

News Release: American Library Association

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 1979

The Office for Library Personnel Resources Advisory Committee Minimum Qualifications for Librarians Task Force has won the 1979 J. Morris Jones World Book Encyclopedia ALA Goal Award.

The \$5,000 grant is made annually to a unit of the American Library Association by the ALA Awards Committee, chaired by Kay Cassell, and World Book Childcraft International, Inc., "to encourage and advance the development of public, academic and/or school library service and librarianship through recognition and support of programs which implement the Goals and Objectives of ALA." The award honors J. Morris Jones, who worked as editor-in-chief of World Book Encyclopedia from 1940 until his death in 1962.

In his proposal for the grant, Task Force Chairperson Keith Cottam wrote that the "masters degree librarianship (ie. the MLS or variant designations) is being disputed as a minimum qualification for librarians, an issue which must be given the utmost priority and support for resolution. An immediate and intensive effort is necessary to clearly identify, describe and assess the potential impact of the laws, regulations and guidelines related to equal employment opportunity which are influencing the traditional practices of recruiting, selecting, hiring, and promoting librarians."

Some of the challenges to the MLS as a professional employment standard in libraries include: the adoption of alternative or equivalent qualifications

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add one--Task Force

for librarian jobs other than the formal "MLS" education; the emergence of job-related employee selection systems based on technical methods such as job analysis and validation studies; and the consideration of certification for licensing as intended protection against discrimination charges.

The Task Force plans to address the issue at a three-day retreat in the fall that will involve members of the Task Force, OLPR staff liaisons, OLPR Advisory Committee Liaison, evaluators and selected legal and technical consultants. The Task Force believes that the material developed at the retreat should be influential as a vehicle for informing, educating, shaping opinions and actions, and elevating the level of professional awareness regarding professional employment selection within the law. Recommendations for ALA's role in this area of concern will also be forthcoming.

Prior to the retreat, at the ALA Summer Conference, the Task Force will focus on the issue through a structured group process that will prepare a statement that will describe the relevance of the issue to the library profession and list the problems that will be addressed at the retreat.

There will be immediate evaluation and feedback of the retreat; however, the proposal stresses that the most critical indicator of the success of the project will be found in the nature and quality of recommendations, guidelines and other documentation produced.