

## GREENE INTRO REMARKS

The crazy thing about my introducing Mark Greene is that he really does need no introduction, not to this gathering, and certainly not from me. In fact, he should have shown the courtesy to explain who the devil *I* was before I got up here to introduce *him*.

Mark has made himself a household name, and a well-known quantity, through any number of channels. He has written widely, usually bluntly, on a jaw-dropping range of important archival topics, including things that he knows absolutely nothing about. He'll demonstrate that again in just a few minutes. Mark has occupied numerous elected and appointed leadership positions in SAA, the Midwest Archives Conference, SHRAB boards, and other associations. He has tutored, mentored, befriended, collaborated with, and argued with—mostly argued with—a big slice of American and international archivists. Oh...and sometimes he's really crabby.

But Mark Greene, for all his legendary crotchiness, can also be the most gracious and generous of people, something that is well remarked by his friends—oh, and I fact-checked that with all three of them before I got here—as well as by his many collaborators over the years. Here's an illustration taken from my own notes of an actual phone conversation from a few years ago:

ME: Hey! How about Meissner-Greene? That has a nice ring!

MARK: Not so much.

ME: "M" would, of course, hit that sweet spot right in the middle of the alphabet...

MARK: I don't think so.

ME: I'm older than you. Technically, that makes me the senior partner.

MARK: No, no, and--um--NO!

ME: Oh, P-L-E-E-E-Z-E. I'll give you \$50.

MARK: Go away! Anyway, I've already used it that way in a bunch of footnotes, so it's gonna have to stay.

ME: Fine!!

But enough of that; I was hired to introduce Mark. And that means that I'm pretty much *required* under contract to find something good to say. So, good luck to me on that one, and here's my best shot.

### **Contributions to the literature and professional discourse.**

Intellectually speaking, Mark gets around a lot. At the archival buffet table he's a decided omnivore. We all share this to some extent. You might be an electronic records specialist but, when pressed, you can still pull off a pretty smart remark about, say, the stability of gall-based inks. But Mark, unlike most of us, makes a *really* annoying habit of speaking in an erudite voice on a truly wide range of important topics. Although his heart lies in the area of archival appraisal, he has written and spoken with equal authority on such dispersed topics as privacy and confidentiality, on the administration of business records, on archival program management, on many aspects of college and university archives, on the nature and meaning of records, on service to users, and, of course, on processing and description. Still some years shy of geezerhood, he has already

contributed a legacy of 21 published articles and book chapters to the professional literature.

And, even more maddening, Mark does none of this at the B-level. Now I grant you the archival community is home to many brilliant people; you'd be hard-pressed to elbow your way through a Fellows' reception without spilling your drink on one or another genius. The notable thing about Mark Greene is not that he's another smart kid in the room, but that he's the *utility* fielder among them. His publications in *several* of these areas have received awards, have been reprinted in anthologies, or have received other critical distinctions.

### **Collaborator.**

The large number of us who have worked with Mark on big projects are among the luckiest of SAA members. Mark is the very best of collaborators. Rather than using shared endeavors as a way to shirk work or to promote himself, Mark seems to shoulder 60% of the effort in everything he shares. He uses collaboration as a tool to leverage knowledge in addressing a problem, and to thereby produce a result superior to what he could have achieved alone. The goal is almost always building up the profession's knowledge base, not serving his ego. This, to my mind, is a mark of some greatness.

His mentoring and his friendships within the profession have been no less notable or important. Mark has, beginning fairly early in his own career, influenced careers of a large number of younger archivists who, I think, found meaning and motivation in his pragmatic, frank, and pugnacious advice in so many areas of archival thought and endeavor. He has influenced people by his actions in the profession and by the passion of his writing and teaching, and not by calling attention to himself. In all of these actions he has, in a real way, helped to shape the American archival profession.

## **Career.**

Mark's career is a re-telling of the classic rags to riches story of the American archivist. I made that last bit up. After earning his Master's degree in U.S. History from the University of Michigan, he served for 4 years as the college archivist of Carleton College. He spent the following 10 years as the Curator of Manuscripts Acquisition at the Minnesota Historical Society, from which experience he built a national reputation as a thinker in the areas of appraisal, reappraisal and deaccessioning, and the management of business records and congressional collections. He went on to serve for 2 years as the Head of Research Center Programs at the Henry Ford Museum & Greenfield Village. In this capacity he deepened and expanded his thinking about processing management and service to end users. Mark is now the Director of the American Heritage Center at the University of Wyoming, where he continues to glower and fulminate from a higher elevation. It was here that Mark came up with the very quotable catch-phrase: "If it ain't broke, don't process it, or IIAB-DPI." Um...that got fixed in the first stable release.

What I've been relating here are what I might call the Mark Greene core values:

Intelligence and a high-voltage intellectual energy, original thinking, dedication to his profession and to its audiences, and a pragmatic approach to solving archival problems. In that sense, they pre-sage his presidential address this afternoon, in which he posits a set of common values that he hopes can be agreed upon by all practicing archivists. As always, his ideas are thoughtful, assertive, and have the success and well-being of the greater archival community firmly in mind. His remarks will challenge us today, as Mark has always challenged us before.

So, having just listened to all this myself, and hardly believing my own ears, I guess we can count ourselves pretty lucky after all to have spent this past year under the benevolent and talented fist of Mark Greene. During his presidential year, Mark has expended near-heroic efforts on behalf of SAA members in several crucial areas: in direct political engagement at the national level—especially with regard to legislation concerning public

access to presidential records and to the PAHR initiative, in advancing SAA's agenda with regard to public awareness of our profession, and in pressing forward the critical pieces of SAA's strategic plan. In this work on our behalf, as in everything else he does, Mark has shown thoughtful energy married with a bulldog determination to achieve the possible.

And, since I still own the microphone, I want to add something on a purely personal level. If you know Mark, as so many of you do, only by his brilliant writings and presentations, you don't know the half of him. Mark is the best of friends and colleagues---the most generous, thoughtful, helpful, and unselfish.

And with that, enough from me. Ladies and gentlemen, let me introduce to you....In this corner....Wearing white trunks....With a lifetime footnote count of 5,107...The Earl of End-Users....The Marquis of Manuscripts....The Duke of Donor Relations...The Prince of Processing...The Undefeated Supreme Sultan of SAA....M-A-R-K---G-R-E-E-N-E....