Citywide Administrative Services

**INTRO. NO. 486: DCAS-RECORDS MERGER**
**NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL**
**COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS**

**TESTIMONY BY EDNA WELLS HANDY**
**COMMISSIONER, DEPARTMENT OF CITYWIDE ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES**
**COMMISSIONER, DEPARTMENT OF RECORDS & INFORMATION SERVICES**
**& EILEEN FLANNELLY, CHIEF RECORDS SERVICES OFFICER**
**APRIL 27, 2011**

Good afternoon Chair Brewer and members of the Governmental Operations Committee. I am Edna Wells Handy, Commissioner for the Department of Citywide Administrative Services (DCAS), and Commissioner for the Department of Records & Information Services (Records). I am joined by my colleagues Eileen Flannelly, Chief Records Services Officer and Kenneth Cobb, Assistant Commissioner for Records. As many of you know, Eileen began as an Assistant Commissioner for Records in 2002, later became a Deputy Commissioner in 2005, and then became Acting Commissioner in July 2010. Ken Cobb has over 30 years of service at Records, beginning as a school intern, then later serving as the Director of the Municipal Archives for over 14 years, and then becoming Assistant Commissioner in 2005. We thank you for this opportunity to discuss Intro. No. 486, in relation to the transfer of functions from the Department of Records and Information Services to the Department of Citywide Administrative Services.

## Introduction

As you know, DCAS ensures that City agencies have the critical resources and support needed to provide the best possible services to the public. To assist City agencies, DCAS provides overall facilities management including maintenance and construction services for 55 buildings; manages real property and locates space for City agencies; purchases and distributes supplies and equipment; and conducts professional development and employee training programs. In order to provide this vital support to City agencies, DCAS encompasses significant human capital, asset management, fiscal management, procurement, information technology, and legal expertise.

Records is responsible for the organization and retrieval of records, reports, and archival documents produced by past and present City governments. The agency is composed of the Municipal Archives, Municipal Records Management, the City Hall Library, and Grant Administration. The Municipal

Archives appraises, accessions, classifies, arranges, and makes available for research invaluable historical records of New York City government. Municipal Records Management ensures the maintenance of records in all City agencies having continuing administrative and legal value, as well as the retirement or proper disposal of those records no longer in current use. The City Hall Library provides library and information services through its collections, which are relevant to New York City governmental matters, and is the depository for all official reports and studies published by New York City departments, commissions, and divisions. Finally, Grant Administration administers New York State Local Government Records Management Improvement Fund grants for Mayoral agencies. Each year, up to $1 million is awarded to Mayoral agencies through these grants.

This anticipated merger has mutual benefits for both agencies, and there are a number of advantages for DCAS in particular. DCAS and Records are collaborating on consolidating records management functions and establishing a pilot records management program, which we plan to launch citywide. Following meetings with Records and DCAS staff, each line of service within DCAS has a liaison to address records issues and retention schedules. In conjunction with the DCAS Citywide Training Center, Records is working on providing records management training to educate staff on records retention schedules and policies. Records also assists DCAS Asset Management by providing records storage space for City agencies that are relocating. This leads to significant reductions in related lease costs because the relocating agency does not need additional storage space. Records expertise also enhances DCAS special events, such as our recent Black History Month and Women's History Month events, with presentations featuring invaluable holdings from the Municipal Archives.

I now turn to my colleague Eileen Flannelly to discuss the benefits of the merger for Records.

Consolidating Records with DCAS also provides numerous benefits for Records, and is a creative solution for issues we have faced over the years due to the size of our agency. Over the years, reductions from Programs to Eliminate the Gap (PEGs) have proven to be increasingly challenging for Records given its small staff and the rapid pace at which technology is evolving and the need for the agency to keep up.

Merging Records and DCAS will lead to more effective records management and archival services for the City. Through streamlined administration, these processes will benefit from better staff utilization, more effective space management planning—resulting in real estate related savings on storage facilities—and more cost-efficient procurement. In addition, DCAS and Records, along with other agencies, will work on developing the most effective and forward-thinking digital and physical records retention strategies. Furthermore, the success of Records with archival asset monetization, such as sales of its vast holdings of tax lot photos, will be enhanced through the development of new products and partnerships with the DCAS-managed CityStore, NYC & Company, and NYC Media.

**Intro. No. 486**

Intro. No. 486 preserves the Charter-mandated powers and duties of Records, and primarily incorporates Chapter 72 of the NYC Charter regarding Records into Chapter 35 of the NYC Charter regarding DCAS. The bill currently provides that the Commissioner of DCAS shall have the powers and duties of the Commissioner of Records. It is important to note that through this integration, Records will maintain—indeed, even enhance—its core functions. The Archival Review Board, which has the duties of inspecting and reviewing any appraisal, organization, processing, or archiving of City records, shall continue within DCAS. The Records functions of overseeing the Municipal Archives, the City Hall Library, Municipal Records Management, and Grant Management will all remain the same following the merger.

The merger will allow Records to leverage DCAS's extensive administrative infrastructure for critical agency functions, enabling current staff at Records to focus on their specialized duties as records managers and archival technicians. Such administrative functions include budget and fiscal operations, particularly capital budget access and enhanced expense budget support; in-house legal counsel assistance; personnel support, such as human resources services and training opportunities; procurement and contracting expertise; and information technology support. Moreover, integrating DCAS and Records will enable both agencies to better absorb the effects of budget cuts resulting from PEG targets.

In anticipation of the merger, Records and DCAS have begun working under a shared services model. I have been appointed by Commissioner Handy to serve as the Chief Records Services Officer for the DCAS Records line of service. In order to make the anticipated merger as seamless as possible, DCAS is already lending assistance to Records to meet its immediate operational needs. For example, DCAS information technology staff is working with Records to upgrade computer services, and the DCAS General Counsel's office is assisting Records with legal needs. DCAS facilities staff is also working on constructing a fully equipped Visitor Center for Records. In addition, DCAS is managing all procurement projects for Records. As a result of shared services with DCAS, Records procurement, administration, and budget staff can now focus on records management, archival preservation, exhibition coordination, and educational outreach. There will be no reductions or relocation of Records staff or service as a result of this merger. As I have previously mentioned, the merger will actually free up Records staff to perform duties more specialized to the core functions of Records.

Working with Chair Brewer, we have identified some amendments that could improve the bill and ensure that Records maintains sufficient autonomy to properly and efficiently perform its functions subsequent to the merger. There shall be an additional provision for a Chief Records Services Officer, who shall be appointed by the Commissioner of DCAS and have the powers and duties of the Commissioner of Records as currently specified in Section 3003 of Chapter 72 of the NYC Charter. Furthermore, the Municipal Archives and the City Hall Library will continue to maintain a separate website and designation from DCAS so that public access to these services will not be impacted. Finally, we also seek to reconstitute the Archives, Reference and Research Advisory Board to have an active role in light of the merger. While this board gradually became dormant over the past decade, we believe that by incorporating subject matter experts appointed by both the Speaker and the Mayor, we can use innovative technology to manage City records and archives and provide world-class service to the public.

**Public Meeting on DCAS-Records Merger**

Recognizing the need to inform our constituents regarding the benefits of the proposed merger, we held a public information session on March 15, 2011 and approximately 100 people attended, including Chair Brewer. I am pleased to report that we received very positive feedback once

attendees understood how the archives, library, and records programs would be strengthened and enhanced by the merger. We look forward to working with Chair Brewer and the Committee to finalize the bill, and continuing to collaborate to improve records management and archival services in the City of New York.

**Conclusion**

Thank you again for this opportunity to testify about Intro. No. 486. With the anticipated DCAS-Records merger, we look forward to promoting the new DCAS and advancing the delivery of world-class service by world-class professionals while making New York City government better, faster, cheaper, and greener. We are pleased to answer any questions you may have.

new york state
archives

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# CHRISTINE W.WARD
# NYS ARCHIVIST
# TESTIMONY BEFORE THE NYC COUNCIL
# COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS
# APRIL 27, 2011

Good afternoon, and thank you for the opportunity to address the New York City Council regarding the proposed reorganization of the city's records management and archival functions. I am Christine Ward, Assistant Commissioner for Archives and Records, and the New York State Archivist. My organization manages the current and archival records of New York State government and we provide technical assistance and grants to 4,400 local governments and 3,000 historical records repositories across the state. While the State Archives does not have a direct responsibility for the records and archives of the City of New York, as we do for those of all of New York's other local governments, we work closely with the Department of Records in a partnership to ensure that grant funds that flow through the State Archives to the City for management of its records is appropriately distributed (and well spent). It perhaps goes without saying that, because of interconnected, complementary or related functions and programs, the effective management of New York City's records is of great interest to state and other local governments. And, because of the richness of New York City's history and the records that

WHERE HISTORY GOES ON RECORD

document that history, their well-being is of interest and concern to the citizens of the state and to all those researchers and individuals whose histories connect to this City.

My purpose today is not to advise you on how to organize the functions of City government—that is clearly your prerogative and responsibility. Rather, my reason for accepting your invitation to testify, is to highlight the importance of ensuring that the reorganization discussion be grounded in the precept that the City must have strong and effective records management and archival programs. I urge you to take this opportunity to ensure that the Department of Records receives the regulatory, administrative and financial resources it both needs and deserves so that it can provide superior service to manage, preserve and make available the information created by New York City government.

Records management and archives are "quiet" internal control functions that go on behind the scenes and rarely result in major headlines or heated debate, although the headlines that can ensue when a Freedom of Information request has been lodged and the records cannot be found, or worse still, have been illegally destroyed can be quite disturbing and embarrassing. Effective management of current and archival records created by City government is essential to: ensure government transparency; inform and support decision-making by City agencies and officials; provide documentation of government actions; sustain the civil and property rights of citizens; provide cost-effective control of city information; and protect the city's most essential documentary resources from technological obsolescence, as well as from natural and man-made disasters.

I respectfully ask that you consider three challenges to local government and assure us that, however the records function is organized, the governing agency will be charged with the responsibility to address all three.

The first challenge is to ensure that the records management and archives program has the necessary statutory basis and authority to carry out its functions. It is essential that city agencies follow best practices in records management—management of records must be integrated into agency operations, not exercised at the agency's convenience or when they "get around to it." Information is an invaluable commodity, and it is essential that city records be complete and accurate, easily located when needed, retained for an appropriate length of time, destroyed when they have served the purpose for which they were created, and for those few that have long-term value, deposited in a professionally run archives for permanent retention. The Department of Records can and should provide agencies with guidance on this, and agencies should be required to follow that advice. Further, the Department of Records needs the professional staff and resources to make this advice available and to assist city agencies in implementing records management activities.

This leads to the second challenge—that of managing the exponentially increasing volume of government information being created electronically – a problem that faces the entire nation, not just New York State or New York City. Our challenge is to ensure that:

- records are created in non-proprietary systems and migrated over time to new software versions, formats and architectures
- records continue to be accessible when and as needed over time
- information is secure and protected
- systems are cost-effective, non-duplicative, and result in usable information

If you do not make sure that the Department of Records has the expertise and resources to engage in dealing with this problem, New York City will face the possibility of a "Digital Dark Age," something that none of us want to leave as a legacy for future generations.

The third challenge I would like to draw to your attention to is the critical need to ensure that the permanently valuable records of the City are properly preserved and made available for use by city government, by citizens of New York City, and by people around the country and the world. The heritage and historical status of New York City is unlike that of any other city in America. New York was the cradle of so many historical events and actions – the historian Kenneth Jackson in fact characterizes it in the phrase "But it was in New York…." I will not lecture you on the key role New York City has played in so many endeavors including business, the arts, immigration, labor, the environment, transportation—you know the list. The documentation of many of those events and people resides in records created by City government and they must be preserved and accessible. It is essential that now and in the future, the Department of Records has the appropriate physical facilities to protect and preserve these records and credentialed professional staff to manage them and to certify their integrity and authenticity including their provenance, their unbroken legal chain of custody and their original order. Very exacting standards for environmental controls and storage are required to do this right. Further, the quantity of archival records – both in paper and electronic formats – is substantial, and again it is essential that they be cataloged and indexed to professional standards so that city officials and private citizens can locate and retrieve the information they need from within those files. The demand for access to both the physical records, and more and more to digital images of those records on the Internet, is skyrocketing, yet it requires trained staff, resources, and a concentrated commitment to open, accessible government to accomplish this. It is essential that, as you consider this reorganization, you ensure that the archival function is taken very seriously, or the losses will be irreparable.

In sum, my purpose in testifying before you today is to underscore the significance of your City's records management and archival functions, and the need to ensure that in whatever part of City government they are located, that the function is both valued and supported and that there is a credible and authoritative voice speaking on behalf of archives and records. The Department of Records deserves, and indeed must have, a fierce advocate for its role in City government who will ensure that the City's records are effectively managed, protected, and made available for the benefit of New York City and its citizens. To do less would betray the faith of past generations of New Yorkers and compromise the future of a City whose efficient and cost-effective management and operation depend upon the continuing integrity, authenticity and accessibility of its own information.

I would like to thank the Committee for giving me the opportunity to appear here today and stand ready to answer any questions you might have.

Testimony
Rachel Chatalbash, President, Archivists Round Table of Metropolitan New York, Inc.
April 27, 2011

RE: Int. 486-2011 - In relation to the transfer of functions from the Department of Records and Information Services to the Department of Citywide Administrative Services, and to repeal chapter 72 of the charter concerning the Department of Records and Information Services.

On behalf of the Archivists Round Table of Metropolitan New York, Inc., I would like to thank the City Council for the opportunity to submit testimony on a subject that is of great professional concern to us. The Archivists Round Table, founded in 1979, is a not-for-profit organization representing a diverse group of more than 450 archivists in the New York metropolitan area. As members of the professional community of archivists, we are committed to the welfare of the New York City Department of Records and Information Services (DORIS), including the Municipal Archives. I will testify today to bring to your attention the ramifications of this proposal to merge the Department of Records and Information Services into the Department of Citywide Administrative Services (DCAS) from the point of view of our profession.

As the Council is aware, the Archivists Round Table has provided the Committee on Governmental Operations with a list of concerns and recommendations regarding the proposed merger. I would like to outline our primary concerns regarding the proposed legislation at this time.

First, historically, records agencies working as independent units have provided better services than records agencies working as part of larger, less specialized departments. This has been proven through DORIS' own history. For example, DORIS did not flourish under the Municipal Services Administration where it was placed by Mayor Lindsay in 1969. This agency had other priorities, such as maintaining facilities and providing offices with necessary supplies and equipment; the support and care of the city's records were not priorities for this department. It was not until 1977 that DORIS became a stand-alone agency, and its archives and records management divisions began to expand and function more effectively. In 1995, under Giuliani's administration, a proposal was put forth to merge DORIS into the Department of General Services, but ultimately, after many discussions among the local professional communities and City Council's Oversight Committee this proposed merger was rejected. City Council opposed the proposed merger because the City's administration was unable to identify what kind of cost savings the merger would produce. To merge DORIS into an agency devoted to services such as facilities and real estate, is a mistake, and one that has been recognized and rectified on DORIS' behalf before. To merge DORIS into DCAS would be to ignore the lessons demonstrated through DORIS' earlier history and the history of the City of New York.

The question of whether a records department should be a stand-alone agency or put under a larger umbrella is not unique to the current debate. The National Archives and Records Administration flourished only after it was made independent from the U.S. General Services Administration in 1985. The National Archives began as an independent agency in 1943 but was merged into the General Services Administration, the agency that supports the basic functioning of other federal agencies, in 1949 as a result of the Hoover Commission's report on government reorganization. Until the

introduction of the National Archives and Records Administration Act, which secured the National Archives' independence, the National Archives was unable to make its case for the skilled personnel and the resources it needed due to lack of access to the Office of Management and Budget or Congress, and was particularly vulnerable to the political whims of each incoming administration. Congress provided the National Archives with its independence to protect the agency from continued neglect. The Federal Government's support of the National Archives as an independent records agency should set an example for records agencies across the country, including our own.

A second key issue is that researchers, academics and the general public need to have continued comprehensive and unfettered access to DORIS and its resources. The records held by the Municipal Archives belong to the City of New York and are a valuable public resource. Over the past thirty-four years DORIS has processed and provided access to approximately 180,000 cubic feet of City records, as directed by the City Charter. Its staff answers more than 55,000 research requests annually. There is great potential for DORIS to lose its effectiveness in providing this access if it were to become a minor part of DCAS, for the reasons I have already described.

A third key issue for consideration is that archivists and records managers are skilled professionals with advanced degrees, specialized knowledge, and extensive training in the evaluation of records and the retention of materials with historical importance. By merging with a much larger and less specialized agency, their unique skills and knowledge become devalued, when instead, the City should actually be giving them more key decision-making positions for records retention across all City agencies. DORIS archivists are skilled and experienced professionals with the knowledge to appraise, process, describe, preserve and provide access to City records. In the past, DORIS has met professional standards and, if allowed, will continue to do so in the future.

Last, and perhaps most importantly, the proposed legislation includes no provisions for DORIS' future and no long-term protection. DORIS' future as the City's archives, records management agency, and library needs to be protected in the proposed legislation. If DORIS is unable to remain a distinct agency, and is merged into DCAS, it would need to be guaranteed autonomy within DCAS. Without the guarantee of autonomy, this merger has the potential to destroy DORIS, and the history of New York City along with it. As proven with the example of our National Archives, once subsumed into a larger, less specialized department, the potential for DORIS to be denied an active role in the management of its budget, its personnel, and its records is too great a risk. City records tell the story of the City's history and need to be maintained to document this history for future generations of scholars and residents. As part of our democratic process, citizens must to be granted access to these records, and therefore to information about the operation of city government.

I would like to remind the Council that in February of 2002, City Council heard testimony from archivists, historians, legal experts and others who protested the control of former Mayor Giuliani's official papers by a private archives facility. At this hearing, the Archivists Round Table called for full funding of the Municipal Archives as the best solution to the myriad questions raised by the Giuliani records issue. Janet Linde of the Archivists Round Table stated: "with a fully-funded Municipal Archives and a strong set of records laws we would not again find ourselves in a situation in which the public loses custody of and access to its valuable intellectual heritage and the records that ensure an

open government." DORIS did not in fact receive increased funding but rather its budget has remained relatively flat, and its staff has been cut dramatically. DORIS had 55 employees in 2001, which represents a reduction of nearly half from 1991, and has approximately 35 employees at present. As a result, the department's ability to serve the City of New York is compromised. This proposed merger has been presented to us as one that would provide DORIS with the resources and the services it is unable to access on its own. However, we must remember that it has been the City and the Mayor who have reduced DORIS' funding, and who now offer a solution that puts our City's history and our intellectual and cultural heritage at even greater risk. It is an incomplete solution to a problem created by this and past mayoral administrations in the first place. There is no assurance that DORIS as part of DCAS would have the staff, funding, or mandate to fulfill its vital role.

The Archivists Round Table of Metropolitan New York urges you to keep DORIS as an autonomous records agency. DORIS must have its interests and essential functions protected so that the value and accessibility of its records will be a part of the future of this City. The legislation that is currently under consideration is therefore far-reaching in its impact as it determines how our historical and cultural legacy will be documented and how access to these public records will be maintained. These issues are critical to transparency in government and to the continued function of a democratic society. The Archivists Round Table offers any assistance we can provide to help DORIS not only remain a professional records agency but also to improve its services and its status within the City's administration today and into the future.

**DORIS/DCAS Merger – List of Concerns and Recommendations for City Council**
**Submitted April 13, 2011**

Submitted by: Archivists Round Table of Metropolitan New York, ARMA – Metro New York City Chapter, Historical Districts Council, Jewish Genealogical Society, Mid-Atlantic Regional Archives Conference, New York Archives Conference, New York City Borough Historians, New York Genealogical and Biographical Society, and New York Public Radio

**Summary:**
City Council is currently considering a substantial change in the administrative structure of the New York City Department of Records and Information Services (DORIS). The proposal merges DORIS into the New York City Department of Citywide Administrative Services (DCAS). DORIS is composed of the Municipal Archives, the City Hall Library, Grant Administration Unit, and the Municipal Records Management Division. The proposed legislation must be brought before the City Council and approved by its members before it can be enacted. As a result, New York's local and regional archives, records management, and genealogy organizations have created this list of concerns and recommendations for the consideration of City Council's Committee on Governmental Operations.

**Concerns regarding the proposed merger:**

1. Historically, records agencies working as independent units have provided better services than records agencies working as part of larger, less specialized departments. DORIS did not flourish under the Municipal Services Administration previously. When Giuliani came into office, he wanted to put DORIS under the Department of General Services, but he was persuaded that this wasn't useful. As an additional example, the National Archives and Records Administration flourished only after it was made independent from the U.S. General Services Administration.
2. All researchers, academics and the general public need to continue to have unfettered and comprehensive access to DORIS and its resources. DORIS would lose its effectiveness if it were to become a minor part of DCAS and lose its identity and ability to function independently.
3. Archivists and records managers are skilled professionals with advanced degrees, specialized knowledge, and extensive training in the evaluation of records and the retention of materials with historical importance. By merging with a housekeeping agency, their unique skills and knowledge become devalued, when instead, the City should actually be giving them more key decision making positions for records retention across all City agencies.
4. The proposed legislation includes no provisions for DORIS' future and long-term protection.
5. DORIS is currently leading three mayoral agency-wide records projects, which are well underway. What will happen to these projects, which are essential to the development of city-wide records management and archives programs? These projects are as follows:
    A) **Development of standardized records retention schedules so that the mayoral agencies manage records appropriately and legally**. Two sections of this retention schedule are complete: human resources and the corrections department.

B) **Standardization of records management software by mayoral agencies**. Currently, agencies working with DORIS are in the process of purchasing software to manage records.

C) **A records storage requirements contract available to all agencies is very close to completion**. The contract specifies requirements for each class of records storage, including: archival records; electronic records; records that require long-term retention; and for records that are inactive and require records storage, but are frequently required for use.

6. Is the merger just about money? DORIS is an agency that once had a small budget but now has a minuscule budget. It must be noted that this budget decrease was the result of political decisions made by the Giuliani and Bloomberg administrations. Currently, DORIS' budget is very small compared to other city agencies ($1,236,410 for FY10); would this merger actually save the city money?
7. At the March 15th public information meeting, Commissioners Flannelly and Handy spoke of increased resources for DORIS, but neither provided financial figures.
8. In order to provide access to records, DORIS can not be defunded to the point of the municipal archives and library having extremely limited hours or no public hours.
9. One of the functions of DORIS is records maintenance. DORIS' current storage space at Bush Terminal is far from meeting archival industry standards. DCAS may be able to provide alternate storage space, but if they are not willing to underwrite the additional cost of monitored temperature/humidity-controlled storage space with the proper shelving, moving out of Bush Terminal may only address the issue of renting commercial storage space and not the critical environmental needs of the collections.
10. While the proposed folding of DORIS into DCAS will reputedly provide more services to DORIS in terms of space, both literally and digitally, there will be no additional staff hired. Presumably DCAS staff is already working at capacity. So, given additional digital server space, who will maintain, oversee and safeguard the terabytes of storage that DORIS is going to need as its digital collections grow? Is DCAS going to provide the necessary digital asset management system(s) needed for archival document, photo, sound and moving image collections that DORIS needs? Such systems require built-in redundancy, self-policing mechanisms that check for errors, migration plans and disaster recovery systems.
11. If the New York City Charter must be rewritten, it should also be improved. The current proposed legislation demonstrates no improvements.

**Recommendations regarding the proposed merger:**

1. DORIS' future as the City's archives, records management, and library needs to be protected in the legislation. If DORIS is unable to remain a distinct agency, and is merged into DCAS, it would need to be guaranteed autonomy within DCAS.
2. The history of the City of New York belongs to the public; its records oversight should include broad representation. There should be mandates about the membership of the Review/Oversight Board. This Board should be larger, more powerful, and should be composed of representatives from both the professional communities (archivists

and records managers) and user communities (genealogists and historians) as well as the general public. The selection list should be compiled by representatives of the relevant organizations. Specific requirements that all members must meet must be developed. This Board needs power to influence decisions made and policies created at DORIS; a Board that only makes recommendations is not enough.

3. In addition to an Oversight Board, a first-rate committee of professional archivists, records managers, and librarians are needed to evaluate the current issues regarding the current city-wide archives and records management programs.
4. The proposed legislation is based upon changing Chapter 72 of the City Charter. However, there are references to archives throughout the City Charter, which need to be reviewed prior to developing more accurate legislation regarding DORIS' future.
5. There needs to be a strategic plan for managing the City's information that is backed and supported by the Mayor. There needs to be guaranteed funding, staffing and authority to implement records management policy. The plan should at the very least address retention schedules, records management training, disposition of records, storage of records, and preservation of/access to archival records. This plan also needs to address electronic records and digital asset management.
6. There are mayoral agencies that maintain records management and archival programs independent of DORIS. If DORIS is to be considered the mayoral agencies' archives and records management agency, it is necessary for DORIS to obtain information regarding the status of records activities within these other mayoral agencies. Additionally, if these other mayoral agencies' archives contain historical information that can be shared with outside researchers, plans should be developed so that DORIS can make those records available to researchers.
7. DORIS needs to be powerful enough to give agency Records Management Officers the authority to implement records management policy.
8. In order to ensure timely access to public records, these records need to be released to DORIS on a prescribed schedule, not when agencies decide to release them (Example: Vital records have not been released for 20+ years. This action does not follow schedules or State law.).
9. Records management should be funded at the City level. This may be unrealistic in the short term given the DORIS budget crisis, but the result of having agencies fund their own records management without strong City policy to enforce it is that records management often takes a back burner or is the victim of cost-cutting measures.
10. This legislation should be clarified to mandate that the Mayor's records go to DORIS.
11. DORIS' leadership must be improved. The job description for DORIS leadership should constitute the following, based up on the Joint Statement on Selection Criteria for the Archivist of the United States prepared by SAA, NAGARA, and CoSA:
    - **Leadership and Advocacy**: Demonstrated ability to provide leadership and advocacy on behalf of DORIS' dual role in preserving cultural heritage and in ensuring that public records serve the purposes of evidence, accountability, and authenticity in protecting the rights of all citizens; demonstrated vision for the future of municipal archives and information management, including development and implementation of information policy and provision for the

management of electronic records; proven ability to articulate a compelling defense of informational resources, and the importance of strong, impartial programs for their care and management, to public officials, resource allocators, users, and the general public.

- **Management Requirements**: Proven ability as an administrator capable of managing an extensive and diverse municipal agency with broad responsibilities, including an ability to ensure effective implementation of its mandate, and efficiency and productivity in its operations and use of resources; experience in working effectively with legislators, government officials, and government and private resource allocators in ways that ensure adequate support for programs, even in times of financial stringency; experience in seeking the advice and counsel of constituent and user groups, including professional associations, and in responding to constituent needs; commitment to working creatively with other offices of the municipal government, with state governments, and with other archival programs, to effectively address shared responsibilities and concerns.
- **Professional Knowledge and Values**: Demonstrated commitment to protecting the professional integrity and political non-partisanship of DORIS as a governmental agency in carrying out its essential functions; unquestioned commitment to open and equal access to municipal records by all citizens, in accordance with all municipal regulations and in compliance with privacy protections for individuals; strong commitment to the principles of public ownership of municipal records and to the goal of holding public leaders accountable to the people through documentation and records of their actions.
- **Personal Expertise and Reputation**: Knowledge and understanding of the critical issues confronting DORIS and the archival profession generally, especially the challenges of information technology, and the competing demands of public access to government records, privacy, and ensuring the authenticity and integrity of all public records; a reputation for excellence, leadership, and effectiveness within the individual's profession, including appropriate scholarly credentials, and sufficient stature to enable the Commissioner to be seen as a leader by a wide range of constituent groups.

12. DORIS' professional staff must meet professional standards and be paid according to that pay scale.
13. DORIS is woefully understaffed. Safeguards against shrinking it further must be implemented.

**NYC City Council Hearing -- Wednesday, April 27, 2011 – 250 Broadway, 14th Floor, NY, NY 10007**
**PERSONAL TESTIMONY TO KEEP DORIS AS AN INDEPENDENT AGENCY FOR THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

**City Records Belong to the People/Preserving Public Records**

Over recent decades the NYC Municipal Archives (DORIS – the Dept. of Records and Information Services)—has been victimized by deplorable budget cuts that have crippled its legal mandate to **appraise, protect** and **provide essential access** to the city's public records in perpetuity.

The city of New York has a legal responsibility to protect its citizens' rights—for example, in regard to voting, property ownership, original wills, birth, marriage and death records, and various other kinds of irreplaceable public records. This legal responsibility of the city's govt. to preserve public records and provide access to them requires a sufficient number of trained professionals, necessary records processing space, adequate storage space to preserve records safely and securely, and enough funding to carry out a city-wide records program.

The city's lack of full support for DORIS' legal mandate to preserve public records represents a breach of trust as well as a false economy. The city of New York is not saving any money by providing such a low level of current support for DORIS that it cannot accomplish its legal mandate—to appraise city records, to protect all of its historical records (whether paper or electronic), to discard useless records, and to provide the necessary access to public records.

Instead, the city is spending more tax-payer dollars on overwhelmed staff that are spending more time trying to locate unorganized and inaccessible records and is spending money to store costly records that could be discarded once they have been properly evaluated by staff.

In view of all of this, it is remarkable that the city is not proposing to increase DORIS' staff and funding to enable it to actually accomplish its legal mandate regarding the city's public records but instead is proposing that DORIS will be able to carry out its responsibilities as a small cog inside of a much larger city agency – once again.

In 1977, DORIS was created by Local Law 49 which added a new Chapter 72 to the Charter of the City of New York and enabled DORIS to leave the gigantic Municipal Services Administration and act as an independent agency again. The change at that time consolidated the NYC Municipal Archives, the City Hall Library, Grant Administration Unit, and the Municipal Records Management Division into one like-minded agency for records and information services.

DORIS was increasingly successful after 1977 as the city recovered in those years but the gains were lost in later recessions and cutbacks. Over the past few decades, the city government continually stripped DORIS of the staff and resources it needed to keep up with a growing and more complicated city-wide public records program. The city of New York did not step up to provide its legally mandated records agency with the full resources it needed to do its job.

Ironically, the primary argument for creating DORIS in Mayor John Lindsay's administration (during the 1970s fiscal crisis) was, of course, to save money! Today the same argument is used by this administration to argue for DORIS losing its independence. In point of fact, there were no real cost savings realized in 1977 because DORIS was too small for there to be any and there will be no real cost savings today if DORIS' charter is changed because DORIS is again far too small to realize any savings (and it is already cut to the bone).

In the Comprehensive Annual Financial Report of the City Comptroller for the FY2010, DORIS' total budget is listed as $1,236, 410 as compared to DCAS (Dept. of Citywide Administrative Services) budget which is $349,546,721. So, DORIS will be completely dwarfed by DCAS, no savings will be realized, and its mission critical --to manage and preserve the city's records--will be seriously compromised by lowered staff morale and further unsustainable budget cuts.

**Early History of the NYC Municipal Archives & Records Center**

The early history and development of the NYC Municipal Archives throughout the 20th century, however, was both a triumph over the city's early neglect and a miracle of survival against all odds. Prof. Barry Seaver (who worked previously for the municipal archives) has extensively researched the beginnings of the New York City Municipal Reference Library in 1914.

He outlines the growth, evolution, and official designation of the NYC Municipal Archives & Records Center on June 30, 1952; which was largely due to the persistence and relentless campaign of one determined NYC public official—Rebecca Rankin –for the founding of a professional, independent archives and records agency for New York City.

As Seaver tells us: "Originally established in 1914 to help educate the city's electorate and improve the decision making of public officials, the municipal reference library of NYC, unlike others created during and after the Progressive Era, expanded its mission to include record-keeping and archival responsibilities.

"Encountering indifference from city officials, [NYC Municipal Librarian] Rebecca Rankin used her understanding of government operations, politics, and public relations to convince these leaders of the need for a municipal archives to preserve historic documents and the need for a system to manage and provide access to departmental records."

"In doing so, Rankin furthered the development of the archival profession in the first half of the twentieth century. Her decades-long efforts demonstrated the challenges and opportunities librarians encountered in reconciling the missions and methodologies of libraries, archives, and records management."

"Rebecca Browning Rankin, director of the [NYC] Municipal Reference Library from 1920 to 1952, worked with Mayor Fiorello La Guardia throughout his three [terms] (1935 to 1945) to

complete the transformation of the local government begun during the Progressive Era—from one based on partisan political considerations (including the Tammany Hall political machine) to a more rational, expert-oriented administration. As part of this process, Rankin convinced Mayor La Guardia and his successor, William O' Dwyer to establish an archives as a division of the Municipal Reference Library (MRL) in 1951."

"Although [Rankin's] primary goal was the preservation of historic documents, for practical and political reasons she developed a records management program that further rationalized the administration of the local government by systematizing the retention and disposal of records. [Without preserving current records, of course, there are no historic records.]

"Upon Rankin's retirement in 1952, the Municipal Archives and Records Center of the City of New York became an independent branch of the New York Public Library (NYPL), which managed its operations [for the city of New York] for the next 17 years."

**Creation of DORIS in 1977**

The NYC Municipal Archive remained an independent branch of the NYPL until 1969 (when Mayor Lindsay signed a local law moving it into the city's big Municipal Services Administration for eight years. In 1977, after realizing that the municipal archives was lost in the MSA, and bowing to internal agency pressures, Mayor Lindsay created DORIS as an independent agency, again, by citing cost savings as one of the primary reasons.)

So, for the major part of its existence, the NYC Municipal Archives & Records Center (DORIS) has maintained its professional autonomy as an independent city agency. In Glenn Collins' 2001 article, "City's History Rewritten from Municipal Archives," he outlines the serendipitous and improbable survival of many of the city's records over the decades, often despite the city's inaction, lack of adequate funding and carelessness with its records. "Of all the remarkable things about NYC's Municipal Archives, the most extraordinary, by far, is its very survival."

I urge all of you today to maintain the integrity (and survival) of DORIS as a separate and independent public records agency. Please vote NO on this ill-advised legislation (Int 0486-2011) to merge DORIS into the much larger and incompatible DCAS agency.

Instead, I urge that you today, as City Council members, and with the help of the city's Mayor and administration, begin to take full financial responsibility for DORIS' public records mandate. There are many options, including increased city revenues, fund-raising, donations and grants, to assist the city in maintaining an archives agency and improving its services and staffing.

One of your most important and fundamental obligations as public officials – is the sacred duty to preserve and provide access to the city's public records that document New York City's citizens' rights and privileges. With your increased help and support, DORIS, our miraculous Dept. of Records and Information Services survivor, can flourish for the next hundred years.

Thank you.
Lucinda Manning

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Lloyd Ultan
Borough Historian

Testimony on April 27, 2011 at
New York City Council Committee on Covernmental Operations hearing on Int.486-2011—
Bill to transfer functions from the Department of Records and Information Services to the Department of Administrative Services

My name is Lloyd Ultan. I am the Bronx Borough Historian. Borough Historians are appointed public officials empowered by New York State law to make recommendations to promote the establishment and improvement of programs to manage and preserve governmental and historical records. That is the purpose of my testimony here.

My first inclination is to recommend against the transfer of the functions of DORIS to the Department Of Administrative Services. The work performed by DORIS and the functions of its personnel are so specialized and so unique that it appears beyond the ability of the persons in charge and the usual personnel of the Department Of Administrative Services to adequately deal with them. The temptation will always exist to financially starve the functions currently performed by DORIS to pay for the operations they already know how to perform and with which they are more comfortable.

Nevertheless, we are told that the merger of the two agencies will save money vitally needed in these fiscally perilous times. Thus, if the merger is to occur, steps must be taken by including in the bill effecting the merger provisions assuring that the unique functions of DORIS continue at its high professional level and that they are adequately funded.

To make sure that his happens, as a Borough Historian, I recommend:

1. That the merged agency be required to hire only archivists, records managers and librarians who hold academic degrees and have experience in their respective fields. The same requirements should be specified for all other specialized personnel, such as conservators and cataloguers.

2. That it be required that the holdings of the municipal archives, records and library be stored only in facilities that are fireproof and climate controlled and in a manner consistent with professionally accepted national preservation standards.

3. That the bill require that all future appropriations for the merged department set aside a fixed percentage of its total to be used for the operations of the municipal archives, records and library. This percentage figure must be in the bill itself. The percentage number should be established by adding the total appropriations for DORIS for all the years from 2006 and 2011 with the total appropriations for the Department Of Administrative

Services for the same years and calculating what percentage of the combined total went to DORIS. That is the percentage number that should be specified in the bill.

I believe that these recommendations, if followed, will preserve and enhance the operations of DORIS under the merged agency. It will also ensure that any verbal promises or commitments in letters will not be forgotten over the years as new administrators, who would not be aware of these commitments, replace those currently in charge. In this way, we can be assured that the heritage of our past will be passed on to future generations and that the legacy that you Councilmembers add to that heritage will continue through the centuries.

# DORIS-DCAS MERGER TESTIMONY FOR NYC HEARING APRIL 27, 2011

**Submitted and given by Terry Koch-Bostic, Representative of the APG-NY (Association of Professional Genealogists)**

Good Afternoon, ladies and gentlemen: members of the City Council; NYC Government; and all the interested parties here who have taken the time to make their voices heard on this very important topic.

My name is Terry Koch-Bostic, I am here today representing the Association of Professional Genealogists. I am the Chapter Representative for the NY Metro Chapter of the APG. This Chapter alone has over 200 members, most of whom are specialists in records pertaining to NYC and the various ethnicities of NYC. All of our members are also members of numerous genealogical and historical societies in the NY Metro area, NY State and nationally. Genealogy professionals work long hours locating, researching and analyzing records for their clients but our members also give countless pro bono hours to the public on digitizing projects including older NYC birth, marriage and death records; researching and writing articles for the many diverse genealogical and historical societies in and around NYC; organizing and giving lectures at local venues including the National Archives (NARA) and also the NY Public Library Genealogy Lecture Series in conjunction with the NY Genealogical and Biographical Society (NYG&B). Our members are also editors and publishers of respected journals and historical books. Recently, two of our NY members were made co-editors of what many consider the foremost scholarly journal in the field of genealogy, *The Record*, a publication of the NYG&B.

Because of the nature of our work, there may be no other single group, outside of the NYC government, who everyday, utilize various records and holdings of DORIS, than the members of the APG NY Metro Chapter. The same holds true for the over 2500 national members of the Association of Professional Genealogists who work with NYC records now available digitally. Based on a long and extensive history of experience with DORIS over the course of many governing cycles, the APG strongly urges that DORIS <u>not be merged</u> with DCAS. We want to go on record that we support the entire "List of Concerns and Recommendations" that has been provided to this Committee in the April 13th document already submitted by the Archivists Round Table (ART) and several other extremely knowledgeable and distinguished groups. The APG recommends that instead of repealing Chapter 72 of the NYC Charter concerning the Department of Records and Information Services and passing new legislation, Int. 486-2011, we ask that you hit the "refresh button" on these managerial issues and develop an entirely different strategy.

Rather than take away autonomy from DORIS, this Committee should recommend that a **Strategic Plan** be developed with members of DORIS, plus representatives of the Archivists Roundtable, and other key members of the local genealogical, historical and university communities, plus NYC and Company. A new strategic plan for DORIS would put into action the "Recommendations" from the Archivists Round Table. It would be a call to action for a practical plan to modernize archival management of **DORIS's assets**, to increase preservation safeguards and to improve public access to all of its incredible records and holdings. Improving access will also improve revenue over time.

Notice I used the word "assets" when I described DORIS's holdings. DORIS's holdings are not to be thought of as dusty boxes of files to be managed in a housekeeping fashion by DCAS, but rather, assets that can inform us for generations to come; assets that need to be more easily accessed so they can be used to enrich the story and history of one of the greatest cities ever created. They are assets that if properly utilized and marketed can have many returns. These assets are so important and **irreplaceable** to the people and history of this City, this merger would not be unlike asking DCAS to run the Metropolitan Museum of Art. That is the level of riches DORIS's holdings have for not only the people of this great City, but everywhere. While NYC has not suffered a devastating fire like the one at the NY State Archives 100 years ago, there have been floods and leaks and vermin that have destroyed records. An untold wealth of NY's history and heritage was destroyed in that Capital Fire including impossible to replace 350 year old Dutch colonial documents and priceless artifacts and crafts representing centuries of Iroquois and Seneca life in NY. We cannot wait until it is too late to consider the ramifications of unsafe conditions for our City's records and history. Nor can we not provide greater access: we must so NYC's stories can be told.

These records serve not only to tell the stories of Mayor's and governments, but of corporations built here; charities, almshouses and foundling hospitals that served our most vulnerable, sick and needy generations; the stories of buildings, street names, dreams of grand architecture; saloons, pubs and glorious restaurants where the working classes and the upper crust gathered for respite for centuries. The records we hold here are of interest to people well beyond our City limits. People from all over the US and the world are in contact with the Municipal Archives, daily, looking for information.

Lenora Gidlund, Director of the Municipal Archives and her staff have hosted Professors Stephen Robertson and Shane White of the University of Sydney, Australia nearly every summer for years – in the basement of the Archives. There, Professors Robertson and White have poured over thousands of NYC original records and manuscripts. Stephen Robertson used District Attorney records to create "Crimes Against Children", a study of the prosecution of sexual violence in New York City in the years 1880-1960. His work in this area has been heavily published in journals and among them are the *Journal of Social History*; the *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences*; and the *Law and History Review*. His work has won various teaching awards and citations for outstanding research and contributions.

Shane White has published a number of prize-winning books on blacks in eighteenth and nineteenth century New York City and is also currently working on "The Making of Black Manhattan", an ethnographic study of black culture from 1810 to 1860. Together with colleagues Professor Stephen Garton and Dr. Graham White, all from the University of Sydney, they have won the 2011 ABC-CLIO Online History Award for "Digital Harlem: Everyday Life, 1915-1930". And they won the 2010 American Historical Association's Roy Rosenzweig Prize for Innovation in Digital History with "Black Metropolis: Harlem, 1915-1930". "Digital Harlem" has been called a "new approach to sharing historical materials that will contribute to new historical interpretations and ways of understanding the Harlem Renaissance. It is a fantastic teaching tool for high school and college instructors."[1]

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[1] David C. Murray, Chair of Award Committee ABC-CLIO Online History Award 2011.

Another recent innovative use of Archival materials includes the book "The Soundscapes of Modernity" by Emily Thompson, a Professor of History at Princeton University. This book tracks early twentieth century sound: what people heard and how they listened. From the NYC Archives came recordings of barkers on Coney Island, Church bells, early radio collections, Department of Health records and photos on hearing and testing, symphony hall architecture and the beginning of acoustic tiles. Professor Thompson used many of DORIS's resources to explain how and why technology modified our taste...in how we hear.

On the lighter side of things, Lionel Train Historian Robert Osterhoff of Wildwood, Missouri, conducted tireless research on Lionel trains designed and produced here in NYC in his book "Inside The Lionel Trains Fun Factory". This book contributes to the fascinating history of NYC as it traces not only the brilliant marketing and manufacturing of Lionel trains, but also one of the earliest American manufacturing conglomerates.

And one of my personal favorite projects borne from the assets of DORIS, is a beautifully bound coffee table book published in 2009, called "The New York City Museum of Complaint" edited by Matthew Bakkom. Bakkom was another enthusiastic treasure hunter willing to be led by Lenora Gidlund to the darkest depths of the Municipal Archives where he reviewed thousands of complaint letters written to NYC Mayor's offices going back to the 1700's. In the thousands of boxes of official correspondence, one thing rings true in reading just a sampling of letters -- personal expression flourishes here. Whether it be a letter in defense of street musicians, battles with the police, smells and dead animals, pushcart peddlers blocking streets or anger at public servants, it is hard to tell if the letter was written in 1797 or 2011.

Having access to original records allows the "spirit of NYC" to be captured in stories and histories and words beyond compare. We need to encourage this kind of utilization of DORIS's assets for research, scholarship and cultural and family history and look for private donors to contribute more grants to write the history of NYC.

The Municipal Archives staff itself also collaborates on many projects at the City, State and National level. But this is the smallest part of their public involvement. Perhaps the most touching and precious of all the duties they fulfill are answering the hundreds of letters that arrive daily, some begging and pleading, for help to find traces of their lost NYC families and heritage. The stories of the millions of individuals and families who came here, escaped to here, settled here or passed through here, most with very little in their pockets, often with only the clothes on their backs but with an enduring strength and optimism that survives to this day, in this City, is the reason we need to respect every little record of their existence. Whether it is their address and occupation in a City Directory from 1850; a tax list from 1790; a probate record from 1900; or their birth, marriage or death record, giving vital clues to who their great grandparents were, we must continue to preserve all of the records that allow families to go back and trace their personal history: for it is as important or more important then the Mayoral and governmental records.

Access to family records is becoming more open, not less, all over the country. It is estimated that over 100 million people in the US alone, have an interest in finding their ancestors. The success of the TV show "Who Do You Think You Are?" supports this interest; the ratings have been so solid it has been renewed for a third season. Studies also show genealogy is one of the most satisfying hobbies people participate in. And

they are willing to spend money, time and travel expenses or hire a professional to find their family records. The average genealogy enthusiast is educated, upwardly mobile and has disposable income. Many are retired and have the time and income to travel.

US Immigration records between 1820-1920 estimate 83% of all immigrants entered through the Port of NY. It is safe to say, that more people in the US have some NYC family roots in the last 200 years than any place in the US. And we have some part of their family story here in the NYC archives. This points to a staggering opportunity. That is why rather than having a discussion about merging DORIS and DCAS, we should be having an open forum on how to capitalize on DORIS's assets, make them better preserved, digitize them and make them more accessible to the public.

First, DORIS needs a marketing plan that could be developed by George Fertitta and his staff at NYC & Co. to attract more genealogy related tourism with existing resources. Also, by partnering with the National Archives in NY, the NY Public Library, the NY Genealogical and Biographical Society, the NY Historical Society, the Brooklyn Historical Society, and so on, we can create a new image of NYC as a genealogy destination even better than the Family History Library in Salt Lake City. DORIS and NYC &Co. need to actively solicit genealogy and historical societies all over the US and encourage their members to plan individual or group trips to use the City's genealogical and historical resources to further their family research. And while they're here researching... they might as well catch dinner and a show.

If we recognize the treasures that are hidden away in DORIS, we can bolster NYC's tourism in a new, strategic way through genealogy that has up to now been entirely ignored; and we can build on the base of NYC tourism that has already focused on theater, fashion and food. We can also better serve the public by rethinking the process of preserving records and finding new ways to allow them to use these records. DORIS will flourish as the National Archives has and will be recognized as the treasure it is to NYC's history, both public and personal. A new vision for DORIS is limited only by budget and imagination. If we don't try to tackle both, it will be an opportunity squandered. Initiatives by private consortiums of genealogy societies who have successfully digitized indexes of vital records at the Municipal Archives, at their own expense, and made them free to the public online have proven both the worldwide public's level of interest in NYC genealogical records, and the financial viability of generating additional income for the Municipal Archives through certificate fees.

I implore you today to take the time, understand the negative ramifications of this legislative change, and see the full implications of the management of archivally precious records and documents. Mayor Bloomberg needs to understand this better also. Managing DORIS is not a housekeeping or administrative task. The Archivists Round Table's submission of "Concerns and Recommendations" needs to be heeded, or this Council may put DORIS on a perilous path and endanger the most irreplaceable records of NYC's people and its history. Plus, you may miss a critical opportunity to succeed through a well thought out strategic plan for DORIS's future.

Thank you.

Terry Koch-Bostic
Chapter Representative
NY Metro Chapter
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Submission of Park West Neighborhood History Group

Regarding Department of Records and Information Services (DORIS)

Municipal Archives and Library

April 27, 2011

We are an enthusiastic part of the constituency for the work of the Municipal Archives, and they have served us well. Whether they remain at DORIS, or become part of the DCAS, please keep them open, accessible, professional, and funded.

We are a neighborhood history organization on the upper west side of Manhattan, and here are a few of the ways we have used and related to the Municipal Archives over our ten years of work:

--Used their information in scores of presentations we have organized on and in our neighborhood and about the City's history of services and government, for hundreds of aficionados;

--Drawn on their history of buildings and neighborhoods for the dozens of walks we have organized with the Columbus-Amsterdam BID, for hundreds if not thousands of people from all over the City and overseas.

--Referenced them in the Neighborhood History Collection we have established at the Bloomingdale Branch of the New York Public Library on 100th Street;

--Searched out sources in the exhibits we have organized at the local Bloomingdale branch of the New York Public Library and in other venues;

--Included them as a link on our website (upperwestsidehistory.weebly.com) and sent NYC History Day students and others to them – all well served;

--Asked them to track a newspaper photo of a water tower we found from the 1920's, which they did, locating the original in a glass slide recently turned up by the archivist at the NYC Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) – and gave us permission to publish it in our history brochure of Park West Village (enclosed and credited.)

--Toured the archives and received an illuminating and instructive briefing on how they work and how we as a neighborhood history organization can work better.

We have received awards for our work from Manhattan Community Board 7, from Goddard Riverside Community Center, from the Manhattan Borough President, and from Assembly Member Daniel O'Donnell. Our work has been both grounded and enhanced by the Municipal Archives and its staff. Please keep them strong.

Submitted by: Winifred Armstrong, for the Park West Neighborhood History Group,

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**Testimony of Brian Keough,** Mid-Atlantic Regional Archives Conference (MARAC), **New York City Council, Committee on Governmental Operations, Hearing , April 27, 2011**

My name is Brian Keough and I am the head of the archives and special collections at the University at Albany Libraries, State University of New York, SUNY. I am here today representing the Mid-Atlantic Regional Archives Conference a.k.a. MARAC. Founded in 1972, MARAC is a volunteer, regional consortium of more than 1,000 archivists, record managers librarians, and historians who live and work in the states of New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Delaware, Virginia, and West Virginia, and in the District of Columbia including more than 200 members from New York.

MARAC's mission is to promote and sustain the archival community in the mid-Atlantic region through the provision of affordable, high quality conferences and educational opportunities, and by fostering collegiality, collaboration and professionalism in multiple venues. MARAC members possess advanced degrees, specialized knowledge, and extensive training. They work in local, state, and federal government, at colleges and universities, at major research libraries, at multi-national corporations, at law firms, at local historical societies, at public libraries and at other organizations concerned with the preservation, authenticity, disposition and accessibility of records and information. The MARAC membership elected me as its New York representative and I am here today to state that MARAC does not support the proposed legislation, 486-2011, which transfers the functions of the Department of Records and Information Services (DORIS) to the Department of Citywide Administrative Services (DCAS), and repeals chapter 72 of the New York City Charter concerning DORIS. We oppose this legislation because we believe that it is not in the public's best interests and it will significantly hamper the preservation and accessibility of the recorded evidence documenting New York City's history, governments, and events.

MARAC opposes this legislation for the reasons outlined in the April 13th, 2011 list of concerns and recommendations provided to the Committee on Governmental Operation. MARAC is particularly concerned with these key issues:

- Legislating and developing the most efficient and effective management of government records at the local, state, and federal level. The New York State Archives, which manages New York state government records, and the National Archives, which manages federal government records, demonstrated, quite clearly and convincingly, that records management agencies working as independent units provide better and more efficient services than records agencies working as part of larger, less specialized agency. This legislation to eliminate DORIS as an independent agency favors a model that the State Archives and National Archives strongly reject because of inefficiencies, lack of expertise, and the need for professionals and administrators with specialized training and competencies.

The National Archives and Records Administration existed as an independent agency until 1949, when it was placed under the auspices of the General Services Administration. This was a failed experiment as the federal records program suffered because of professional misunderstandings, politics and layers of bureaucracy. Finally in 1985, after decades of advocacy by archivists and historians, the National Archives became an independent agency under the executive branch, as it existed originally. Since that time, the National Archives and its federal records management program has thrived evidenced by the millions of researchers and visitors to their exhibit areas, the construction of the Archives II facility, and the successful management of the presidential library system.

Since its creation in 1971, the New York State Archives advocated for the consolidation of records management and archival programs in order to expand records management services and exert control over records at an earlier point in their life cycle. So, in 1987, two new laws expanded and clarified the mission of the New York State Archives to assume authority and responsibility for overseeing the management and disposition of state government records, including operation of the State Records Center in Albany. The New York State Governmental Accountability, Audit and Internal Control Act of 1987 mandated that state agencies must develop records management policies and procedures to meet internal control requirements designed to protect legal, financial and other interests of the government and the public. The State Archives was given the authority to review and approve of agency requests to dispose of records; to provide records management education, training, and technical assistance services to agency staff; and to operate the State Records Center for cost-effective, secure storage of inactive records prior to their final disposition by destruction or transfer to the Archives. Around the same time, new Local Government Records Laws consolidated and clarified numerous outdated and often overlapping laws and created the Local Government Records Management Improvement Fund that provides technical advisory services and competitive grants to local governments to help them develop and maintain records management programs. The State Archives has flourished within the State Education Department, along with other likeminded operations such as the New York State Museums and the New York State Library.

- MARAC also opposes this legislation because it includes no provisions for DORIS' future and long-term protection and sustainability. We believe that records management should be funded at the City level. While it may seem unrealistic in the short term given the DORIS budget crisis, it has been proven that the result of having agencies fund their own records management without a strong city policy to enforce it is that records management is relegated to the back burner or is the victim of cost-cutting measures. DORIS' future as the City's archives, records management, and library needs to be protected in the legislation and there needs to be a strategic plan for managing the City's information that is backed and supported by the Mayor. There needs to be guaranteed funding, staffing and authority to implement records management policy. The plan

should at the very least address retention schedules, records management training, disposition of records, storage of records, and preservation of/access to archival records, electronic records, digital asset management and a proscribed schedule for access to public records.

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In sum, MARAC does not support this legislation as it is currently written. All governments have the responsibility to manage records to serve the best interests of the public, to create and preserve records that provide evidence of their decisions and of an agency's functions, organization, policies, programs, and activities. We ask that you not pass this legislation in its current form. Rather consider legislation that ensures the preservation of and access to New York City's records through the maintenance of DORIS as an autonomous records agency, with the financial support and professional respect it deserves.

# TESTIMONY TO THE NEW YORK CITY COMMITTEE ON GOVERNEMENTAL OPERATIONS

GERTRUDE B. HUTCHINSON, MSIS, MA, RN

2011 CO-CHAIR OF THE NEW YORK ARCHIVES CONFERENCE (NYAC)

ARCHIVIST, BELLEVUE ALUMNAE CENTER FOR NURSING HISTORY

FOUNDATION OF NEW YORK STATE NURSES

GUILDERLAND, NY

COMMITTEE ON GOVERNEMENTAL OPERATIONS

14TH FLOOR COMMITTEE ROOM

250 BROADWAY, NEW YORK, NY

April 27, 2011

Councilwoman Brewer, members of the Committee on Governmental Operations, and distinguished colleagues, thank you for this opportunity to speak. As the 2011 Co-Chair of the New York Archives Conference (NYAC), it is my privilege to bring this testimony on behalf of the NYAC membership.

The Preamble of the Society of American Archivists' *Code of Ethics for Archivists* states:

> The Code of Ethics for Archivists establishes standards for the archival profession. It introduces new members of the profession to those standards, reminds experienced archivists of their professional responsibilities, and serves as a model for institutional policies. It also is intended to inspire public confidence in the profession.[1]

Archivists are skilled professionals who cooperate with and respect their colleagues, institutions, donors, and researchers who are generally other professionals, paraprofessionals, genealogists or students. Archivists follow this public mandate:

> to strive to promote open and equitable access to their services and the records in their care without discrimination or preferential treatment, and in accordance with legal requirements, cultural sensitivities, and institutional policies. Archivists recognize their responsibility to promote the use of records as a fundamental purpose of the keeping of archives. Archivists may place restrictions on access for the protection of privacy or confidentiality of information in the records.[2]

As previously noted in others' testimony this afternoon, archivists have professional and ethical responsibilities to advocate for their profession and the records for which they care. Because of their advanced education, archivists can assess a collection for its historical value now and for

future generations. Archivists have the responsibility to assess, access, process, preserve and make records and collections available to the public. Archivists must also protect the privacy of donors, whether individuals or groups, in a non-partisan, non-discriminatory way. Archivists must also be aware of the sensitive nature of some collections and treat those collections with respect in the same non-partisan, non-discriminatory way.

When Mayor Bloomberg announced his recommendation that the Department of Records and Information Services (DORIS) be absorbed into the Department of Citywide Administrative Services (DCAS) and his appointment of Commissioner Edna Wells Handy as Commissioner of DCAS, he gave Commission Handy this charge: "Find new ways to do more with less; don't be afraid to take risks and seize opportunities to take innovative approaches."[3] Given the current and projected economic conditions, Mayor Bloomberg's rationale for this legislative proposal is understandable. Given the significance of the records involved in this matter, NYAC strongly urges, **irrespective** of the disposition of the legislative proposals on this matter, that the essential components imperative to protect the integrity of the intended and necessary records management services be maintained. Those components include:

- Qualified staff – archivists prepared with advanced education earning a MSIS or MLS or PhD, and paraprofessionals receiving continuing education about current archival standards and practices for paper and digital records.
- Necessary resources – adequate archival shelving, acid-neutral boxes and folders, storage space for oversized items, temperature and humidity-controlled environments to mitigate against damage or deterioration, sufficient electronic storage space for records and archives "born digital" and the means to re-format those records into the future.
- Fiduciary responsibility to make archival documents and records available to the public equitably without bias while at the same time protecting the privacy rights of

donors and researchers. This responsibility also includes internal audits, keeping accurate records of accessions, de-accessions, or loans to museums, archives or in traveling displays.

- Security and protection provisions – providing a reading room where researchers can use the archives and records and staffing it with sufficient numbers of personnel to prevent damage, defacement or theft of important documents.
- Developing strong collaborative relationships between the archival repository and the public it serves.

In closing, NYAC advocates for the retention or preservation of historical and cultural records in whatever format they may be found; the staffing of the agencies that carry out this task by individuals with the appropriate professional training; the provision of adequate resources to the agencies to allow them to carry out their function, and equitable access to records or cultural heritage documents.

Thank you again for this opportunity to share NYAC's views on this important matter.

Gertrude B. Hutchinson, MSIS, MA, RN
Co-Chair of New York Archives Conference (NYAC)

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[1] *Code of Ethics for Archivists*, Society of American Archivists, 5 Feb 2005. <http://www.archivists.org/governance/handbookk/app_ethics> (2011 Apr 14)
[2] "VI. Access." *Code of Ethics for Archivists*, Society of American Archivists, 5 Feb 2005. <http://www.archivists.org/governance/handbookk/app_ethics> (2011 Apr 14)
[3] Mayor Bloomberg's News Conference, November 2010 <www.nyc.gov/html/em/html/2010b/media/pc11081-_dcas_512k.asx> (2011 Apr 14)

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I represent: New York Civic

Address: 450 Park Ave. South

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Address: 221 EAST 235th ST

I represent: Myself

Address: _____

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Name: Cynthia Doty

Address: 305 Riverside Dr 3C NY 10025

I represent: Park West Neighborhood History Group

Address: 400 CPW 10025

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Name: Rachel Chatalbash

Address: 25-16 41st St. Apt 2F Astoria NY 11103

I represent: Archivists Round Table of Metropolitan New York

Address: www.nycarchivists.org

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Name: Lauren Machlein

Address: 36 W 44th St

I represent: NY Genealogical Society

Address: 36 W 44th St

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Name: Gertrude B. Hutchinson

Address: 2568 Western Ave #3-09, Altamont, NY 12009

I represent: New York Archives Conference (NYAC)

Address: Albany, NY

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Name: McKelden Smith

Address: 36 West 44th St, NY, NY 10036

I represent: NY Genealogical + Biographical Soc.

Address: same

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Name: Lloyd Ultan

Address:

I represent: Bronx Borough Historian

Address: 3309 Bainbridge Ave - Bronx

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Name: Brian Keough

Address: 1 Fernwood Dr. Voudonville, NY

I represent: Mid-Atlantic Regional Archives Conference

Address: New York Chapter

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Name: LUCINDA MANNING
Address: 63 AUDUBON DRIVE OSSINING, NY
I represent: NY - ARCHIVISTS ROUND TABLE
Address: NYC

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Name: Christine W. Ward
Address: Albany, NY
I represent: NYS Archives
Address: Albany, NY

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Date: _____

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Name: Richard Trebherman
Address: LaGuardia & Wagner Archives
I represent: LaGuardia Community
Address: College / CUNY

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Date: _____

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Name: ~~Teresa~~ Terry Koch-Bostic

Address: 32 Violet Ave. Mineola NY

I represent: NY Metro Chapter - Association of Professional Genealogists

Address: 11 West 81st St NY NY

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Date: _____

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Name: Kenneth Cobb

Address: _____

I represent: Assistant Commissioner

Address: Records

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Date: 4.27.11

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Name: Eileen Flannelly

Address:

I represent: Chief Records Services Officer

Address: Records

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Date: 4.27.11

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Name: Edna Wells Handy

Address: Commissioner

I represent: DCAS/Records

Address:

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