



An open letter of support for Doane University's archives

July 1, 2019

Dear President Carter,

I am the president of the Midwest Archives Conference, a regional professional association representing archivists, curators, and librarians in thirteen states including Nebraska. Members of our organization expressed concern over recent events on the Doane University campus pertaining to an archival exhibit that resulted in the Director of the Perkins Library being placed on a temporary administrative leave. I am writing today to express both our support of Doane's institutional archives and our hope that Doane will work with its information professionals to constructively incorporate what is a challenging and difficult history into a better future for the campus and alumni.

The exhibit proved to test Doane's collective social memory in the context of the current national conversation about racist imagery in campus archival collections and yearbooks. Statements by Doane University in reaction to the exhibit clearly indicate your university's support of an inclusive environment that strives to be a welcoming space for your entire community. However, administrative reaction to the contested exhibit, as described in media accounts, caused concern for many in the archival community over the integrity and authenticity of the Doane archives and for the primary source material it contains.

The Society of American Archivists' Core Values (<https://www2.archivists.org/statements/saa-core-values-statement-and-code-of-ethics>) states that we "preserve such primary sources to enable us to better comprehend the past, understand the present, and prepare for the future." The Midwest Archives Conference encourages Doane University to engage these primary sources to confront individual and institutional racism throughout its history and its present and to value the integrity of the archival collections and the judgment of the professionals in the library who manage these materials.

As Doane University nears its 150th anniversary, I recommend taking recent events and the upcoming historical marker as an opportunity to expand Doane's archival program with the addition of a professional archivist who can contribute to the organization, interpretation, and discoverability of Doane's rich history.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Erik A. Moore". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

Erik A. Moore
President, Midwest Archives Conference