

Highlights of SRRT History

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Highlights of SRRT History¹

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Good morning all. Since 1969, SRRT has been a strong voice for decades to push ALA in a more progressive direction. Some of the bravest and most principled people have fought hard to make ALA more relevant in our contemporary society. The fact is that history has proved us right over-and-over again on civil rights, environment, feminism, freedom of expression, LGBT equality, services to poor people, against militarism and US wars, and on whistleblowers.² One early SRRT victory was to establish “social responsibility” as a core value of the association.

Regrettably, in the current retrograde period we are seeing some of these victories overturned. Sadly, the core value of social responsibility was abolished last year, (along with the core values of democracy and privacy) which is already having negative consequences. Indeed, the history of SRRT is replete with pushing controversial issues to the forefront and eventually getting buy-in from the ALA leadership and Council. For example, SRRT had to fight hard to stop a 2019 proposal to downgrade the ALA Council to an advisory body under an all-powerful Executive Board. Early on SRRT won an expansion of the ALA Council with 100 at-large members, but that was reduced to 36 at-large in 2023. SRRT won support for a nuclear freeze in 1984, but the Council deleted that from the ALA Policy Manual last year.

I have been lucky to have known and been inspired by many of the past generation’s leaders that came out of SRRT, such as Herb and Mary Biblo, Sandy Berman, Mitch Freedman, Pat Schuman, Betty Turock, John Berry, and E.J. Josey.³ We have brought an incredible list of national progressive leaders to speak at ALA conferences, such as Daniel Ellsberg, Rosa Parks, Jesse Jackson, Cornell West, Bill McKibben, Phyllis Bennis, and Palestinian poet Mosab Abu Toha. And when Mitch Freedman was ALA President in 2002-2003, he brought in Naomi Klein, Amy Goodman, Michael Moore, Ralph Nader, and Winona LaDuke.

How it All Began

SRRT was established in 1969 as part of the larger social movements of the time that wanted to change the world. It immediately became ALA largest round table with 1050 members. The first meeting in January 1969 was full of librarians who were already political activists, working in the Free Speech Movement, Anti-Vietnam War, Black Panthers, labor unions, and other social change groups. People had such energy, enthusiasm, and commitment that they got up at 6 am and went to bed at 2 or 3 am.

John Berry, early SRRT member and long-time editor of *Library Journal* wrote: “...So incensed were many older members by the seemingly disrespectful demeanor of the ‘young rebels’ – their contempt for traditional values and authority, their long hair and short skirts, their uninhibited lifestyles, their disdain for the wisdom of their elders – that they opposed their very presence at microphones to interrupt the ‘business’ of the association by the insertion

of ‘issues.’

ALA President Eric Moon (1977-1978) wrote of the 1969 ALA Annual Conference, “Atlantic City was probably the greatest library convention in library history anywhere, any time. Anybody who was not there can’t have any idea how different it was from anything that ever happened before (or since, I might add).”

3,000 to 4,000 people attended the 1969 ALA Membership Meeting, and it lasted 10 hours!

The issues debated were:

- Intellectual freedom,
- Reform of curricula and an end to the ineffective ALA accreditation of library schools,
- The Equal Rights Amendment (for women’s equality) & moving ALA Midwinter out of Chicago because of Illinois’ failure to endorse ERA,
- Support for an Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty,
- Opposition to the Vietnam War, and
- Community control and advocacy for the urban poor.

The initial agenda included democratizing the Association. SRRT won:

- Open meetings,
- Ballot statements by candidates for President and Councilors,
- Changing ALA Council composition to 100 at-large members,
- Roll-call votes,
- Establishing an outreach office, and
- Social responsibility as an ALA “core value.”

Most of the original resolutions were adopted by ALA Council in 1971. The Council’s final report stated that ALA should be able to take a position on current social issues, and libraries could become more effective instruments for social change. These changes made it possible for younger and more progressive librarians to get elected to ALA’s governing body and to serve throughout the association.

Summing up SRRT’s first decade, Arthur Curley (1994-1995 ALA President) wrote that SRRT had made a profound difference in public library services throughout the country. Libraries have gone from collections-centric to people-centric. Public libraries in effect discovered their communities and embarked on new ways to reach the underserved. In 1979, there were 34 SRRT members in the ALA Council, and SRRT and Black Caucus activist E. J. Josey was elected to the ALA Executive Board!

I will highlight some issues that have made an impact on the profession and society.

Civil Rights

Little was accomplished on racism within ALA until the 1960s, and therefore few Black people

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were active in ALA. State library associations in the southern states were segregated, but the Civil Rights Movement included librarians like E.J. Josey; Major Owens, who helped found the New York State SRRT chapter and later became the only librarian elected to the US Congress (Brooklyn, following Shirley Chisholm); and Eric Moon who was the editor of *Library Journal* and ALA President from 1977 to 1978. In 1961, the activists succeeded in amending the Library Bill of Rights to prohibit discrimination based on race, religion, national origins, or political views, causing four southern state associations to withdraw from ALA. In 1964, the ALA Membership Meeting voted to prohibit ALA officers and staff from attending meetings of these chapters, but the ALA Executive Board subverted the boycott by declaring the policy only applied to the five top officers, and the ALA Council affirmed the Board's ruling. It was an uphill battle. E.J. founded the Black Caucus of ALA in 1970 and was one of the bravest and most effective early members of SRRT. He went on to serve in the ALA Council and become the first Black male ALA President from 1984 to 1985.

A major association-wide discussion around what constitutes appropriate issues for ALA's consideration erupted in 1972. David Berninghausen, Director at the University of Minnesota library school and chair of the ALA Council's Intellectual Freedom Committee advocated neutrality, that so-called non-library issues should only be addressed privately. E.J. Josey countered, "The picture of the librarian that emerges from his concept is that of a mere technician, or a human computer concerned with warehousing and distribution of books.... Finally, although those who have talked about bombing Vietnam back to the stone age may not have quite succeeded, one of our own number would have librarians rationalize themselves into a state of technological muteness and abandon the professionalization which they have fought so hard over so many years to achieve – all this in the name of intellectual freedom. If Berninghausen's proposals are what intellectual freedom is like, I for one want no part of it. As a black man who was born and grew up in the South, I have experienced this kind of "intellectual freedom," and I reject it as inimical to my freedom as a human being."

The Coretta Scott King Book Award for the best African American children's book was established in 1969, and became a SRRT Task Force in 1980, and a round table in 2022. Speakers included Rosa Parks at their annual breakfast in 1991. The Genesis Award was added in 1993 for the author or illustrator whose work shows promise and creativity.

The Speaker: A Film About Freedom, ALA's 1977 professionally made (in secret) film supposedly about the First Amendment deeply angered the Black Caucus of ALA and other progressives. The film's moral is that it is legitimate for a high school to invite a speaker, on free speech grounds, who claims that Black people are genetically inferior to white people. Sandy Berman circulated a protest statement. ALA's first black President, Clara Jones, and the ALA Executive Board were horrified when they viewed the film. But the ALA Council refused to take any action at the 1978 Midwinter Meeting, in full view of the national media and a crowd of 2000 to 3000 people. It is very disheartening to note that at a 2014 retrospective program titled, "Speaking about 'The Speaker,'" organized by the ALA Council's Intellectual Freedom Committee," all three panelists were supporters of the film. For more, see my editorial in *Progressive Librarian*, no. 42, Summer 2014 (freely available online).

At the 1995 Philadelphia Annual Conference, ALA President-Elect Mitch Freedman organized a

demonstration against the death sentence for Mumia Abu-Jamal, and SRRT passed a resolution asking Governor of Pennsylvania Tom Ridge to reverse the death sentence and allow an appeal.

The Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday Task Force affiliated with SRRT in 1999, and in 2000, began hosting its inspiring annual Sunrise Celebration. That meeting brings together representatives from numerous ALA bodies and ethnic caucus affiliates to read excerpts from one of King's publications. There is also a keynote speaker, call to action, and an ending where participants join hands and sing, *We Shall Overcome*. With the demise of the Midwinter Meeting/LibLearnX, it will have to be held virtually from now on. I will miss the in-person celebration tremendously.

The ALA Council passed SRRT's 2012 resolution against voter suppression, and followed up with a program in 2020, and a speaker at the 2022 MLK Jr. Sunrise Celebration. And SRRT won a 2015 resolution denouncing systemic racism, and another endorsing the Movement for Black Lives statement. SRRT's succeeded in passing its Midwinter 2016 resolution on advocating the change of the Library of Congress Subject Heading "Illegal Aliens" to "Undocumented Immigrants," but the US Congress blocked implementation. The Library of Congress finally replaced the heading with "Illegal Immigration" in 2021.

Collection Development

The SRRT Task Force on Alternatives in Publication (AIP) participated in an amazingly successful Book Fair in New York City during the 1974 ALA Annual Meeting. Over 300 small publishers and 10,000 people attended, including about 2000 librarians. But the backlash was intense, and the ALA Executive Director vowed to put the book fair out-of-business." In 1979, the SRRT Ethnic Materials Information Exchange Task Force published its first edition of the *Directory of Ethnic Publishers and Other Resource Organizations*. AIP sponsored many "Free Speech Buffets" at ALA conferences where local alternative and progressive publishers displayed their works in the 1990s and 2000s. They also published many editions of *Alternatives in Print*. The Jackie Eubanks Memorial Award promoted the alternative press in libraries.

Environment

In 1990, the SRRT Task Force on Environment motivated the ALA Council to urge librarians to celebrate Earth Day and provide environmental information. The Task Force began publishing *GreeNotes* in 1996. This work was reconstructed in the new Sustainability Round Table in 2013. SRRT and the Sustainability Round Table were unsuccessful in passing a resolution on divestment of fossil fuels from the ALA Endowment Fund at the 2013 Annual Conference. In 2017, the ALA Council recognized climate change as real and caused by humans, and libraries need to actively address that. But a resolution on socially responsible investments failed in 2018. The two round tables presented a massive report on divestment from fossil fuels in 2019 to the Endowment Trustees which helped turn the tide, since today 99% of the endowment is fossil free.

Feminism

The SRRT Task Force on Women (now Feminist Task Force) began its newsletter in 1970, and in 1974 and 1975, passed resolutions at the ALA Council on support for the Equal Rights Amendment, affirmative action, comparable pay for comparable worth, and non-sexist terminology. The Task Force motivated the creation of the Council Committee on the Status of Women in 1976, and there were feminist groups throughout ALA divisions and elsewhere by the end of the 1970s. One recent success was the renaming of the Melville Dewey Award to Medal of Excellence in 2019. Dewey was eventually ostracized from ALA because of his documented sexual harassment, racism, and antisemitism.

The SRRT Coordinator's Program at the virtual 2020 Annual Conference was "Herstory through Activism: Women, Libraries, and Activism," and a 2023 program was titled, "What Can U.S. Librarians Learn from Feminist Struggles in Ukraine, Sudan, and Iran?"

Freedom of Expression

In 2002, SRRT activist Ann Sparanese organized against the publisher Harper Collins for refusing to release Michael Moore's new book due to the wave of patriotic zeal after the September 11th attacks. *Stupid White Men...and Other Sorry Excuses for the State of the Nation!* rose to number one on the *New York Times* Bestsellers List! ALA President Mitch Freedman then invited Michael Moore to speak at the 2002 Annual Conference, and ALA showed his documentary film, *Fahrenheit 911*, at the 2004 Annual Conference.

SRRT opposed the entire USA PATRIOT Act at the Midwinter 2004 meeting, but the ALA Council passed a very narrow resolution opposing only Section 215 of the Act, "The Library Section." It is beyond irony that ALA officials often play up this policy not noting that ALA took the narrowest possible approach.

Sandy Berman began a campaign for the protection of workplace speech in 1999 after he was forced out of his position at the Hennepin County Library in Minnesota for criticizing a new director's cataloging policies. SRRT unsuccessfully tried amending the Library Bill of Rights, but a resolution finally passed at the 2005 Annual Conference. That year the ALA Council also passed Elaine Harger's Resolution on Disinformation, Media Manipulation & the Destruction of Public Information.

Although passed by the 2019 ALA Membership Meeting by a vote of 63-62, SRRT was unsuccessful in winning a resolution defending the speech of supporters of the movement for Palestinian rights. The ALA Council referred it to a working group formed from representatives of three Council committees, and with SRRT participation. A revised resolution was put forward at the 2020 Midwinter Meeting, but none of these committees actually supported it, and it was not even discussed at the Council meeting!

In 2022 SRRT presented a program with speakers advocating the repeal of anti-boycott laws in 34 states and showed the film *Boycott* at the 2023 Annual Conference. Most of these laws

prohibit state contractors from endorsing a boycott of Israel.

Health Care

The ALA Council passed SRRT's resolution supporting single-payer health care for all in 1992, and a 2003 resolution mandating ALA to offer health care coverage for library workers who lack coverage in their workplaces (which was implemented). But the Council backtracked in 2005 when it only supported "comprehensive health care for all," and in 2009 only "affordable universal health care." SRRT tried to get endorsement of Medicare for All in 2010, but the Council defeated it.

International

SRRT has put forward many resolutions and programs on various international issues. SRRT won Council resolutions against the Vietnam War in 1971 and "Against the Use of Torture as a Violation of Our Basic Values as Librarians" in 2004, as well as against the Iraq War in 2005. The Vietnam War reappeared at ALA in 1999 when SRRT wrote a resolution and held a demonstration against former General Colin Powell, the ALA keynote speaker. The resolution noted his cover-up of the My Lai Massacre where the US Army murdered, raped, and mutilated hundreds of unarmed Vietnamese civilians. The 2004 resolution against torture addressed the discovery of the regularized use of torture at US prisons at the Guantanamo Naval Base and at US prisons in Iraq.

SRRT failed in its opposition to the Central American and Afghanistan wars. But SRRT's Alternatives in Print Task Force began its Books for Nicaragua Project in 1985 and shipped \$60,000 worth of books to aid the Nicaraguan literacy campaign.

SRRT's resolution on South Africa passed the ALA Council 1986. It called for supporting the South African freedom struggle, opposing the reentry into IFLA of the South African Institute for Librarianship and Information Science (SAILIS) until it opened its membership to all, urging libraries to collect alternative South African materials, and for inviting South African colleagues to advise ALA on how it might help promote the free flow of information and a more just and humane society there. The ALA Executive Board directed the ALA Endowment Trustees to begin divestment of stocks with substantial investments in South Africa. But the Intellectual Freedom Round Table was upset about sanctions and tried unsuccessfully to get the 1987 ALA Membership to vote for a resolution opposing local government restrictions against dealing with South Africa. Former ALA Executive Director Robert Wedgeworth and Elizabeth Drew went on a fact-finding mission to South Africa sponsored by the Association of American Publishers (AAP) in May 1989. The ALA Executive Board endorsed their report in favor of breaking international sanctions against South Africa. However, the chair of the Council's International Relations Committee was one of the founders of SRRT, E. J. Josey, and a strong proponent of sanctions. Josey called an open committee hearing to debate the report. Many SRRT members testified, and all speakers called for rejecting the report except for Mr. Wedgeworth, who spoke last and then walked off in a huff. A new alternative South African library organization was launched in 1990, the Library and Information Workers Organization of South Africa (LIWO),

and SRRT immediately established good relations with this non-racial organization.

SRRT successfully countered propaganda to destabilize Cuba from 2000 to 2004. A successful resolution at the 2000 ALA Midwinter Meeting called for an end to the US blockade and travel ban, and advocated normalization of diplomatic and trade relations between the two countries as the best way to promote democracy and free expression in both countries. SRRT and the ALA Council affirmed support for the forthcoming IFLA conference in Havana, and while in Cuba several SRRT members helped organize a statement signed by most US librarians there calling for normalized relations between the US and Cuban governments, ending the blockade, and reinstating unfettered travel and people-to-people exchanges. The Council then endorsed an ALA policy that stated deep concern about the recent arrests and prison terms of the “political dissidents”, but also that these dissidents did not consider themselves librarians. ALA offered support to the Cuban library community in promoting free access to information, called on the Cuban library association (ASCUBI) to implement a code of ethics [which it did], called for the elimination of the US embargo and travel restrictions, and called on Cuba to adhere to Article 19 of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

SRRT’s 2009 resolution on withdrawing from Iraq and Afghanistan, shifting budgeting priorities, and providing assistance to libraries and cultural and educational institutions easily passed the ALA Membership Meeting, but was soundly rejected by the ALA Council.

Beginning in 1990, SRRT became the center of a firestorm around ALA’s position on censorship in Israel and the Occupied Territories, and the ALA Council even considered disbanding the round table. Many of us, including Jewish people like myself, were called antisemitic and faced nationwide smear campaigns in the early 1990s, and again around 2015. SRRT’s 1992 resolution calling on Israel “to abide by universally recognized norms of intellectual freedom and human rights passed by wide majorities at the ALA Membership and Council Meetings,” but the victory was short-lived. The Anti-Defamation League and other groups counter-organized and the resolution was revoked at the next Annual Conference. This was likely the first time that the Council had revoked a previous resolution. SRRT’s 2002 and 2009 resolutions on the destruction of Palestinian Libraries, Archives, and Other Cultural Resources were considerably watered down. At the Midwinter 2015 meeting, SRRT attempted to get the ALA Endowment Fund to divest from Caterpillar, Hewlett-Packard, and Motorola Solutions because of their involvement in repression in the West Bank. SRRT’s resolutions were defeated again at the two 2015 meetings, where we faced charges of antisemitism. SRRT tried again in 2021 and finally succeeded in 2024 to win a resolution against the destruction of libraries and schools in Gaza. But SRRT resolutions for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza failed in 2023 and 2024.

For a full explanation regarding Cuba, Israel/Palestine, and South Africa, see my articles in *Progressive Librarian*, numbers 44-46, 2016-2018 (online).

LGBT

The SRRT Task Force on Gay Liberation (now Rainbow Round Table) was organized in 1970. It is the oldest LGBT organization in the United States. As early as 1971, the Task Force made waves with a “Kiss-In,” at the “Hug a Homosexual Booth.” The ALA Council supported all

minority rights in 1971, and passed a strong LGBT rights resolution in 1977, calling for equal employment opportunity and the dissemination of materials in libraries. The Library of Congress then issued a list of gay and lesbian subject headings in 1987, and the Task Force published its *International Thesaurus for Gay and Lesbian Index Terms* in 1988. Their successful 1992 resolution condemned attempts to censor gay library materials and opposed anti-gay laws

SRRT with other ALA groups, won a resolution against the Colorado constitutional amendment prohibiting equal rights for gays, lesbians, and bisexuals, and called for boycotting the state until the amendment was rescinded. There was a huge rally and march to the Capitol at the Denver Midwinter 1993 meeting. Another successful resolution called for boycotting states that reject gay rights. In Midwinter 1999, the ALA Council passed SRRT's resolution breaking ties with the Boy Scouts over their anti-gay policies. Although the Task Force became its own round table in 1999, there is still close cooperation, including the joint Rainbow Project's annual bibliography for young readers.

Native Americans

Minnesota SRRT succeeding in passing its 1990 resolution on the Columbus Quincentennial through the SRRT Action Council, ALA Membership Meeting, and ALA Council. It urged libraries to provide programs and materials that examine the Columbus event from an authentic Native American perspective. And SRRT and the American Indian Library Association (AILA) presented a virtual panel on Native American treaty rights in 2020, which included Winona LaDuke, and was co-moderated by Cindy Hohl who was AILA president at the time and ALA President, 2024-2025. And SRRT presented another panel on indigenous communities in 2022.

Poor People's Policy and Student Debt

In 1990 at Sandy Berman's and Minnesota SRRT's initiative, Action Council and the ALA Membership Meeting passed a resolution on Library Services to Poor People, and SRRT established a Task Force on Hunger, Homeless and Poverty (HHPTF). About half of Sandy's proposals for new subject headings were adopted by the Library of Congress. Sandy was awarded ALA's Honorary Membership in 2004. HHPTF unsuccessfully tried to insert the words "housing status" in the Library Bill of Rights at the 2012 Annual Conference. And the Task Force finished its Poverty Tool Kit in 2012, *Extending Our Reach: Reducing Homelessness Through Library Engagement*. The ALA Council passed SRRT's resolution in favor of student loan cancellation in 2022.

Whistleblowers and the National Security Debate

Although ALA had signed onto an open letter with many other organizations in December 2010 reaffirming publishers, Internet users, and the public's First Amendment rights in the wake of the WikiLeaks disclosures, ALA had not addressed specific cases. In an unsuccessful effort to motivate such cases, the SRRT International Responsibilities Task Force with the help of several other ALA bodies and the ALA President and Executive Director brought Daniel Ellsberg to the 2011 Annual Conference. The program was titled, "Daniel Ellsberg on War and Secrecy," and

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thousands of librarians heard him support Bradley (now Chelsea) Manning and WikiLeaks. He even said, “I was Bradley Manning.” Thousands also attended a showing of his film, *The Most Dangerous Man in America*, where Ellsberg answered questions.

Even though Ellsberg got rousing support from thousands of librarians, SRRT’s resolutions were defeated from Midwinter 2011 to Midwinter 2013 in support of whistleblowers, Julian Assange, Bradley (now Chelsea) Manning, and Edward Snowden, and support for WikiLeaks. As a result of changing public opinion, a resolution at the 2013 Annual Conference in support of Snowden sailed through both the ALA Membership Meeting and the first meeting of the ALA Council! But the ALA establishment was upset, and they moved reconsideration at a subsequent Council meeting, which effectively defeated it. An updated version was defeated at the Midwinter 2014 meeting. Related to Snowden’s revelations, SRRT finally succeeded in passing a resolution against mass surveillance at the 2016 Midwinter Meeting. A resolution in support of the right to publish leaked documents and for dismissal of charges against Assange was defeated in 2019, and another on the dismissal of his charges was defeated in 2022. There were some wild statements about Assange undermining national security, even accusing him of being a foreign agent. On his long-overdue release from prison after pleading guilty to a minor crime, he stated that he “pleaded guilty to journalism.”

Let me conclude with a quote from an early SRRT activist, Betty-Carol Sellen from 1973. “If librarians decide that the issues vital to that society are irrelevant to librarians as librarians, then society may find that librarians are irrelevant to it.”

¹ This is an enhanced longer version of a talk I gave at the American Library Association conference in Philadelphia on June 28, 2025. It relies on my personal experience and the research for my book, *Progressive Library Organizations: A Worldwide History* (McFarland, 2015), and 2 update articles published in the *Journal of Radical Librarianship*, volumes 4 (2018) and 10 (2024), which is freely available online. The book gives complete historical listings of all SRRT task forces, programs/actions, and chapters/affiliates.

² SRRT works mainly through its task forces and its governing body, the Action Council. The task forces organize programs and develop resolutions, often aimed at making ALA policy through the ALA Council. The number of programs per year has varied from just a few to 16 in 1996. There have been more than 70 different issue-oriented task forces, and more than 50 local and state affiliates. There are 288 items in the online SRRT Resolution Archive.

³ Herb and Mary Biblo were active in SRRT for almost their entire adult lives. Mary was the Head Librarian at the University of Chicago Laboratory School from 1970-1998. She was the longest serving ALA Councilor-At-Large, elected from 1978-2020. She helped establish SRRT’s Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday Task Force, and won two awards from the Black Caucus of ALA. Herb was the Executive Director of the Long Island Library Resources Council, retiring in 2017 after 35 years of service. He was a participant in SRRT’s founding struggles, served many terms as an ALA Councilor-At-Large, and as ALA Treasurer from 1980 to 1984 when 5 of the 12 members of the Executive Board were SRRT members. Herb had a passion for organizing, and he did so on a wide range of issues. Sandy Berman was the Head Cataloger at the Hennepin County Library in Minnesota. He is best known for his work on simplifying cataloging practices and bombarding the Library of Congress with progressive changes for existing subject headings and advocating for new ones. He was an active SRRT member on numerous progressive issues, including the establishment of ALA policies regarding services to poor people and

freedom of workplace speech. Mitch Freedman was a student at the University of California, Berkeley during the 1964-1965 Free Speech Movement, and participated in the iconic student protests. He was an early active member of SRRT, served on the ALA Council and was ALA President from 2002 to 2003. He was a staunch advocate for library workers and established the ALA Allied Professional Association during his presidency. ALA-APA is a separate 501(c)(4) non-profit organization that advocates for raising librarians' salaries and for continuing education. He hired Sandy Berman when he was the director of the Hennepin County Library and later served as the director of the Westchester Library System in New York for many years. Pat Schuman was president of Neal-Schuman Publishers and president of ALA from 1991-1992. She was SRRT's first coordinator and chaired SRRT's first program in 1969, "The Failure of Libraries: A Call to Action." She was an early feminist activist and a founder of the SRRT Women's Liberation Task Force. She is remembered for her advocacy of "The Right to Know" during her presidency, when she brought Jesse Jackson who made a rousing speech to thousands of librarians. Betty Turock was Professor and later Dean at the Rutgers University School of Communication, Information and Library Studies. She was a founding member of SRRT, and she became ALA president from 1995 to 1996. Betty is best known for establishing the ALA Spectrum Scholarship Program that has aided hundreds of BIPOC people in becoming librarians. It started with a \$100,000 contribution from her family in 2010. John Berry was an early SRRT rebel rouser and long-time editor-in-chief of *Library Journal*, where he regularly reported on SRRT activities and advocated progressive causes to the library profession. E.J. Josey was a SRRT founder and early civil rights activist. He held various positions but ended as a professor in the University of Pittsburgh School of Library and Information Sciences, where he mentored innumerable young Black students. He was instrumental in pushing integration for libraries in the South, and was the founder of the Black Caucus of ALA. He was a prolific author, and he is remembered for his pathbreaking, *The Black Librarian in America* (1970) and editing the *Handbook of Black Librarianship* (1978). E.J. was a long-time ALA Councilor-At-Large, and ALA's first male Black president from 1984 to 1985.