

Colleagues:

As you plan for late 2024 and 2025 library conference programs, as you schedule annual lectures and keynote speakers, and as you prepare to profile significant events like Banned Books Week, I ask you to keep in mind my forthcoming book, *In Silence or Indifference: Racism and Jim Crow Segregated Public School Libraries* (<https://www.upress.state.ms.us/Books/I/In-Silenceor-Indifference>). The book will be out September 15, 2024.

In Silence or Indifference describes the racism and racists practices exercised on Black school librarians and their students in segregated Jim Crow public school libraries between 1954 and 1974. It's a story never before told, in large part because when these events took place the nation's library community said and did almost nothing in response. Ironically, this silence or indifference occurred at the same time the profession was honing its national image as a defender of intellectual freedom, opponent of censorship, and proponent of the freedom to read.

Why does this story deserve widespread discussion? If librarianship does not process darker chapters of its history like these into its collective professional memory, it will continue to issue historically inaccurate statements like the one ALA composed several years ago in response to nation-wide challenges to Critical Race Theory. "For more than 140 years," the statement reads, "ALA has been the trusted voice of librarians, advocating for the profession and the library's role in enhancing learning and ensuring access to information for all." (ALA Executive Board, August 18, 2021). "Ironically, it was the application of Critical Race Theory to American library history that led me to research and write *In Silence or Indifference*."

To explore possibilities for discussion that this book may present, I invite you to contact me.

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