

## 40.2

At Midwinter, 2008, Council approved several revisions to the ALA Code of Ethics. In the document passed by Council, the sections of the Code were numbered as "ARTICLE X, ARTICLE Y, etc.," while the Code itself uses the numbering "1), 2), etc." PMC regards this difference as an editorial matter only, and has substituted the existing numbering system for the one used in the Council document. Otherwise, the changes put forth here are exactly as passed by Council.

At the 2008 ALA Annual Conference, the ALA Council Policy Monitoring Committee moved and Council voted to incorporate the following changes to Policy 40.2:

3): DELETE the current wording and REPLACE WITH: "We protect each library user's right to privacy and confidentiality with respect to information sought or received and resources consulted, borrowed, acquired, or transmitted."

4): DELETE the current wording and REPLACE WITH: "We respect intellectual property rights and advocate balance between the interests of information users and rights holders."

5): DELETE the current wording and REPLACE WITH: "We treat co-workers and other colleagues with respect, fairness, good faith, and advocate conditions of employment that safeguard the rights and welfare of all employees of our institutions."

### Code of Ethics of the American Library Association

As members of the American Library Association, we recognize the importance of codifying and making known to the profession and to the general public the ethical principles that guide the work of librarians, other professionals providing information services, library trustees and library staffs.

Ethical dilemmas occur when values are in conflict. The American Library Association Code of Ethics states the values to which we are committed, and embodies the ethical responsibilities of the profession in this changing information environment.

We significantly influence or control the selection, organization, preservation, and dissemination of information. In a political system grounded in an informed citizenry, we are members of a profession explicitly committed to intellectual freedom and the freedom of access to information. We have a special obligation to ensure the free flow of information and ideas to present and future generations.

The principles of this Code are expressed in broad statements to guide ethical decision making. These statements provide a framework; they cannot and do not dictate conduct to cover particular situations.

- I. We provide the highest level of service to all library users through appropriate and usefully organized resources; equitable service policies; equitable access; and accurate, unbiased, and courteous responses to all requests.
- II. We uphold the principles of intellectual freedom and resist all efforts to censor library resources.
- III. We protect each library user's right to privacy and confidentiality with respect to information sought or received and resources consulted, borrowed, acquired, or transmitted.
- IV. ~~We recognize and respect intellectual property rights.~~ We respect intellectual property rights and advocate balance between the interests of information users and rights holders.
- V. We treat co-workers and other colleagues with respect, fairness, and good faith, and advocate conditions of employment that safeguard the rights and welfare of all employees of our institutions.
- VI. We do not advance private interests at the expense of library users, colleagues, or our employing institutions.
- VII. We distinguish between our personal convictions and professional duties and do not allow our personal beliefs to interfere with fair representation of the aims of our institutions or the provision of access to their information resources.
- VIII. We strive for excellence in the profession by maintaining and enhancing our own knowledge and skills, by encouraging the professional development of co-workers, and by fostering the aspirations of potential members of the profession.

**Comment [e1]:** A comma was added to Article III, otherwise the text remained unchanged.

**Comment [e2]:** Article IV was completely rewritten.

The final version reads: "We respect intellectual property rights and advocate balance between the interests of information users and rights holders."

**Comment [e3]:** A comma was added to Article V, otherwise the text remained unchanged.

~~Adopted June 28, 1995, by the ALA Council~~

*Adopted 1981, Amended, 1995 AC, 2008 AC*

*revised by ALA Council at the 2008 Midwinter Mtg*

OLD

## American Library Association Code of Ethics

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- IV. We recognize and respect intellectual property rights.
- V. We treat co-workers and other colleagues with respect, fairness and good faith, and advocate conditions of employment that safeguard the rights and welfare of all employees of our institutions.
- VI. We do not advance private interests at the expense of library users, colleagues, or our employing institutions.
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- VIII. We strive for excellence in the profession by maintaining and enhancing our own knowledge and skills, by encouraging the professional development of co-workers, and by fostering the aspirations of potential members of the profession.

*Amended*

~~Adopted~~ by the ALA Council

June 28, 1995

7111  
*adopted 1981*

**INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE REPORT, CD#18.5-18.7, Exhibit 45. E. J. Josey, chair, moved and Council**

**VOTED.** To adopted CD#18.5, Resolution on Vo Thi Van, which read:

"That the American Library Association urges that the United States work directly with the Royal Thai government and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to fully reinvestigate [Vo Thi Van's] status and claim of eligibility for refugee status."

Councilor E.J. Josey moved and Council

**VOTED.** To adopt CD#18.6, Resolution on the United States Information Agency, which read: "That the American Library Association registers its strong opposition to the proposed transfer of the USIA to the State Department; and, that the United States Congress should allocate the needed funds to enable the USIA to continue to operate independently and to maintain its ability and flexibility to manage the public dialogue abroad for each of the U.S. government agencies which have lead roles in policy issues of foreign affairs significance; and, that the American Library Association urges all members of the United States Congress to oppose legislation that will undermine the USIA by merging it with another agency, cutting back its funding, reducing or eliminating USIA programs relating to library programs or the exchange of librarians; and, that copies of this resolution be submitted by the American Library Association in person or by regular or electronic mail to all members of the U.S. Congress, including chairs of the budget and foreign relations committees, the State Department, the White House and the media."

Councilor E.J. Josey moved and by **CONSENT**, Council voted that the American Library Association further the dissemination of the UNESCO Public Library Manifesto through the appropriate communication channels.

**COMMITTEE ON PROFESSIONAL ETHICS, CD#36-36.1, Exhibit 46.** Jeanne Isacco, chair, reported that the committee had completed a four-year process to revise the *ALA Code of Professional Ethics*. She emphasized that during this process, the committee had received numerous comments, many of which were incorporated into the revision. Lastly, she said that for several years, the committee had encouraged members in individual libraries to use the code, discuss the implications of each statement, and adopt it as part of their institution's practices. Isacco said the committee was anxious to encourage the adoption and, more importantly, the discussion of the Code after its adoption in local, regional or state libraries. She said that only by encouraging such discussion could the committee hope to make the Code a meaningful part of the library profession.

Jeanne Isacco and Councilor Carolyn Daniel moved the adoption of CD#36.1. Councilors Ronnie Budge and Susan M. Flannery moved to amend by substituting for Statement 6, which currently read: "*We do not advance interests at the expense of library users, colleagues, or employing institutions*" with the words: "*We avoid situations in which personal interests might be served or financial benefits gained at the expense of library users, colleagues, or our employing institutions.*"

Councilor Bernard Margolis proposed a friendly amendment, which was accepted by the mover, that the words "*private or*" be added to the amendment, which would then read: "*We avoid situations in which private or personal interests might be served or financial benefits gained at the expense of library users, colleagues, or our employing institutions.*"

Several Councilors spoke against the amendment and Council then

VOTED, To defeat the amendment to substituted the wording in Statement #6 of the *ALA Code of Professional Ethics*.

Council returned to the main motion.

Councilor Charles Bunge and Lynette Anderson moved to amend the title to read: "*ALA Code of Ethics for Library and Information Services*" and also, "*To amend paragraph 2 in the same manner.*" Bunge said he was troubled by the title of the document, since the Code was not limited to professional librarians and that it was a statement of ethics for all levels of staff, trustees and institutions. The title, he said, should reflect this.

Councilor Bunge then recommended that the title be shortened to *ALA Code of Ethics*. The change would be reflected in both the title and in the second paragraph of the document. Council then

VOTED, To amend the title of the ethics statement to *ALA Code of Ethics*

Councilors Martin Gomez and Linda Elliott moved to amend by striking from the first paragraph the words "*of work*" and adding the words "*that guide the work of library professionals.*" Councilor Larry Romans remarked that this seemed to be contrary to the previous action. The motion to strike was **DEFEATED**.

Council then

VOTED, To approve the *ALA Code of Ethics* as amended.

**COMMITTEE ON ORGANIZATION REPORT, CD#21.1, Exhibit 47.** Sarah Pritchard, chair, presented the first action item. She stated that COO agreed with the recommendation of the Executive Board that the Development Office Advisory Committee should be dissolved because its functions had been taken over by the Fund for America's Libraries. Pritchard said, however, that

# STATEMENT ON PROFESSIONAL ETHICS, 1981

## Introduction

Since 1939, the American Library Association has recognized the importance of codifying and making known to the public and the profession the principles which guide librarians in action. This latest revision of the CODE OF ETHICS reflects changes in the nature of the profession and in its social and institutional environment. It should be revised and augmented as necessary.

Librarians significantly influence or control the selection, organization, preservation, and dissemination of information. In a political system grounded in an informed citizenry, librarians are members of a profession explicitly committed to intellectual freedom and the freedom of access to information. We have a special obligation to ensure the free flow of information and ideas to present and future generations.

Librarians are dependent upon one another for the bibliographical resources that enable us to provide information services, and have obligations for maintaining the highest level of personal integrity and competence.

## Code of Ethics

- I. Librarians must provide the highest level of service through appropriate and usefully organized collections, fair and equitable circulation and service policies, and skillful, accurate, unbiased, and courteous responses to all requests for assistance.
- II. Librarians must resist all efforts by groups or individuals to censor library materials.
- III. Librarians must protect each user's right to privacy with respect to information sought or received, and materials consulted, borrowed, or acquired.
- IV. Librarians must adhere to the principles of due process and equality of opportunity in peer relationships and personnel actions.
- V. Librarians must distinguish clearly in their actions and statements between their personal philosophies and attitudes and those of an institution or professional body.
- VI. Librarians must avoid situations in which personal interests might be served or financial benefits gained at the expense of library users, colleagues, or the employing institution.

*Committee on Professional Ethics Report on revised  
Statement is available at Exh. 11, page 134  
of 1981 Annual Conf. Council minutes*

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*54.16*  
*40.2*  
*54.15*

AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

Item: LIBRARY PERSONNEL Item Number: 106.13  
 Approved by: ALA Council Page: 1 of 2  
 Issue Date: January 1975 Supersedes: \_\_\_\_\_

STATEMENT ON PROFESSIONAL ETHICS

Introduction

The American Library Association has a special concern for the free flow of information and ideas. Its views have been set forth in such policy statements as the Library Bill of Rights and the Freedom to Read Statement where it has said clearly that in addition to the generally accepted legal and ethical principles and the respect for intellectual freedom which should guide the action of every citizen, membership in the library profession carries with it special obligations and responsibilities.

Every citizen has the right as an individual to take part in public debate or to engage in social and political activity. The only restrictions on these activities are those imposed by specific and well-publicized laws and regulations which are generally applicable. However, since personal views and activities may be interpreted as representative of the institution in which a librarian is employed, proper precaution should be taken to distinguish between private actions and those one is authorized to take in the name of an institution.

The statement which follows sets forth certain ethical norms which, while not exclusive to, are basic to librarianship. *It will be augmented by explanatory interpretations and additional statements as they may be needed.*

The Statement

A Librarian

has a special responsibility to maintain the principles of the Library Bill of Rights.

should learn and faithfully execute the policies of the institution of which one is a part and should endeavor to change those which conflict with the spirit of the Library Bill of Rights.

AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

Item: LIBRARY PERSONNEL Item Number: 106.13  
Approved by: ALA Council Page: 2 of 2  
Issue Date: January 1975 Supersedes: \_\_\_\_\_

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must protect the essential confidential relationship which exists between a library user and the library.

must avoid any possibility of personal financial gain at the expense of the employing institution.

has an obligation to insure equality of opportunity and fair judgment of competence in actions dealing with staff appointments, retentions, and promotions.

has an obligation when making appraisals of the qualifications of any individual to report the facts clearly, accurately, and without prejudice, according to generally accepted guidelines concerning the disclosing of personal information.