



# ACA News

The Newsletter of the Academy of Certified Archivists Issue 106 Fall 2019

## President's Message

Timothy A. Slavin, CA  
Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs  
Dover, DE



Beginning my term as president of the Academy of Certified Archivists is humbling. I am honored to serve our organization and profession, and I am humbled and grateful to be surrounded by the very dedicated and talented members of ACA.

Most recently, that talent and dedication was evident in the outgoing class of ACA regents and officers. I want to extend my thanks to Daria Labinsky, CA, Stephanie Malmros, CA, Emily Dominick, CA, Louis Jones, CA, and Todd Welch, CA for their selfless energy, hard work, and insight exhibited throughout their time on the board. I extend a special thanks to Todd Welch, CA for the special commitment he made to remain in the ACA presidency (at the board's invitation) for an extra year. Todd provided the stable hand that the organization needed at exactly the moment in which it was most needed.

As many of you have heard and read, we lost a wonderful colleague with the passing of Gregor Trinkaus-Randall, CA. Gregor's dedication to our profession was extraordinary. He was always willing to suggest, explore, discuss, push, and, most importantly, volunteer his time for all of us. We send our condolences to Gregor's family with the simple but poignant message that we will miss him so very much.

The board of ACA has set forth on an exciting agenda of projects, ranging from addressing operational and financial efficiencies, addressing challenging issues related to reviewing the requirements for sitting for the certification exam, developing alternate exam delivery options, increasing

## In this Issue

President's Message .....	1
From the Secretary.....	3
From the Regent for Certification Maintenance.....	3
From the Regent for Outreach.....	4
Legacy Travel Award.....	5
History of the ACA Part 2...8	

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**President's Message** *(continued from previous page)*

our transparency as a member-based organization, and exploring the potential need for a new domain in cultural competency.

Some of our initial activities already have results to boast about (quietly). Our call for volunteers resulted in more than thirty-five people stepping forward to serve the organization. We are always looking for volunteers, and if you are interested in volunteering and earning service hours, please contact ACA Regent for Outreach Dara Baker, CA at [outreach@certifiedarchivists.org](mailto:outreach@certifiedarchivists.org). Dara's efforts on behalf of ACA are so many and so varied that it is difficult to summarize them, but it is never difficult to say thank you. Thank you, Dara, for all that you do for ACA.

Our new web master is Sarah Denison, CA. Sarah serves as the Chief Collaboration Officer for the Government Information Center for the State of Delaware. Sarah has already made great improvements to our site navigation and content. Thank you, Sarah, for your service to ACA.

I look forward to working with each of you in our service to the profession.

### Searching for a Job?

Look at ACA's listing of job ads that are looking to hire Certified Archivists. Go to <https://www.certifiedarchivists.org/job-postings/>.

We depend on our membership to update us about recent openings that require or prefer an ACA certification. Please email [webmaster@certifiedarchivists.org](mailto:webmaster@certifiedarchivists.org) for questions, or to list/advertise a job opening that requires or prefers an ACA certification!

## ACA Officers

President (2019-2020)	Timothy A. Slavin, CA Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs Dover, DE
Vice President/ President-Elect (2019-2020)	Tomaro Taylor, CA USF Libraries Tampa, FL
Treasurer (2018-2020)	Gerrienne Schaad, CA Florida Southern College Lakeland, FL
Secretary (2019-2021)	Marie Force, CA Delta Flight Museum Atlanta, GA
Regent for Examination Administration (2019-2020)	Rosemary Pleva Flynn, CA University of North Dakota Energy & Environmental Research Center Grand Forks, ND
Regent for Examination Development (2018-2020)	Jane Zhang, CA Catholic University of America Department of Library of Information Science Washington, DC
Regent for Certification Maintenance (2019-2021)	Stephanie Bayless, CA National Archives at San Francisco San Bruno, CA
Regent for Outreach (2018-2020)	Dara Baker, CA National Archives and Records Administration College Park, MD
Immediate Past President & Re- gent for Nominations (2019-2020)	Todd Welch, CA Utah State University Merrill-Cazier Library Logan, UT

Contact information for the Officers and Regents is available on the ACA website:  
[www.certifiedarchivists.org/about-us/officers.html](http://www.certifiedarchivists.org/about-us/officers.html)



### From the Secretary

Marie Force, CA  
Delta Flight Museum  
Atlanta, GA

#### Board of Regents Update

At the August 2, 2019 meeting in Austin, Texas, the Board of Regents:

- Thanked Todd Welch, CA for his extended service to the board as president for an additional year.
- Heard reports and plans for tackling the ACA strategic plan initiatives including CapHill Management Services contract review, developing requirements document for a membership software system, and making recommendations for a Role Delineation Statement task force and a Committee for Regent for Member Services.
- Motion passed unanimously to adopt a cultural competency component for future ACA exams.
- Tasked the Role Delineation Statement task force with how to incorporate cultural competency into RDS.

#### At the August 4, 2019 Business Meeting:

- Members heard reports from board members and were briefed on the strategic plan initiatives and other activities of the board.
- Linda Hocking, CA and Becky Haglund Tousey, CA were presented with Distinguished Service Awards.
- By-law amendments passed unanimously for adoption of the mission statement, addition of a Regent for Member Services and addition of electronic voting to the voting process.

### From the Regent for Certification Maintenance

Stephanie Bayless, CA  
National Archives at San Francisco  
San Bruno, CA



I've only been in this position for a short couple of months, but that is long enough to notice that there are some questions about Emeritus Status. Let's see if I can shed some light on this designation.

#### What is emeritus status?

It is a marker of your professional service and achievements that acknowledges you've retired or otherwise moved on in your career. It lowers your annual dues to \$10 while allowing you to stay fully active in the Academy. And it stays with you forever - once you are approved for emeritus status, you no longer have to recertify.

#### How do I qualify?

You need to be retired from daily archival work, have recertified at least once, and be current on your dues. The Regent for Certification Maintenance reviews all requests to make sure the designation is appropriate and you are a member in good standing.

#### Do I have to be retired?

No! You have to no longer be performing daily archival work, but that doesn't mean you can't still be working full or part time. You can qualify if you've taken a job that has pulled you away from archives - a Dean of Libraries, for example. The idea behind this is that you'll no longer be focusing your professional development and service on archives.

#### How do I apply?

Submit a letter formally requesting emeritus status that explains your circumstances c/o the ACA Secretariat at [aca@caphill.com](mailto:aca@caphill.com). You can include a copy of your CV if you find that an easier way to show

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**From the Regent for Certification Maintenance** *(continued from previous page)*

your career progression. Prefer snail mail? Send a hard copy to the Academy’s mailing address.

**What if I have more questions?**

Email me at [certificationmaintenance@certifiedarchivists.org](mailto:certificationmaintenance@certifiedarchivists.org). I’m happy to discuss your specific situation.

**From the Regent for Outreach**

Dara Baker, CA  
National Archives and Records Administration  
College Park, MD



Fall has finally arrived in my part of the world (Maryland/DC) and it’s a great time to turn our minds to fall conference season and advertising. This fall, ACA will be trying out a new model for conferences, “Office Hours” at a table rather than being staffed for the entire conference (joint conferences and SAA will continue with the fully staffed model). The goal of the “office hours” is to try to streamline our time and yours during a conference. As we roll in to the spring, more of these will be announced locally.

In the next few months, the Regent for Outreach and volunteers will be undertaking a few main tasks: formalizing the position of the Regent for Member Services as required in the by-laws and approved at the August business meeting. We will also be assessing our web communications and working to improve our transparency with our members. We welcomed Sarah Denison, CA as our new website manager/webmaster and thank Jim Havron,

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## From the Regent for Outreach *(continued from previous page)*

CA for his amazing work in that role and for his continuing dedication to ACA and the archives profession as he continues to manage our IT/Cybersecurity.

Thanks to everyone who has already responded to the call for volunteers! You will be hearing back from myself or Stephanie in a few weeks. I cannot express how amazing it is to see the breadth and depth of our members skills and interests.

We had an amazingly successful exam last year and welcomed 79 new CAs who have received their first certificates. Congratulations!!

And you know that we are always interested in speaking to students and other professionals about becoming CAs. If you are part of a state archives association and are interested in having a representative from ACA speak to your members or if you are involved with/work with a university program or a student chapter and are interested in giving a presentation for ACA this year, please let me know! We were able to have Ryan Leimkuehler, CA present an ACA exam education session at NAGARA this year to incredibly positive reviews. If any members are on Program Committees, it would be great to get an ACA session in a pre-conference workshop!

I participated in #AskAnArchivist this year with a few questions and interactions. In answer to the question of “What do archivists do to stay current with new changes, new technology, new ideas, and new trends” we heard from individual archivists and institutions about the importance of attending conferences, professional development classes, intellectual shadowing, and, of course, Twitter and listservs. I’d love to hear what our CAs are doing as part of American Archives Month. Post to Facebook, share on our Twitter @acarchivists or send

me an email to share with the rest of our members.

Berlin Loa, CA shares her experiences as ACA’s recipient of the reinvigorated Legacy Travel Award below. As a newly minted professor of Library Science I am delighted we were able to help her reconnect with the archives community at such a crucial time. Good luck in the new job Berlin!

The usual reminders: if you are planning to give a presentation, discussion certification with a group or post a job with CA as a preference or a requirement, let me know! And stay tuned for the Travel Assistance and Legacy Award information for 2020.

As always, you can contact me at [outreach@certifiedarchivists.org](mailto:outreach@certifiedarchivists.org).

## Legacy Travel Award

Berlin Loa, MA, CA

This summer, after a long absence from SAA, I was fortunate to receive the recently renewed ACA Legacy Travel Award to travel to Austin for the annual meeting and the ACA 30th Anniversary event. I hadn’t attended the conference for years, but was very involved in committees and task forces during my early years with SAA. Attending the conference felt a little like coming home to visit. I saw familiar faces and caught up on SAA and ACA in the business meetings. And, of course, attended the ACA 30th anniversary reception with the lovely cupcakes topped with edible ACA logos – an immersive archives experience!



From the CAs I spent the evening with at the reception, to those I met newly at sessions on equity and inclusion, to the [AAC members](#) I had

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## Legacy Travel Award

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dinner with, and the [NAAS session](#), the conference was fulfilling and refreshing. I met many new colleagues and reconnected with others. Transitioning to a new position over the summer, SAA and the ACA were an excellent opportunity to stay connected during my brief break. Memorable sessions included the plenary with Meredith Evans and Trevor Dawes who reminded us of the importance of incorporating diversity, inclusion, and representation in our work. As archivists we can apply these in all of the spaces we occupy including exhibits, programs, and services in addition to acquisitions and processing. And, the session on demythologizing the archives by challenging traditional methodologies in order to recontextualize collections and praxis with Rebecca Joanna Kuske, Megan Renee Benfield, and Ryan Hendrickson was a refreshing look at shifting the archives paradigm to meet the conditions of community and affect practice.

I walked away from SAA exhausted by the travel and the heat (Austin in the summer!), but also inspired by my colleagues' presentations on inclusive description, and the challenges and promises of access options. While I have always remained locally

active in archives associations, I was reminded of the importance of being involved on a national level as an opportunity to reflect upon and affect what our practices mean for our communities.

I am grateful to the ACA Legacy travel award for making it possible for me to attend the annual meeting and the ACA events. Being a CA has opened doors to new positions and opportunities as an archivist, but it has also provided another benefit in the form of a semi-guided professional development schedule that isn't always provided as part of our positions. Recertification by petition includes service, presenting, teaching, and writing, all of which I enjoy and practice as an archivist. Being a CA also means joining a professional network of members dedicated to professional commitment beyond education and experience, many of whom I was able to meet and enjoy time with at SAA.

It might have been the night at the Moody Theater or it might have been the exhibit and edible logos at the Briscoe Center, but I'm pretty sure it was the collegial environment and excellent sessions that left me ready for my next role as an archivist. Thank you to the ACA and the Legacy Travel Award committee for the opportunity and the much-needed re-immersion in the archives conversation!



ACA Board Meeting, August 2019





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## The History of ACA

Contributed by Mott Linn, CA

### The History of ACA Part 2: ACA is Formed

After SAA approved the creation of ACA on February 1, 1989, it appointed five members to the Interim Board of Certification, including its chair Edie Hedlin. Once appointed, IBC members quickly realized just how much they had to accomplish in less than two years.

Obviously, the creation of a valid exam was of paramount importance. SAA Council and the IBC selected the Professional Examination Service (PES) to provide guidance and technical assistance to ensure that the certification examination would be reliable, valid, objective, and conform to generally accepted standards.

PES advised to begin with, in essence, the defining of what a professional archivist does by constructing the Role Delineation Statement (RDS). James Rhoads, who was the former Archivist of the United States, led this work. The RDS was created by groups of experienced archivists who collectively represented a broad cross-section of archives. This was the case with all the groups used throughout the process. These groups identified seven basic “domains,” or areas of archival practice. Then, they determined that there were twenty-four common, major archival tasks and more than fifty knowledge statements that are required to successfully accomplish these tasks. Each of these they then matched with one of the domains. Although the RDS was developed to create a legally defensible exam, it is also one of most valuable benefits that ACA has bestowed upon the profession because archival experts developed it according to rigorous standards. The archival community came to agree that the RDS was a thorough description of what an archivist is and does. Previously, no one agreed on this basic point because archivists’ collections and backgrounds were so varied. As a result, many at the time believed that there was no feasible way to develop standards for an archivist’s knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs). The RDS overcame all that. Every few years, ACA re-examines and updates the RDS to ensure that it remains up-to-date with the ever-advancing archival field.

In early 1989, four other groups of archivists used the RDS to guide them in creating a pool of a couple of hundred multiple-choice questions. PES ensured that

these would adhere to psychometric testing standards for reliability and validity. In June, another group selected which of these questions would become the initial certification exam. Once the exam was finished, PES used the Angoff Method to set the passing score in a way that met the Standards for Education and Psychological Testing. As a result of the rigor in the exam’s construction, it tests in a reliable and valid way for a professional-level mastery of an archivist’s needed KSAs.

SAA Council and Hedlin agreed that marketing and public relations were important. Thus, during the next months, IBC representatives conducted many promotional efforts, including at more than a dozen regional archival associations.

Originally, to become a candidate to take the exam, an archivist had to meet one of three qualifications: a master’s degree with a minimum of nine semester hours in archives administration and one year of qualifying experience in archives; a master’s degree and two years of qualifying experience; or a bachelor’s degree and three years of qualifying experience. To have original members, the IBC had to decide on the criteria for certification by petition, which SAA Council then approved. They decided that applicants had to meet one of three combinations of education and experience: a master’s degree including at least nine semester hours of graduate study in archives administration and a minimum of five years of professional archival experience; a master’s degree and six years of experience; or a bachelor’s degree and seven years of experience. Applicants had to send in their petitions by September 30, 1989.

Because of the number of petitions that came in just before the deadline and how many appeals were made, it took almost a year to wind down this process, which Frank Cook oversaw throughout. Ultimately, 689 archivists succeeded certifying using this method.

On October 26, 1989 at the SAA Annual Meeting in St. Louis ACA held its organizing meeting. The gathered members determined many details of the academy’s operation, including the election of its first officers. After the election, the IBC handed over its responsibilities and ceased to exist.

Next: Part 3: ACA’s Early History

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