

Preserving the Documents of the Past and Making Them Accessible to the Future!

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#MAC2019DETROIT

In the end, the theme of the 2019 MAC meeting in Detroit, Michigan, “Innovation, Transformation, Resurgence,” seemed to be prophetic on so many levels! The Program Committee came up with an incredibly innovative program for those in attendance. The Local Arrangements Committee showed all those attendees that the City of Detroit is in a true transformation. And, in turn, the attendees showed a resurgence in ideas, professional activity, and excitement. That excitement was evident prior to the meeting, as our original attendance estimates were absolutely blown out of the water with 473 attendees at final count! That’s right Chicago, we gave you a run for your money!



The conference kicked off Wednesday, April 3, with an all-day, preconference symposium for business archivists. It is clear that this has been an underappreciated group for MAC as there were 50 spots available and final attendance totaled 52! Business archivists gathered to discuss common issues and brainstorm solutions for collections and archival administration.

Later that evening, we inaugurated a first-of-its-kind event for MAC that we hope will become an annual tradition: the MAC Service Project. Archivists attending this year’s meeting had the opportunity to give back to the local Detroit community. Wednesday evening at the Detroit Public Library–Main Branch, local residents were invited to bring in their family’s archival materials for a hands-on

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State of MAC: April 5, 2019

Good afternoon. It is my honor and pleasure to address you for one last time as your president. I do this, of course, with mixed emotions.

Because MAC presidents serve two-year terms and my term is coming to a close, we can consider this the biennial farewell message, and I suspect that what I'm feeling today is not much different from the experience of my predecessors.

So what are those emotions?

First, I feel a deep sense of gratitude for those who make MAC the mutually supportive organization that it is. I hope that during your time here in Detroit you have experienced that support, or perhaps have given that support back to a colleague who may need it.

I also feel a lot of relief right now, frankly. Somehow I managed to preside over four Council meetings over the last two years without misfiring procedurally too many times and that I won't need to impose upon my colleagues like that any longer. I am sure they feel that relief too!

But I also feel a bit of melancholy right now. The rhythm of collaboration, discussion, shopping for opinions and insights, learning from my colleagues—that rhythm is one of the benefits of sitting on this perch in MAC. While I plan to remain involved—I have no choice, really, since I'll be officially joining the Presidents' Award Committee in a few minutes—I also am not kidding myself when I realize it won't be the same for me personally in the time ahead.

I'll come back to this theme in a few moments, with an eye toward how this affects us all in our careers and in our personal lives, and what MAC can continue to do and improve upon in this regard.

As our treasurer, Colleen McFarland Rademaker, noted, MAC's financial picture is healthy overall. We strive to make sure that we provide our members with an excellent value in professional development opportunities, great food at receptions and breaks, and chances to network with colleagues and vendors who provide much-needed services to our profession. And doing so while we keep our costs in line with our income. It might seem like simple math: don't spend more than you take in. But it isn't that simple. As we plan meetings and other events, we commit to many expenses before the income arrives. And, while we can base those decisions on our recent experiences with previous meetings, we also recognize that no two meetings are alike. Registration responses vary from year to year, depending to some extent upon the location of our meetings. We have learned what works and what doesn't, and sometimes we take a risk to learn that something might not pan out the way we had hoped. Not taking a risk can itself be a risk, if we continue to repeat practices that have not been successful.

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drop-in workshop equipped with scanning and processing stations. Volunteers from MAC and the Reuther Library were on-site to assist with physical preservation, metadata creation, and scanning. The event was well attended and a smashing success. What an amazing way for archivists to give back to the community while honing their expertise!

The second day of the conference was chock full of activities for all in attendance. While the city buzzed with opening day festivities celebrating the hometown Detroit Tigers, archivists hummed around the many tours taking place. Traditional behind-the-scenes tours of local repositories included The Henry Ford, the Detroit Institute of Arts, the Walter P. Reuther Archives of Labor Affairs, and the Burton Collection at the Detroit Public Library, and walking tours explored the Black Bottom and Paradise Valley areas of the city's lower east side. A special tour with plenary speaker Viranel Clerard of the Detroit Mural Project highlighted public art in downtown Detroit.

The Education Committee—led by Amy Bishop (cochair) and Janet Carleton (cochair) and comprised of members Sally Conkright, Chad Conrady, Hathaway Hester, Brad Houston, Kathryn Kuntz, Carrie Schwier, and Anke Voss—provided attendees with some great opportunities for furthering their professional development. Attendees learned about everything from records management to text and data mining.

The Program Committee—led by Carrie Schwier (cochair) and Jennifer Audsley-Moore (cochair) and comprised of Joanna Bares, Stacey Erdman, Lauren Gaines, Kayla Harris, Lindsay Hiltunen, Deborah Kloiber, Hayley Jackson, Brandon Pieczko, Carol Street, and Robbie Terman—developed a program with a little something for everybody and a record number of sessions (27)! This was made possible by scheduling traditional 90-minute sessions, as well as “lightning sessions” of 45 minutes.



The plenary session this year took the form of an interview with speaker Viranel Clerard, a community art advocate, photojournalist and educator for the Heidelberg Arts Leadership Academy, and founder of the Detroit Museum of Public Art, a digital catalog of 1,000+ public art murals in the city of Detroit. The interviewer was Michael Smith, the Johanna Meijer Magoon Principal Archivist of the Michigan Historical Collections at the Bentley Historical Library. What an amazing opportunity to hear a conversation about Clerard's journey to Detroit, his fascinating career, and the many intriguing projects he has undertaken!

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The opening reception took place at the Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History, one of the country's preeminent institutions dedicated to the collection, preservation, and display of materials documenting African American culture. The drinks and conversation flowed throughout the evening, and those in attendance were invited to walk through the incredibly moving permanent exhibit at the museum, *And Still We Rise: Our Journey through African American History and Culture*. The exhibit traces the journey of those brought as slaves in bondage from Africa to the new world and the fight for freedom that still continues in modern-day America. What an experience!



The Local Arrangements Committee, consisting of Jamie Myler (cochair), Shae Rafferty (cochair), Lauren Lincoln (cochair), James Hanks, Maria Ketcham, Sarah Lebovitz, Kathryn Lovelace, Kathy Makas, Marian Matyn, Dave Moore, Natalie Morath, and Alison Stankrauff, would like to take this opportunity to thank all the wonderful archivists who came to Detroit and made this conference something special for everyone. We hope you had as much fun attending this conference as we did putting it on for you. We also hope you remember your time here fondly and return to experience Detroit's inspiring innovation, transformation, and resurgence!