

**Society of American Archivists
Council Meeting
August 3, 2020
Virtual Meeting**

**SAA Foundation Board Report
(Prepared by President Scott Cline)**

What a year! In so many confounding ways.

In 2019, the Board made the decision not to hold an in-person mid-year meeting as a cost saving measure. Little did we know at the time that we would not be holding an in-person annual meeting. I believe we made the correct decision regarding the mid-year meeting; the work we were able to accomplish via email speaks for itself. However, on a personal note, I am saddened that we will go for however long it will be without meeting face-to-face.

I want to focus on a few accomplishments since the 2019 annual meeting. On the last day of October, we completed negotiations with Michael Kurtz when he signed a Memorandum of Understanding affirming his bequest of \$500,000 to the Foundation for creation of *The Dr. Michael J. Kurtz Initiative for the Future of Archives, Records, and Information*. The bequest will be announced officially at the 2020 meeting. I especially want to thank Board members Dennis Meissner and Margery Sly and Executive Director Nancy Beaumont for carrying the ball in negotiating with Michael in person, via email, and on the phone. And, of course, we are so grateful to Michael for his generosity.

COVID added an entirely new, and we hope short-lived, focus to the Foundation's work. In April, we established the Archival Workers Emergency Fund (AWEF) with seed money in the amount of \$15,000. AWEF was the brainchild of an *ad hoc* group of colleagues led by Jennifer Chapel and Lydia Tang. AWEF's goal is to assist those archivists who are negatively affected by the pandemic by providing up to \$1,000 in awards that can be used to meet acute financial needs. Foundation seed money, donations from members and institutions, and transfer of funds from SAA Sections have raised \$129,150 as of July 9. AWEF has provided 139 grants to colleagues. A special thank you goes to the AWEF Review Committee, comprising individuals from the *ad hoc* group and two Board members (Sharmila Bhatia and Amy Fitch), as well as to SAA staff members Felicia Owens and Peter Carlson, whose administrative support has made this process workable.

At the 2019 Board meeting, we adopted a budget that included an increase for the Foundation's Travel Award from \$10,000 to \$12,000. With transformation of the SAA Annual Meeting to a virtual meeting, the Foundation was presented with a unique opportunity. We decided to transfer \$6,000 from the Travel Award to AWEF and, because there is no travel to the Annual Meeting, the balance was applied to Registration Awards. Thus the Foundation is providing for up to 122 complimentary registrations.

Also at the 2019 Board meeting, we adopted a payout for the Strategic Grant program of \$21,300. The Grant Review Committee recommended and the Board approved five grants for the 2020 cycle:

- **Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University (\$5,000):** A proposal to undertake a comprehensive research project to examine archival accessioning labor profiles throughout the United States, including administering a survey, conducting site visits, and developing an open access dataset.
- **Quenepon Restoration Project Team (\$5,000):** A proposal to revive, web restore, and create viable digital preservation strategy for *El cuarto del quenepón* to honor its legacy and continuing influence in the Puerto Rico arts community.
- **Society of American Archivists Education Office (\$5,000):** A proposal to develop the next level of professional development coursework for archives managers, focusing on diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) skills and competencies.
- **Sixty Inches From Center (\$4,500):** A proposal to publish a series of multimedia articles and produce a live discussion series that brings archival best practices to an audience of cultural workers, artists, writers, curators, grant-makers, street scholars, and community archivists.
- **Black Theater Commons (\$3,700):** A proposal to create an instructive, informative and entertaining video that can be used on BTC's website, in workshops, and in classrooms introducing black theater participants to archives, and advocating for the preservation of the historical records of black theater across the country.

Since its first Strategic Growth Fund grant cycle in 2016, the SAA Foundation has awarded a 21 grants, totaling \$84,256.

I try to express my appreciation to the SAA/SAAF staff whenever I can, but in reality it is never enough. The Foundation and the Society could not do what they do without the commitment and exceptional work carried out day after day by staff. In particular, Nancy, Felicia, and Peter have made our work much easier than it might otherwise be.

Finally, it is with no little regret that I step down as President of the Board after a wonderful three years. I believe three years is a decent amount of time to serve in that position. I am justly proud of the work the Board has done during this time, especially in growing the Strategic Grant Program, negotiating the Michael Kurtz bequest, developing the Travel Award Program, and stepping up to assist colleagues affected by COVID by creating the Archival Workers Emergency Fund. I have been blessed in my career to be involved at the leadership level with many groups and associations; I have enjoyed the Foundation work above all. I will continue to serve on the Board for the two years left of my term. I count myself lucky that I will continue to work on behalf of the Foundation and with colleagues I admire and deeply respect.