

**J. V. FLETCHER LIBRARY MATERIALS SELECTION POLICY --
PURSUANT TO MASSACHUSETTS GENERAL LAW
CHAPTER 78, SECTION 33, AS AMENDED**

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE SELECTION POLICY

- 1.1** The purpose of this Selection Policy is to guide the Library Director and Staff involved in materials selection, and to inform the public about the principles and practices upon which selections are made.
- 1.2** The Fletcher Library has as its goal total library service to the community, its individuals and groups -- adult, young adult, and children. To this end, it strives for a carefully chosen book collection, creative programming, and an imaginative use of varied information and communication media. It provides books, periodicals, printed matter and audio visual materials for all ages who seek information, mental stimulation and enrichment, or entertainment for their leisure hours. The public library has a responsibility to serve as an open forum for ideas in order to bring a wide spectrum of information and attitudes to the public's attention.

2.0 OBJECTIVES AND CRITERIA FOR SELECTION

- 2.1** The Library strives to maintain its permanent collection by acquiring material which is of historical, literary, or practical worth. Selection is considered judgmental and interpretive process involving: a general knowledge of the subject and its important literature; a familiarity with the materials in the collection; an awareness of the bibliographies of the subject; and a recognition of other needs of the community.
- 2.2** As a responsibility of library service, books and other reading matter selected should be chosen for values of interest, information, and enlightenment to the reader. There should be the fullest practicable provision of material representing all points of view concerning the problems and issues of our times, international, national and local. Books

or other reading materials will not be proscribed or removed from library shelves because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval. In no case should any book be excluded because of the race or nationality or the political or religious views of the writer.

2.3 Purchases for the library are made on the basis of recommendations in library journals, professional and literary magazines, publishers' trade magazines, and newspaper reviews.

2.3 a The general criteria for purchase are readability, price, popular appeal, timeliness, significance of the author, political and social significance, and permanent values of the book. These criteria are also applied in choosing other materials for purchase.

2.3 b Each title is judged individually according to its intrinsic merit, the subject treated, the reader interest, and the need for the book in an organized collection. Each title is judged as a whole, and isolated passages in themselves are not used as criteria. No book or material shall be judged for exclusion by taking single passages out of context and basing condemnation of that material on such lifted passages.

2.3 c All citizens are encouraged to make suggestions on collection development and requests for specific materials, which will be given careful consideration in light of overall collection needs, selection criteria, and budget constraints.

3.0 RESPONSIBILITY FOR SELECTION

3.1 The Board of Trustees formulate policies for the selection of all materials within the broad framework of the objectives and purposes of the Library. The Trustees delegate the responsibility of implementing these policies through materials selection to the Library Director who will ensure that the library Staff purchase materials in conformance with these policies for selection.

3.2 The Library Director, Assistant Director, Department Heads, and their delegates will make selections within their areas of competence and evaluate all other requests for selections from Library Staff and the public.

4.0 SELECTION IN SPECIFIC AREAS

4.1 Selection policies in the fields of politics, religion, sex and sociology are subject to criticism in a free society. The Fletcher Library bases its

selection in critical areas upon the following principle: that the library has a responsibility to provide for the community the unorthodox as well as the accepted, and new forms of expression as well as traditional ones.

- 4.2** The Library leaves to parents the job of determining what a child may view or read. Otherwise, each reader is privileged to select for himself among the books the library has purchased, and no one is obliged to read what he does not like.
- 4.3** Funds do not permit unlimited purchase of specialized research, scholarly or highly technical materials and no attempt will be made to supply textbooks or other curriculum-related materials used in the schools and colleges of the area, except as such materials also serve the general public. It is not the purpose of the collection to serve as a supplementary elementary, high school or college library.

5.0 DONATIONS

- 5.1** Donations of books and materials to the library are welcomed, with the understanding that the same criteria of selection will be applied before adding donated materials to the collection. Those materials not selected will be refused, or sold, or discarded.
- 5.2** No donations which are accompanied by qualifying instructions as to disposition, housing, or use will be accepted.

6.0 WITHDRAWALS FROM THE COLLECTION

- 6.1** Systematic removal of materials no longer useful to the collection is essential in maintaining the purposes and quality of resources. Weeding is as important as the original selection, and the same criteria are applied in order to assure the development of a timely, quality collection.

7.0 CONTROVERSIAL SELECTIONS

- 7.1** Any resident of the Town of Westford that has a concern regarding the selection of a specific title is welcome to discuss the interpretation of these principles with the Library Director. Should the resident desire further edification from the governing body of the Library, the resident should then put their concerns in writing to the Board of Trustees. The Board will then study the matter relative to the individual concern and the selection principles as promulgated.

ADDENDA: Library Bill of Rights
Freedom to Read Statement

Approved by the Board of Trustees, September 13, 1982