

Dr. E. J. Josey

Founder, The Black Caucus of the American Library Association

Dr. E. J. Josey (1924-2009) was founder of the Black Caucus of the American Library Association, professor emeritus in the Department of Library and Information Science at the School of Library and Information Sciences at the University of Pittsburgh, and past president of the American Library Association (1984-1985).



A noted administrator, author, educator, leader, librarian, public intellectual and scholar, Josey was a life-long advocate for civil rights, human rights and equal opportunity for librarians of color, as well as a mentor to librarians of all ethnicities. During the early 1960's, he participated in the civil rights movement in Savannah (see *The Black Librarian in America*, pp. 308-11), and served on the executive board of the Savannah Branch of the NAACP wherein he helped desegregate stores in Savannah, Georgia, as well as serving on the executive board of the Albany, NY Branch of the NAACP. In 1964, in spite of the 1954 U.S. Supreme Court decision, which encouraged desegregation of libraries and American Library Association (ALA) chapters, the ALA was slow in implementing racial desegregation of all of its southern chapters until E.J. Josey offered his resolution at the 1964 Conference which prevented ALA officers and staff members from attending segregated state chapter meetings (the four remaining segregated chapters that denied membership to African American librarians at that time were Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, and Mississippi); hence they desegregated immediately, and Josey became the first African American librarian to be accepted as a member of the Georgia Library Association. Thus, he was known for his uncompromising opposition to any form of discrimination whether it is racial, gender, age or sexual orientation. He was first elected to the ALA Council (the policy making body of the association) in 1970, serving until the summer of 2000, a period of 29 years, and was therefore a member of ALA for more than 48 years, where he also chaired the ALA International Relations Committee.

Dr. Josey earned degrees from Howard University (A.B.), Columbia University (M.A.), and the State University of New York at Albany (M.S.L.S.). Subsequently, in 1973, Shaw University conferred on him an Honorary Degree of Doctor of Humane Letters, (D.H.L.), the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee conferred the Doctor of Public Services (D.P.L.) Honoris Causa on May 16, 1987, North Carolina Central University honored him with the Doctor of Humanities, Honoris Causa on September 29, 1989, Clark Atlanta University bestowed upon him the Doctor of Letters Degree (D.Litt.) on May 22, 1995, and Clarion University of Pennsylvania honored him with the Doctor of Humane Letters (D.H.L.) on December 15, 2001. And in 2002, he was elected to honorary membership in the American Library Association (ALA), the highest honor of the association, conferred in recognition of his outstanding contributions of lasting importance to libraries and librarianship.

The author of more than 400 articles in library, educational, and history journals, Dr. Josey was also the subject of a biography (*E. J. Josey: An Activist Librarian* edited by Ismail H. Abdullahi in 1992 via Scarecrow Press), several dissertations, and the author or editor of twelve books in the field of library science: *The Black Librarian in America* (Scarecrow Press, 1970), *What Black Librarians are Saying* (Scarecrow Press, 1972), *New Dimension for Academic Library Service* (Scarecrow Press, 1975), *A Century of Service: Librarianship in the United States and Canada* co-editor with Sidney Jackson and Elinor Herling (American Library Association, 1976), *Opportunities for Minorities in Librarianship* co-editor with Kenneth Peeples, Jr. (Scarecrow Press, 1977), *Handbook of Black Librarianship* co-editor with Ann Allen Shockley (Fisk University Library, Libraries Unlimited, 1977), *The Information Society: Issues and Answers* (Oryx Press, 1978), *Libraries in the Political Process*, Oryx Press, 1980. *Ethnic Collections* with Marva L. DeLoach (Neal-Schuman Press, 1983), *Libraries, Coalitions and the Public Good* (Neal-Schuman Press, 1987), *Politics and the Support of Libraries* with Dr. Kenneth Shearer (Neal-Schuman Press, 1990), *The Black Librarian in America Revisited* (Scarecrow Press, 1994), *Handbook of Black Librarianship* co-editor Marva L. DeLoach (Scarecrow Press, 2000). And notwithstanding, he served as editor of *The Bookmark* from 1976-86 (in the fall of 1986 he relinquished the editorship to serve co-editor for five years), was contributing editor of *Afro-Americans in New York Life and History*, emeritus distinguished professor of Library Science at Amen-Ra Theological Seminary (Los Angeles, California), and served on the editorial advisory committee of *Multicultural Review* magazine. Dr. Josey was a mentor to *JPAS* editor Itibari M. Zulu, and many others.

A foundation has been set up to honor Dr. Josey's life and work. Contributions can be sent to: The E.J. Josey Foundation for Justice and Peace, 526 West Second Street, Washington, North Carolina 27889.