

News Release: American Library Association

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From: Peggy Barber, Director
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Allie Beth Martin, President of the American Library Association (ALA) and a major figure in the library profession, died Sunday (April 11) of cancer in Tulsa, Oklahoma.

A librarian for 41 years, Mrs. Martin served since 1963 as Director of the Tulsa-City-County Library System. As ALA President she was to have presided over the Association's conference this July, marking the organization's centennial year.

A well-known and respected librarian, Mrs. Martin also served as President of the Arkansas, Oklahoma and Southwest Library Associations. She held both bachelor's and master's degrees in library science from the George Peabody College for Teachers (1939) and the Columbia University School of Library Service (1949), respectively.

Mrs. Martin who was a frequent contributor to the library press, also served as editor of the ARKANSAS LIBRARIAN. She was the author in 1972 of THE PUBLIC LIBRARY: A STRATEGY FOR CHANGE, a far-reaching national study of the public library's current condition and its role in serving Americans during the last quarter of this century.

Robert Wedgeworth, Executive Director of the ALA, called Mrs. Martin "one of the most dynamic and influential librarians in our nation's history" and characterized her contribution to library service as "invaluable. Under her leadership the Tulsa City County Public Library became a true center for educational and cultural

add 1. Allie Beth Martin

programs, reaching out to the diverse information needs of a complex metropolitan community."

As Director of the Tulsa library system, which serves more than 400,000 persons, Mrs. Martin was a strong advocate of the library's role as an informal, easily accessible learning center for the out-of-school adult. She was also a strong proponent of cooperation among state and regional library networks, and actively supported SLICE, the successful Southwestern Library Interstate Cooperative Effort.

Among her other active professional concerns were insuring equal opportunities for minority library personnel and establishing continuing library education programs for both professional and nonprofessionals. The innovative programs and services initiated by Mrs. Martin include an art competition which attracts entries from as many as 16 states, a circulating art collection for children, regularly scheduled concerts and plays, and FOCUS, a series of seminars designed to acquaint businessmen with the library's research facilities.

Mrs. Martin's library career was launched during her college days at Arkansas College in Batesville where she worked part-time in the college library. She later became librarian of the first Batesville Public Library. From there she moved to library positions in Little Rock and Osceola, and in 1949 was named head of the extension division and the children's department of the Tulsa Public Library.

A member of the ALA since 1935, Mrs. Martin has served on its Executive Board, has chaired its membership committee, and has served on the Boards of Directors of the Association's Children's Services Division and Public Library Association.

Mrs. Martin was recently recognized by the ALA which named her an honorary member and by the Tulsa library system which named a branch in her honor.

add 2. Allie Beth Martin

Sixty-one years old at her death, Mrs. Martin is survived by a daughter Elizabeth (Mrs. Hal) Piper, who lives in Moscow, and a grandson David.

An Allie Beth Martin Scholarship Fund has been established at the Tulsa City-County Library System, 400 Civic Center, Tulsa, Oklahoma 74103.