

BOSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY

COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT POLICY

PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND

The *Collection Development Policy* upholds the mission of the Boston Public Library, which is to preserve and provide access to the historical record of our society and to serve the cultural, educational, and informational needs of the City and the Commonwealth¹.

The *Collection Development Policy* directs Library staff in the maintenance and development of the Central Library, branch, and online collections. The policy also defines collection development practices, and provides continuity to selection, purchasing and retention decisions. As part of strategic planning, the Collection Development Policy will be reviewed regularly to ensure it is a living document that addresses up to date collection concerns.

The Boston Public Library consists of neighborhood branch libraries and a Central Library that serves as an internationally recognized research institution, vital urban library, and the nexus of the branch system. The Central Library supports the community's research and leisure needs and preserves materials for the future. The Branch Library collections consist of popular titles as well as materials to support the interests of the communities they serve. Branch collections vary in size and scope depending on community needs and space limitations.

The collection supports the interests and needs of people of all ages, starting with early literacy and including children, teens, and adults. As the Library for the Commonwealth, the Library develops, maintains, and preserves collections of research and archival materials and provides access to the Library's resources to the residents of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

COLLECTION RESPONSIBILITIES

At the direction of the President, the Chief of Collections Strategy works with staff to oversee and direct a selection process that is responsive to public demand. In addition, the Boston Public Library Special Collections Committee assists the Library in decision making regarding rare and special material preservation, acquisition, deaccession, and access (Appendices A and B).²

¹ Mission Statement adopted by Boston Public Library Board of Trustees, September 19, 2000.

² Special Collections Committee Charge adopted by Board of Trustees, September 11, 2012. (Appendix A)
Written by Laura Irmischer, Chief of Collections Strategy, with Susan Glover, Keeper of Special Collections, and Mary Frances O'Brien, Chief of Public Services
Approved by the BPL Board of Trustees on January 8, 2013

All Library staff members and the public are encouraged to recommend items for consideration. Recommendations are evaluated based on the same criteria for selection as items purchased for the collection.

CRITERIA FOR ACQUISITION

Budget allocation by subject and format is based on public demand, usage statistics, relevance to the Collections of Distinction³, and available resources. Items may be added to the circulating, research, or special collections. Reserve levels in the circulating collection are monitored after purchase to respond to public demand. Selectors use several criteria when evaluating material, keeping in mind physical space requirements and the Library's resources. Items need not meet all criteria for inclusion in the collection.

Evaluation criteria for all acquisitions include:

- Public demand and anticipated demand
- Relevance to the interest and needs of the community
- Attention of critics and reviewers, award winners, or inclusion in bibliographies
- Significance, timeliness, or permanence of subject matter
- Relevance and suitability of physical format
- Representation of diverse points of view
- Clarity, accuracy, and logic of presentation
- Relevance to early literacy
- Responsive to school age and teen interest, and scholastic support and enrichment
- Literary merit and contribution to the field of knowledge
- Relationship to the existing collection
- Reputation or qualifications of the author, creator, or publisher
- Value of the resource in relation to its cost
- Suitability of subject and style for intended audience
- Availability of content through the internet, subscription databases, or other means
- Condition of material

Additional criteria for Special Collections include:

- Relevance to Collections of Distinction
- Associated processing, conservation and/or storage requirements

³ See full description beginning on page 3

Additional criteria for electronic resources include:

- Ease of use and remote access potential
- Hardware, software, networking, and storage requirements
- Licensing requirements
- Comparison of content and cost with other available formats
- Long term availability and perpetual access rights

WORLD LANGUAGES

The Library collects recreational and informational material in languages other than English for adults and juveniles to meet the needs of a diverse population, focusing on languages that are actively used and can be purchased, cataloged, and accessed accordingly.

DIGITIZING THE COLLECTION

The Boston Public Library recognizes the importance of digital collections for access to, and preservation of, the collection. To that end, the Library is digitizing items from its collection based on selection criteria within the scope of the Library's resources. The Library's digital experts continue to work on the technical aspects of preserving digital objects and are closely monitoring the field as it develops.

The following criteria are considered when selecting materials for digitization:

- Subject areas in demand, and anticipated to be in demand, by the public
- Materials that support exhibitions
- Preservation
- Scan-on-demand and interlibrary loan requests
- Format and physical characteristics
- Unique, rare, or special collections not widely available
- Complement or expand existing digital collections internally or in concert with Library partners or affiliates
- Existing metadata to aid in the organization and description of the object
- Rights and restrictions associated with the object

COLLECTIONS OF DISTINCTION

Collections of Distinction represent the most outstanding, expansive, and renowned of the BPL's collections. The BPL's commitment to the ongoing development and preservation of its distinctive collections and its pivotal role as a center of knowledge are fundamental to the Library's *Compass: Principles of Excellence* strategic plan. Identifying and promoting the Library's Collections of Distinction are key strategies to fulfilling the vision of the Library.

Collections of Distinction guide lifelong learners, scholars, and the intellectually curious to the finest of the Library's more than 150 years of collecting. At the same time, Collections of Distinction direct the Library's collection development decisions and expand public access through digitization to these deep and rich intellectual resources.

Collections of Distinction are identified based on the following criteria:

- Unique, rare, and/or intrinsically valuable
- Pre-eminent among libraries and cultural institutions
- Historical significance that reflects the long term BPL commitment to the collection, buttressed by the past and current generosity of individuals
- Central to the history of the City of Boston, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, and the communities therein.
- Resonates with communities of scholars and makes the BPL the destination for scholarship in a particular subject
- Universality of subject matter and furthers the purpose of the BPL by contributing to a democratic education

The Library will give priority to Collections of Distinction in its allocation of resources dedicated to research and special collections with respect to public access, acquisition, digitization, preservation, and staff development.

New Collections of Distinction may evolve to accommodate changes in cultural interests, scholarship, or the city's demographics. Any potential collection will be evaluated based on the criteria above before becoming a Collection of Distinction. All Collections of Distinction will be reviewed by the BPL Special Collections Committee and Board of Trustees.

RESEARCH AND SPECIAL COLLECTIONS

Research and special collections consists of materials on a broad array of topics that serve researchers from high school through doctoral levels and from dedicated scholars to lifelong learners. As a result, the collections reflect a wide diversity of subjects, cultures, countries, and languages.

The Boston Public Library is a federal depository for United States Government Publications. Through the Federal Depository Library Program, the Library collects and provides access to government publications in all formats, including print, microform and electronic.

The Library has an agreement with the Norman B. Leventhal Map Center to provide access to the combined Library and Mapping Boston Foundation collections through conservation, cataloging, digital scanning and archival storage. Under the agreement, the Library provides funds annually for the acquisition of maps, which are purchased

Written by Laura Irmischer, Chief of Collections Strategy, with Susan Glover, Keeper of Special Collections, and Mary Frances O'Brien, Chief of Public Services
Approved by the BPL Board of Trustees on January 8, 2013

under the Map Center's Acquisition Policy (Appendix C). The Library retains ownership of the maps in its collection.

Although most resources in the research and special collections are in print format (books, periodicals, newspapers, documents, etc.), significant collections in other formats include manuscripts, prints, photographs, microforms, sound recordings, films, audio and video materials, digital objects, maps, blueprints and other architectural drawings, sheet music, and realia.

Curators and other designated staff work with the Collection Development Department to acquire materials. Staff consider public service needs, financial implications, locally available resources, relevance to the interest and needs of the community, and how the acquisition would support the Library's Collections of Distinction. Staff build upon existing special collections and research and comprehensive level collections, identify relationships and fill in gaps in the collection. Due to the Library's commitment to access to the collection, all acquisitions must be cataloged, conserved as needed, and considered for digitization. When appropriate, the Special Collections Committee supports the Library in decision making regarding rare and special materials.

DESELECTION AND COLLECTION MAINTENANCE

Deselection of material from the circulating collections is a vital part of successful collection maintenance. Continuous evaluation is necessary and materials are regularly removed to maintain a current, accurate and appealing collection and to facilitate its ease of use.

An item may be deselected for several reasons, including:

- Information is out of date
- Item is worn or damaged
- Item no longer responds to current needs or interests
- Materials in the format are no longer collected

Deselected items may be added to the research collection, offered to other libraries or disposed of through book sales, giveaways, exchanges, or recycling.

While research and special collections material are not routinely removed from the collection, there are some circumstances where deselection is appropriate. Legal restrictions and the donor's intent are reviewed before any further steps are taken. When evaluating material for deselection, the Library adheres to the American Library Association's *Standards for Ethical Conduct for Rare Book, Manuscript, and Special Collections Librarians, with Guidelines for Institutional Practice in Support of the Standards* (Appendix D). Candidates for deselection are put through an evaluation

process supported by the Special Collections Committee. Funds acquired through deselection are designated for further collection development.

GIFTS

The Library accepts donations that supplement and enhance its collections. Gifts are evaluated according to the same criteria applied to purchased material. There is a financial cost incurred by the Library associated with the care, preservation, and digitization of these gifts to insure that the gifts may serve that mission and fulfill the intention of the donor. With regard to special collections material, the Library will frequently request from the donor an appropriate financial contribution to endow the care and preservation of the gift. For more information on donations, see Appendix E. For the full Guidelines for Endowment, see Appendix J.

INTELLECTUAL FREEDOM

The Library respects the freedom of information for its users and adheres to the principles expressed in the American Library Association's *Library Bill of Rights* and *Freedom to Read* and *Freedom to View* statements (Appendices F, G and H). The Library's goal is to offer a diversity of ideas and opinions including those which may be unorthodox or controversial. The Library opposes any attempts by individuals or groups to censor items in its collection. Responsibility for the reading choices of minors rests with their parents or legal guardians. Selection of adult material will not be restricted by the possibility that these items may come into the possession of children nor does the Library use any system of coding, rating or labeling to identify or segregate materials for purposes of censorship. Challenges regarding Library materials are handled in accordance with the Library's *Requests for Reconsideration* (Appendix I).

**BOSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY
COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT POLICY APPENDIX**

- A. SPECIAL COLLECTIONS COMMITTEE CHARGE**
- B. SPECIAL COLLECTIONS ACQUISITION BY PURCHASE/DEACCESSION PROCESS**
- C. MAP CENTER ACQUISITION POLICY AND AUTHORITY**
- D. DEACCESSION OF MATERIALS FROM THE COLLECTION**
- E. GIFTS**
- F. LIBRARY BILL OF RIGHTS**
- G. FREEDOM TO READ STATEMENT**
- H. FREEDOM TO VIEW STATEMENT**
- I. REQUESTS FOR RECONSIDERATION**
- J. GUIDELINES FOR ENDOWMENT**

Appendix A: Boston Public Library Special Collections Committee Charge

Purpose: The purpose of the Special Collections Committee is to assist the Library in decision making regarding rare and special material preservation, acquisition, deaccession, and access. The Committee is intended to bring broader input and expertise to the process of building and maintaining the Boston Public Library's rich, remarkable and unique collections of research and cultural materials, including books, manuscripts, prints, fine arts, and other objects. The Committee is also encouraged to explore ways the collections can further the library system's commitment to outreach and education in Boston's diverse and vibrant neighborhood communities.

Composition: Individuals from the community at large, the President of the BPL and Trustees or designee will serve on the Special Collections Committee consistent with our goal of increasing governance transparency and the breadth of citizen input.

Areas of Focus:

1. **Conservation/Preservation:** Ensure that over time items in the BPL special collections are stored properly and conserved as appropriate.
2. **Collection Development:** Continue to augment the core strengths of the special collections through selective purchases, gifts, and deaccessioning as appropriate.
3. **Access:** Promote compelling and creative approaches to sharing the BPL collections across the Boston community, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and beyond. Seek opportunities to leverage existing and emerging technologies to further this goal.
4. **Coordination:** Explore ways to support and leverage system-wide initiatives whenever appropriate, e.g. the cultivation of gifts, grants and other funding sources.

Process Requirements:

The Committee shall report at least once annually to the Board of Trustees on its activities.

The Committee is intended to guide Special Collections related activities only and not to affect the regular ongoing acquisition and purchase of online databases, periodicals and serial collections, and other materials required for the ongoing operations of the Library and its branch system.

Approved by Boston Public Library Board of Trustees on September 11, 2012

Written by Laura Irmischer, Chief of Collections Strategy, with Susan Glover, Keeper of Special Collections, and Mary Frances O'Brien, Chief of Public Services
Approved by the BPL Board of Trustees on January 8, 2013

Appendix B: Special Collections Acquisition by Purchase/Deaccession Process

1. Objects or Collections Valued at Less Than \$1,000:
 - No reporting requirement
 - All acquisitions cataloged and/or described upon receipt
2. Objects or Collections Valued Between \$1,000 and \$9,999:
 - Reported to the Special Collections Committee
 - All acquisitions cataloged and/or described upon receipt
3. Objects of Collections Valued Between \$10,000 and \$49,999:
 - Proposals reviewed and approved by the Special Collections Committee
 - a. Acquisition or deaccession framework scored by the submitting curator and any back-up documentation provided to the Special Collections Committee members five business days prior to review.
 - b. A fast track communications process will be used for acquisitions with extreme time constraints.
 - Reported to the Board of Trustees.
 - All acquisitions cataloged and/or described upon receipt.
4. Objects or Collections Valued at \$50,000 or above:
 - Proposals reviewed by the Special Collections Committee
 - a. Acquisition or deaccession framework scored by the submitting curator and any back-up documentation provided to the Special Collections Committee members five business days prior to review.
 - b. A fast track communications process will be used for acquisitions with extreme time constraints.
 - Special Collections Committee recommendation brought to the Board of Trustees for review and final approval.
 - a. A fast track communications process will be used for acquisitions with extreme time constraints.
 - All acquisitions cataloged and/or described upon receipt.

Appendix C: Norman B. Leventhal Map Center at the Boston Public Library Acquisition Policy and Authority

Building on the combined strengths of the map collections of Norman Leventhal and the Boston Public Library, the acquisition policy of the Norman B. Leventhal Map Center (NBLMC) focuses on Boston, Massachusetts, and New England. Also reflecting the national and global interests of a large metropolitan area, the Map Center selectively collects materials pertaining to other states and their major cities, the United States and North America, as well as individual foreign countries, the continents, maps showing the entire world, and celestial maps. The period covered is the late 15th century to the present.

Cartographic materials are added to the collection by purchase, donation from individuals or corporations, and transfer from other Library departments or government agencies. These cartographic materials consist primarily of maps, atlases, and globes, but also include cartographic and geographic reference aids, electronic media, aerial photographs, and related textual documents, such as surveyor field notes.

In terms of its primary geographical focus, the Map Center will acquire as comprehensively as possible cartographic materials of the City of Boston and its environs, concentrating on this region's earliest appearance on maps during the exploration period, and its subsequent settlement, growth, and cultural and economic development. In order to place Boston into its larger regional and political context, the Map Center also seeks out maps and atlases of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and its individual counties and towns. Maps and atlases of northeastern North America, New England, other New England states, and their individual counties and towns will be collected more selectively.

Cartographic materials relating to the Map Center's national and international interests are selected to provide broad geographical coverage for representative time periods. Special, but not exclusive consideration is given to Boston's and New England's interaction with these areas – historically, economically, culturally, and politically. This portion of the collection helps to document the countries from which immigrants came to the region, areas to which New Englanders emigrated, and locations with which the region had economic ties.

This collection also reflects several special emphases. The first, which parallels the Map Center's strong commitment to educational outreach, is the acquisition of examples of cartographic materials produced for educational purposes. These include school maps and atlases, geographic games and puzzles, school geographies, and globes, especially those published or used in Boston and the larger New England area. Another emphasis is urban mapping. In order to fully comprehend the mapping of a large city such as Boston, the Map Center collects city maps, urban panoramic views, city atlases, and materials related to urban planning on a selective basis for the rest of the world. A third

area of interest is Boston's maritime heritage, which is reflected in collecting nautical charts of New England and North American coastal areas, as well of locations where New Englanders had strong trading and shipping interests, such as the West Indies, the Pacific Ocean, and eastern and southeastern Asia during the 18th and 19th centuries.

A final area of interest is the history of mapping techniques and practices, especially as they were used or developed in the larger Boston region. Strong consideration is given to acquiring important examples of different types of cartographic materials that are representative of the broad spectrum of cartographic production, such as surveying and data collection, map compilation, and various printing techniques. Special attention is paid to mapmakers who were active in Boston.

Published reference materials (books, periodicals, and electronic data bases) which support research in topics supported by the cartographic collections are also acquired for the Map Center's reference collection. In terms of United States materials, emphasis is placed on state thematic and historical/facsimile atlases, state gazetteers and place name literature, state cartographic histories, and state cartobibliographies. For areas outside the United States, acquisitions are more selective, focusing on the best and most comprehensive world reference atlases, national atlases for individual countries, and comprehensive cartographic histories and cartobibliographies particularly for continents, broad regions, and countries that provide background information for historical maps and atlases in the collection.

Although the proportions of money spent will vary on an annual basis depending on the cartographic materials that are available on the market, it is estimated that approximately 70 per cent of the Acquisition Fund will be spent on Boston and New England, and materials published in the region, and 30 percent on maps of non-New England states and their major cities, North America, as well as individual foreign countries, the continents, and maps showing the entire world. Acquisitions are not confined to retrospective purchases. Current materials (both hard copy and electronic versions) are added to the collection, following the guidelines outlined above.

There are several levels of accountability for Map Center acquisitions Individual acquisitions costing or valued at \$10,000 or less will be made at the discretion of the Map Center's Curator and Executive Director.

Acquisitions ranging from \$10,000-20,000 will be made at the discretion of the Curator and Executive Director, in consultation with a senior Boston Public Library staff member (currently, Director, Central Services) as designated by the BPL President.

For purchases priced in the \$20,000-\$50,000 range, the Map Center staff will consult with the senior Boston Public Staff member and an Acquisitions Subcommittee consisting of three members of the Board of Review. Such consultations may be

conducted by conference call or email, but the staff will also alert the rest of the Board when these consultations occur.

Acquisitions over \$50,000 will require the concurrence of the Map Center's Curator and Director, and the approval of a majority of the members of the Board of Review and a majority of the members of the Board of Directors. Conference calls may be used to expedite the process when it is not practical to discuss such acquisitions at regularly scheduled meetings of the boards. An annual list of acquisitions and their costs shall be compiled for circulation and review by the Board of Review, Board of Directors, and the Library's Collections Development Subcommittee.

In terms of de-accessioning cartographic materials that originated from the Boston Public Library's collection or the Library's acquisition funds, the Map Center will follow the guidelines and policies that are in the process of being developed by the Library's Collection Development Subcommittee.

Adopted by the Norman B. Leventhal Map Center Board of Directors, May 19, 2010

Note: The Library's Collections Development Subcommittee is now known as the Boston Public Library Special Collections Committee.

Appendix D: Deaccession of Materials from the Collections

The statement below was excerpted from the American Library Association's Standards for Ethical Conduct for Rare Book, Manuscript, and Special Collections Librarians, with Guidelines for Institutional Practice in Support of the Standards, 2d edition, 1992.

In the deaccession of rare books and manuscripts, the special collections library must weigh carefully the interests of the public for which it holds the collections in trust, the interests of the scholarly and cultural community, and the institution's own mission. The institution must consider any legal restrictions, the necessity for possession of valid title, and the donor's intent in the broadest sense.

Procedures for the deaccession or disposal of materials must be at least as rigorous as those for purchasing and should be governed by the same basic principles. The decision to dispose of library materials must be made only after full and scrupulous consideration of the public interest and the needs of researchers; the process of deaccession should be carried out in as open and public a manner as possible.

Mandatory restrictions on disposition which accompanied a donation must be observed unless it can be shown clearly by appropriate legal procedures that adherence to them is impossible or substantially detrimental to the institution. When statements of donor's preferences accompanied the acquisition, any departure from them must be carefully considered and negotiated with the donor or the donor's heirs or settled by appropriate legal procedures.

Responsibility to the needs and reputation of the library requires that, in preparing for and accomplishing any deaccession, the special collections library must take care to define and publicly state the purpose of the deaccession and the intended use of monetary or other proceeds of the deaccession, to avoid any procedure which may detract from the library's reputation for honesty and responsible conduct, and to carry out the entire process in a way which will not detract from public perception of its responsible stewardship. The following points must be taken into consideration. The library must insure that the method of deaccession will result in furthering the agreed purpose of the deaccession, whether this be monetary gain or more appropriate placement of scholarly resources.

The deaccessioning library must disclose to the potential new owner or intermediary agent any action, such as the retention of a photocopy of the material, which may affect the monetary or scholarly value of the material.

To the fullest extent possible, the library must make public information on the disposition of deaccessioned materials.

The library must not allow materials from its collections to be acquired privately by any library employee, officer, or volunteer, unless they are sold publicly and with complete disclosure of their history.

Due consideration should be given to the library community in general when disposing of items. Sales to, or exchanges between, institutions should be explored as well as disposal through the trade.

The standards were approved as policy by the ACRL Board of Directors on January 18, 1987. The statement was updated and approved by the ACRL Board of Directors in 1993. Full text of the standards can be found in *College and Research Library News* (C&RLNews) 54:4, April 1993, or online at: <http://www.ala.org/Template.cfm?Section=speccollections&template=/ContentManagement/ContentDisplay.cfm&ContentID=8969>.

Appendix E: Gifts

While donations of material can be a significant contribution to the collection, the Library recognizes that significant resources are required to process and maintain donations, including evaluating, cataloging, processing, preserving and providing access to gifts. Collection Development staff consider any additional costs to the Library when evaluating potential donations. The Library does not necessarily accept all donations.

Donations are accepted according to the following guidelines:

- Donations become the property of the Boston Public Library and are subject to its policies and procedures.
- The Library does not perform appraisals or provide itemized lists of donations.
- Due to the volume of donations received, it is not possible to notify the donor of the status of the donation or the time frame of the decision.
- The Library has limited use for some categories of material, such as textbooks, Reader's Digest condensed books and individual editions of some periodicals. Potential donors should contact Collection Development for more information.
- Materials in poor physical condition will not be accepted.
- Gifts not included in the collection may be sold to benefit the Library, discarded, or recycled.

Appendix F: 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, 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.

Adopted June 18, 1948.

Amended February 2, 1961, and January 23, 1980,
inclusion of "age" reaffirmed January 23, 1996,
by the ALA Council

Adopted by the Board of Trustees of the Boston Public Library November 20, 2000

Appendix G: 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.

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

Adopted by the Board of Trustees of the Boston Public Library November 20, 2000

Appendix H: The Freedom to View Statement

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:

1. 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 guarantee of freedom of expression.
2. To protect the confidentiality of all individuals and institutions using film, video, and other audiovisual materials.
3. 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.
4. 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.
5. 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 January 10, 1990, by the ALA Council

Adopted by the Board of Trustees of the Boston Public Library November 20, 2000

Appendix I: Requests for Reconsideration

Complaints about any material(s) owned by the Boston Public Library and part of the Library's materials collection will be handled as follows:

1. If the user is dissatisfied with an item, they will be asked to fill out the Request for Reconsideration form listing the concerns that they have about the item.
2. The form will be forwarded to the Collection Development Manager, who will review the item(s) in question from the standpoint of the concerns expressed.
3. Options for the Collection Development Manager will include, but not be limited to, explaining why the item will be maintained by the Library in its present location, moving the item to a different department of the Library (from the Children's Room to the Young Adult Room for example), moving the item to non-circulating status or removing the item from a display area to a closed stack area, or other appropriate action. Upon request, a written response will be sent to the user explaining the option chosen.
4. A copy of the Collection Development Manager's letter to the user, as well as the user's written statement of concern, shall be given to the President of the Library for informational purposes.
5. The user may appeal the decision to the President of the Library.

Appendix J: Special Collections Committee of the Boston Public Library Guidelines for Endowment

The Boston Public Library regularly receives gifts of personal property which contribute to the Library's mission. There is a financial cost incurred by the Library associated with the care and preservation of these gifts to insure that the gifts may serve that mission and fulfill the intention of the donor. Consequently, in most instances, although not all, the Library will request from the donor an appropriate financial contribution to endow the care and preservation of the gift, subject to the guidelines set forth below.

1. An endowment will not be required for a donor when the gift provides a particularly unique addition to the Boston Public Library's collections and the donor cannot afford to set up an endowment.
2. Items that are valued below \$50,000 will not require an endowment.
3. Items valued above \$50,000 will come under Guideline No. 1. The Special Collections Committee will determine with input from the Boston Public Library staff what an appropriate amount would be.
4. Gifts will not be rejected solely because of the lack of an endowment.
5. Boston Public Library Trustees will make all final decisions as to endowment.
6. Gifts supported by cash donations to be used outright and not in the form of endowment may also be considered.

Approved by Boston Public Library Board of Trustees on January 16, 2007