natural to a time of accelerated change. And yet suppression is never more dangerous than in such a time of social tension. Freedom has given the United States the elasticity to endure strain. Freedom keeps open the path of novel and creative solutions, and enables change to come by choice. Every silencing of a heresy, every enforcement of an orthodoxy, diminishes the toughness and resilience of our society and leaves it the less able to deal with controversy and difference.

Now as always in our history, reading is among our greatest freedoms. The freedom to read and write is almost the only means for making generally available ideas or manners of expression that can initially command only a small audience. The written word is the natural medium for the new idea and the untried voice from which come the original contributions to social growth. It is essential to the extended discussion that serious thought requires, and to the accumulation of knowledge and ideas into organized collections.

We believe that free communication is essential to the preservation of a free society and a creative culture. We believe that these pressures toward conformity present the danger of limiting the range and variety of inquiry and expression on which our democracy and our culture depend. We believe that every American community must jealously guard the freedom to publish and to circulate, in order to preserve its own freedom to read. We believe that publishers and librarians have a profound responsibility to give validity to that freedom to read by making it possible for the readers to choose freely from a variety of offerings.

The freedom to read is guaranteed by the Constitution. Those with faith in free people will stand firm on these constitutional guarantees of essential rights and will exercise the responsibilities that accompany these rights.

We therefore affirm these propositions:

1. It is in the public interest for publishers and librarians to make available the widest diversity of views and expressions, including those that are unorthodox, unpopular, or considered dangerous by the majority.

Creative thought is by definition new, and what is new is different. The bearer of every new thought is a rebel until that idea is refined and tested. Totalitarian systems attempt to maintain themselves in power by the ruthless suppression of any concept that challenges the established orthodoxy. The power of a democratic system to adapt to change is vastly strengthened by the freedom of its citizens to choose widely from among conflicting opinions offered freely to them. To stifle every nonconformist idea at birth would mark the end of the democratic process. Furthermore, only through the constant activity of weighing and selecting can the democratic mind attain the strength demanded by times like these. We need to know not only what we believe but why we believe it.

2. Publishers, librarians, and booksellers do not need to endorse every idea or presentation they make available. It would conflict with the public interest for them to establish their own political, moral, or aesthetic views as a standard for determining what should be published or circulated.

Publishers and librarians serve the educational process by helping to make available knowledge and ideas required for the growth of the mind and the increase of learning. They do not foster education by imposing as mentors the patterns of their own thought. The people should have the freedom to read and consider a broader range of ideas than those that may be held by any single librarian or publisher or government or church. It is wrong that what one can read should be confined to what another thinks proper.

3. It is contrary to the public interest for publishers or librarians to bar access to writings on the basis of the personal history or political affiliations of the author.

No art or literature can flourish if it is to be measured by the political views or private lives of its creators. No society of free people can flourish that draws up lists of writers to whom it will not listen, whatever they may have to say.

4. There is no place in our society for efforts to coerce the taste of others, to confine adults to the reading matter deemed suitable for adolescents, or to inhibit the efforts of writers to achieve artistic expression.

To some, much of modern expression is shocking. But is not much of life itself shocking? We cut off literature at the source if we prevent writers from dealing with the stuff of life. Parents and teachers have a responsibility to prepare the young to meet the diversity of experiences in life to which they will be exposed, as they have

a responsibility to help them learn to think critically for themselves. These are affirmative responsibilities, not to be discharged simply by preventing them from reading works for which they are not yet prepared. In these matters values differ, and values cannot be legislated; nor can machinery be devised that will suit the demands of one group without limiting the freedom of others.

5. It is not in the public interest to force a reader to accept the prejudgment of a label characterizing any expression or its author as subversive or dangerous.

The ideal of labeling presupposes the existence of individuals or groups with wisdom to determine by authority what is good or bad for others. It presupposes that individuals must be directed in making up their minds about the ideas they examine. But Americans do not need others to do their thinking for them.

6. It is the responsibility of publishers and librarians, as guardians of the people's freedom to read, to contest encroachments upon that freedom by individuals or groups seeking to impose their own standards or tastes upon the community at large; and by the government whenever it seeks to reduce or deny public access to public information.

It is inevitable in the give and take of the democratic process that the political, the moral, or the aesthetic concepts of an individual or group will occasionally collide with those of another individual or group. In a free society individuals are free to determine for themselves what they wish to read, and each group is free to determine what it will recommend to its freely associated members. But no group has the right to take the law into its own hands, and to impose its own concept of politics or morality upon other members of a democratic society. Freedom is no freedom if it is accorded only to the accepted and the inoffensive. Further, democratic societies are more safe, free, and creative when the free flow of public information is not restricted by governmental prerogative or self-censorship.

7. It is the responsibility of publishers and librarians to give full meaning to the freedom to read by providing books that enrich the quality and diversity of thought and expression. By the exercise of this affirmative responsibility, they can demonstrate that the answer to a "bad" book is a good one, the answer to a "bad" idea is a good one.

The freedom to read is of little consequence when the reader cannot obtain matter fit for that reader's purpose. What is needed is not only the absence of restraint, but the positive provision of opportunity for the people to read the best that has been thought and said. Books are the major channel by which the intellectual inheritance is handed down, and the principal means of its testing and growth. The defense of the freedom to read requires of all publishers and librarians the utmost of their faculties, and deserves of all Americans the fullest of their support.

We state these propositions neither lightly nor as easy generalizations. We here stake out a lofty claim for the value of the written word. We do so because we believe that it is possessed of enormous variety and usefulness, worthy of cherishing and keeping free. We realize that the application of these propositions may mean the dissemination of ideas and manners of

expression that are repugnant to many persons. We do not state these propositions in the comfortable belief that what people read is unimportant. We believe rather that what people read is deeply important; that ideas can be dangerous; but that the suppression of ideas is fatal to a democratic society. Freedom itself is a dangerous way of life, but it is ours.

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This statement was originally issued in May of 1953 by the Westchester Conference of the American Library Association and the American Book Publishers Council, which in 1970 consolidated with the American Educational Publishers Institute to become the Association of American Publishers.

Adopted June 25, 1953, by the ALA Council and the AAP Freedom to Read Committee; amended January 28, 1972; January 16, 1991; July 12, 2000; June 30, 2004.

## **APPENDIX D**

### **FREEDOM TO VIEW**

The FREEDOM TO VIEW, along with the freedom to speak, to hear, and to read, is protected by the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States. In a free society, there is no place for censorship of any medium of expression. Therefore these principles are affirmed:

To provide the broadest access to film, video, and other audiovisual materials because they are a means for the communication of ideas. Liberty of circulation is essential to insure the constitutional guarantees of freedom of expression.

To protect the confidentiality of all individuals and institutions using film, video, and other audiovisual materials.

To provide film, video, and other audiovisual materials which represent a diversity of views and expression. Selection of a work does not constitute or imply agreement with or approval of the content.

To provide a diversity of viewpoints without the constraint of labeling or prejudging film, video, or other audiovisual materials on the basis of the moral, religious, or political beliefs of the producer or filmmaker or on the basis of controversial content.

To contest vigorously, by all lawful means, every encroachment upon the public's freedom to view.

This statement was originally drafted by the Freedom to View Committee of the American Film and Video Association (formerly the Educational Film Library Association) and was adopted by the AFVA Board of Directors in February 1979. This statement was updated and approved by the AFVA Board of Directors in 1989.

Endorsed by the ALA Council January 10, 1990