

## An Opportunity to Look Back

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This past spring, I've had the honor of being MAC's first graduate student fieldwork employee. Tasked with researching MAC's history and creating a timeline of key events to walk members down a digital memory lane ahead of this golden 50th anniversary, I quickly realized that a history of MAC would mean nothing without the voices of its incredible members who have shaped and given this organization such a vibrant life. Working closely with MAC leadership, we asked simply, what does MAC mean to you? The responses we received were full of joy and humbling to read. Thank you to those who responded.

While impossible to narrow down the events of the past five decades into a simple slide show and timeline, what I can say with confidence is that MAC's greatest accomplishments have been a celebration of its members and the fortification of the highest standards of this profession. When looking at what threads to weave through my research and projects, what jumped out immediately was the impact Archie Motley's vision and leadership had on shaping the very soul of MAC. MAC's 50 years has been a story about community, uplifting the voices of the often overlooked, and archival excellence. From championing diversity and inclusion and tackling divisive issues of discrimination from the very first publications in 1973, to ensuring space for women-led professional conversations and supporting solo archivists holding their entire institution on their shoulders, MAC has time and again taken a stand for professionals. It has served as a guide for this vocation through a truly staggering number of changes, including, but not limited

to, the emergence of new-fangled technology such as microfilm, conversations on the merits and longevity of electronic mail and the World Wide Web, and advocating the highest corners of our government in support of archival values and morality. MAC has impacted not only how our jobs are done but social memory and how we remember and encode our histories.

The joy of being together again after the uncertainty and hardships of the past few years has been an electric undercurrent leading up to the conference. Not surprising, as that is another thing that shone out from the pages of MAC's history. The joy of being together. The celebration of silliness and community (looking at you, Raiders of the Lost Archives MAC members) to Motley's MACaroons softball team, and the running inside joke about beers in bathtubs, to the celebration and commitment to younger generations of archivists. I'm standing here today having had this glorious opportunity to learn firsthand from the best, and I am just one in a long line of members who have been uplifted through this community.

Thank you for allowing me to safely dip my toes into archival waters and thank you to everyone for carving a path in this profession. My heartfelt thanks to Tamar Chute for mentoring me, to Shaun Hayes for helping to provide this opportunity, and to Kate Dietrick, Kyna Herzinger, Michelle Sweetser, Greg Bailey, Jerice Barrios, and the entire UWM Archives team for your endless support. Cheers to another 50 years of MAC!