



For Immediate Release

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**THE NEW YORK LIBRARY ASSOCIATION COMMEMORATES THE LIFE OF JANET
WELCH, FORMER NYLA PRESIDENT AND FIRST WOMAN APPOINTED AS NEW YORK
STATE LIBRARIAN**

ALBANY, NY – Today the New York Library Association was notified that Janet Welch, former NYLA President and the first woman to hold the position of New York State Librarian, passed on the evening of Tuesday, January 3rd, 2023.

Welch was a visionary in the library community, an early internet advocate, and spearheaded multiple initiatives that shaped the future of libraries. For example, in the late 1990s, before the internet was considered a household necessity, Welch prioritized bringing web access to libraries across New York State.

As the first woman to serve as New York State Librarian, Welch directed a major renovation of the Research Library and multiple enhancements to the Talking Book and Braille Library. She also oversaw numerous additions to the State Library's collections, including leading efforts to collect and preserve artifacts from the World Trade Center following the events of September 11th, 2001.

Before her appointment as State Librarian, Welch was Director of the Rochester Regional Library Council, served in multiple leadership positions in university, public, school, and corporate libraries throughout her career, and was elected NYLA President in 1992. She was a certified School Library Media Specialist and earned her Masters of Library Science Degree from Rutgers University.

She received the American Library Association's Award for Nationwide Library Legislative Success and Improvement of Library Services for the American People, as well as the NYLA President's Award for development and leadership of the nationwide Public Awareness of Libraries campaign.

NYLA Executive Director AnnaLee Dragon interned at the Division of Library Development during Welch's tenure as State Librarian, and shared that "Janet Welch holds an important place in my memory and development as a librarian. She was kind, focused, and a fierce advocate for libraries and librarians of all kinds. I consider myself very fortunate to have learned from her firsthand and know that she will be dearly missed by us all. She made an indelible mark on our state and our association, leaving both better off than when she found them."

The New York Library Association, our members, and the library community will continue to remember and advance Janet Welch's contributions to the field of library science and will celebrate and honor her significant legacy.

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