

THE ASSOCIATION OF CATHOLIC DIOCESAN ARCHIVISTS
DIOCESANARCHIVISTS.ORG



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From the President

Katie Oubre

Diocese of Springfield in Illinois



ACDA is an organization where I truly believe that everyone has something to offer. I am honored to serve as your president, and I look forward to working with and learning something new from all you. Thank you to Brian Fahey, Katy Lockard, and all the other past presidents who came before them for building a solid foundation for this organization.

Since the last newsletter, we had our one-day meeting in conjunction with the Society of American Archivists (SAA) conference in Washington, DC. It was wonderful to see everyone who attended and to reconnect in person. I always come back from conferences re-energized and inspired by the work of my colleagues in other (arch)dioceses and institutions.

I'm sure you all saw the announcement on the listserv, but as a reminder, ACDA now has an endowment fund! The primary purpose of the ACDA Endowment Fund is to provide our organization with sustainable, long-term funding for continuing education opportunities. To start with, it will fund the Audrey P. Newcomer Continuing Education Scholarship. When the scholarship was first established, we had funds to award it 10 times. Now we will be able to continue offering this scholarship in honor of Audrey's memory in perpetuity.

I met Audrey at the very first SAA conference I attended. At the ARCS (Archivists of Religious Collections Section) meeting, everyone had to introduce themselves by name and institution. Audrey, who was several rows in front of me, immediately gestured for me to come forward and sit with her—I was a diocesan archivist she didn't know, who was sitting alone. Her hospitality, passion, and enthusiasm for our profession are qualities that I see across ACDA. I am proud of and inspired by the work that Thomas Lester, Brian Fahey, Tim Olson, and others have done to make this endowment a reality.

Keep an eye out for upcoming chances to participate and make your voice heard in ACDA. Whether it is serving on a committee, presenting at our Biennial Conference in 2024, or sharing a project you've worked on in a future ACDA newsletter—I can't wait to see what our membership can accomplish next.

Meet an ACDA Member

Emily Ahlin

Diocese of Cleveland



What diocese or institution do you work for?

The Diocese of Cleveland.

How long have you been with the diocese / institution? Has your job changed over the years?

I started as the Diocesan Archivist about 2.5 years ago and have worked and lived in Cleveland pretty much as long (I'm originally from Pittsburgh although I've lived in other places throughout the US).

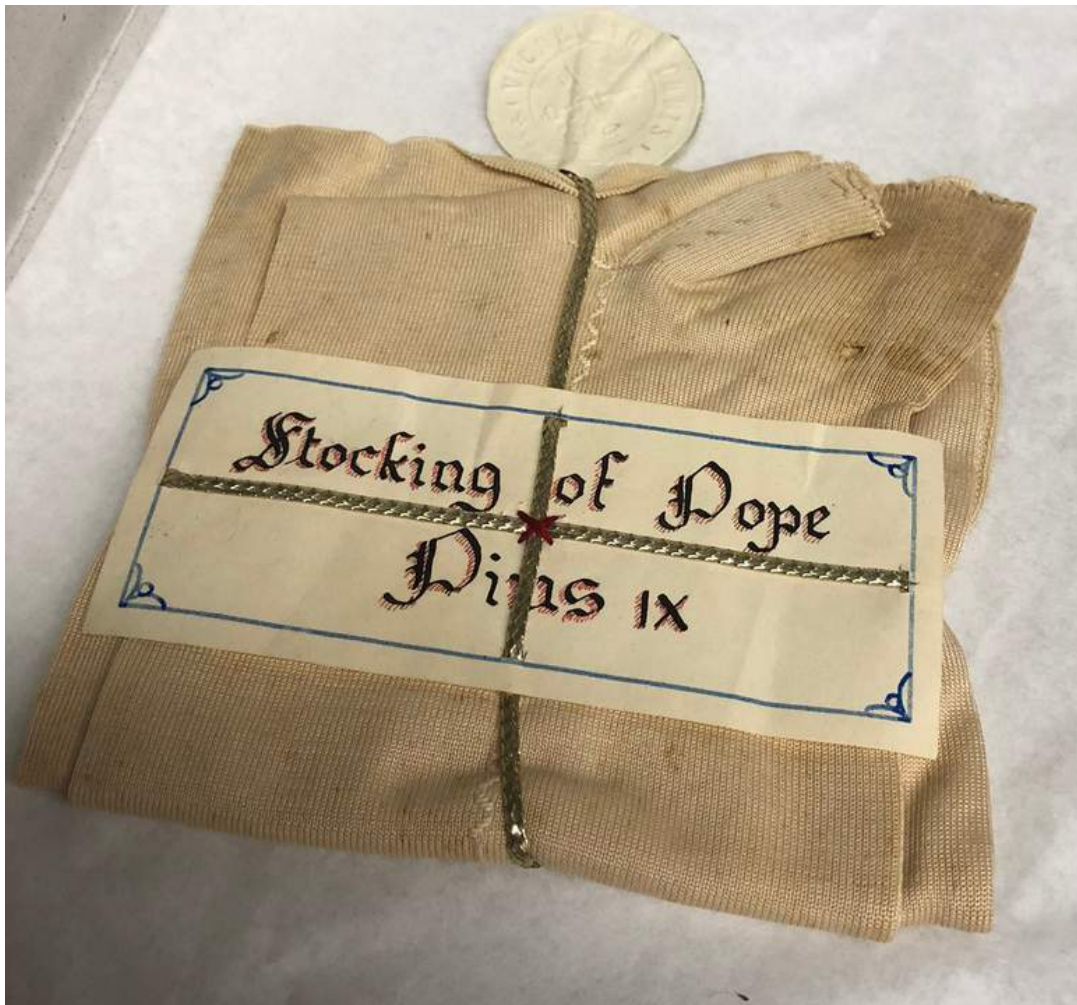
How did you find yourself working in Archives? Did you study it in school? Find your way here from another career?

After doing a research fellowship in undergrad that required me spending hours upon hours reading historical documents on microfilm, I thought about getting a history Ph.D., but knew from teaching assistants in some of my classes that getting one of those wasn't exactly a lucrative career choice because the job market is terrible. I thought perhaps being an archivist might be a more practical way to achieve similar ends. I tried it out with an internship in my undergrad's archives and I hated it - I was processing the most boring collection possible in a windowless processing room next to a library science grad student who was possibly the most miserable person I ever met and couldn't wait for it to be over!

After that, I served as a FOCUS (Fellowship of Catholic University Students) missionary for a year, then was faced with the question of what I was going to do for the rest of my life...and libraries and archives came back as a viable option. I decided to give Archives another try by volunteering at the Heinz History Center in Pittsburgh and discovered there was so much more to Archives than the experience I had. I started working on my MLIS at Pitt the following fall, worked as much as I possibly could to get experience in a wide variety of libraries, archives and institutions, and got really lucky that the Diocese of Cleveland was hiring right when I was graduating so that my love for the Church and my love for the information professions could be combined.

What is your favorite item in your archive's collection?

Definitely Pope Pius IX's socks! The fact that they were clearly used (they have a hole in them!) and someone bothered to seal them just continually blows my mind.



How did you find yourself working in Archives? Did you study it in school? Find your way here from another career?

I like rock climbing (only bouldering though, because I'm afraid of heights), baking any and all manner of sweets and treats, traveling and hiking, teaching PSR (or CCD or faith formation or whatever acronym your diocese uses for that), celebrating liturgical feast days with my friends, taking sunset walks down the shores of Lake Erie, and buying craft project kits at Target with the intention of learning and doing said craft, then never doing the craft project.

Interested in featuring in an upcoming Meet an ACDA Member?
Email editor@diocesanarchivists.org or complete the form [here!](#)

Mark your calendars!

CAMP MUNDELEIN: NAVIGATING ARCHIVAL TRAILS

**JULY 8-12
2023**

ACDA Biennial Conference
at
University of Saint Mary of the
Lake/Mundelein Seminary
in Mundelein, IL

Join us as we explore issues of interest to archival & records management professionals and advocates, including bishops, chancellors, and support staff.

Attend educational sessions and workshops

Learn & share different methods & perspectives

Network and collaborate

Make memories!

Collection Spotlight: Relics

Allison Spies

Archdiocese of St. Paul & Minneapolis

What makes this collection interesting?

The scope of the collection, in terms of the quantity and variety of relics, is the first thing that catches your attention. It also presents some fascinating contradictions. Hidden within its stately custom-built enclosure of wood and granite, it consists of an odd assortment of containers, such as a tin shaped like a treasure chest that upon closer inspection previously held candies, or a paperboard box from a pack of disposable syringes. Obviously, rehousing the relics into more appropriate storage is part of the processing plan, though I may keep some of the old containers as curiosities. Much like a time capsule, this collection as a whole embodies an era when regulations regarding the exchange and use of relics were quite different from today, and it would be much less feasible or likely for something like it to be created in our time.





How did your archive come to hold this collection?

Most of the relics were personally collected by our former Archbishop Leo Binz (1962–1975). They were stored in a locked chest built in beneath a side altar in the chapel in his residence. The chest was transferred to the archives when that building was sold in 2017.

What kinds of materials are in this collection?

The collection includes an estimated 200 or more individual relics, mostly first class fragments housed in *thecas* (metal holder for a relic) and folded inside their authentication documentation, as well as some larger, more decorative reliquaries with multiple relics. There is also a kit that was used to essentially mass-produce relics for altar stones for portable altars, primarily in use by the archdiocese during the 1960s.

Who would be interested in exploring this collection?

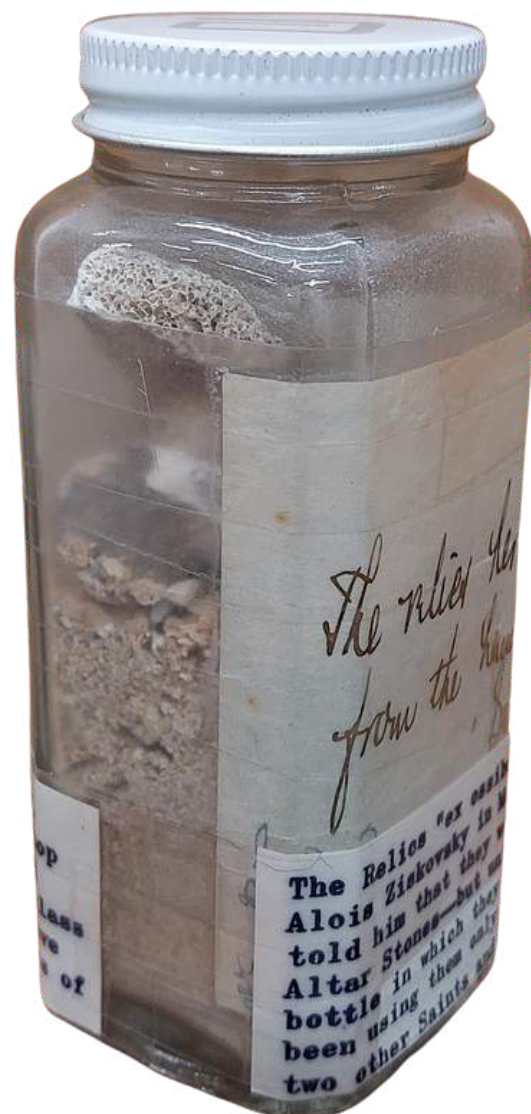
Parishes and individuals with special devotion to particular saints are often drawn to this collection. I have noticed a recent increase in interest in relics based on research requests received, and really anyone intrigued by the tradition of the veneration of saints through relics would appreciate this collection. I enjoy displaying a selection of the relics around All Saints Day.

What is your favorite item in the collection?

There is a glass bottle—it looks like a modern spice jar—containing several larger bone pieces and what appears to be sand. According to the label, the contents are relics of the martyr St. Theodore, which were gifted by Archbishop John Ireland to one of our diocesan priests in 1914. There was no seal and no official documentation with it. I am very curious about its origins, and who made the decision to put it in the current container. While attempting to photograph the contents for this article, I spotted a green thumbtack buried in the sandy material, which I have now removed. There is also an intriguing and yet infuriating note tucked inside the wax-covered box that houses the jar and the altar stone relic kit, stating, “There is a history behind this Relic container. I shall write it up when I have time...”

Is there anything else you want to share?

Our current Archbishop and chancellor are both in favor of redistributing the relics amongst our parishes and the lay faithful, and several have already been gifted from the collection. While a part of me is sad to see the collection dispersed, it's also exciting to witness the joy and connection to faith that occurs when these relics are made available for devotion among the local Catholic community, and it brings a special kind of new life to them beyond what they would experience within the archives.



Do you have a collection to feature in an upcoming Collection Spotlight?
Email editor@diocesanarchivists.org or complete the form [here!](#)

CAMP MUNDELEIN: NAVIGATING ARCHIVAL TRAILS

ACDA Biennial Conference

JULY 8-12, 2023

CALL FOR PROPOSALS

DEADLINE EXTENDED thru NOV 22!

We can't make this conference happen without you! Share your expertise and experiences related to diocesan/religious archives and records management.

Collaborate on proposals at [ACDA 2024 Conference Session Brainstorming](#)

Submit your proposal at

[ACDA Session Proposal Submission Form 2024](#)

or to programming@diocesanarchivists.org.

Beyond ACDA: Professional Organizations

Jon-Erik Gilot, Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston
Stephanie Jacobe, Archdiocese of Washington, DC
Katie Oubre, Diocese of Springfield in Illinois
Angelique Richardson, Archdiocese of Atlanta
Rena Schergen, Archdiocese of St. Louis

Introduction

Dear reader,

I have a confession to make: I'm a creature of habit. I'm confident it's no surprise to you that I prefer to "stay the course" and keep with the same group of people I know, personally and professionally. In other words, I'm one of you! I mean, what do I have to gain by expanding my horizons? Why would I challenge myself? What qualifications do I have to do anything more?

Yet now that I'm older (or at this stage in my life, perhaps it's "older-er"), I've come to realize that there are complementary paths I've never taken. I dismissed them because I thought they were "out of the way," or that I wasn't the "right person" for it, or that some just looked too darn difficult. That's just a bunch of malarkey!

The following articles from fellow ACDA members highlight their journeys with other professional organizations. Each author recognizes that their gains outweigh some minor differences or discomfort and occasional challenges. They've attained new perspectives, increased their knowledge, and tremendously expanded their number of professional contacts. All of which is to the advantage of their diocese and to all of us at ACDA.

Their journeys uncover the fact that "here be no dragons" on the paths you have yet to take.

Cheers,
Brian Fahey
Diocese of Charleston

Mid-Atlantic Regional Archives Conference (MARAC)

Jon-Erik Gilot



The recent COVID19 pandemic changed many things for those of us who were used to attending archives conferences like SAA or Camp Mundelein. For myself – as someone who loves travel – by 2021 I was questioning whether I really wanted to navigate that crowded airport, get on that cramped airplane to then go sit in a packed plenary session. The answer I kept coming back to was...no. I didn't. Instead, I started looking at events closer to home that would still fulfill my desire for continuing education and networking. And that's what led me back to MARAC (Mid-Atlantic Regional Archives Conference).

In my previous life as an archives vendor I had been a MARAC member and attended many of their biannual conferences. When I moved into the diocesan archives world more than a decade ago I allowed my membership and involvement in MARAC to lapse. Where I opted to forego the travel associated with an SAA or ACDA conference, the pandemic offered a perfect opportunity to reconnect with an archives group right in my backyard. I could skip the airport and drive to a regional conference. I could forego the ballroom plenary sessions to instead participate in smaller, focused breakout sessions.

Over the past two years I have participated in MARAC's annual conferences at Gettysburg and College Park. At last year's conference I took in one of the most fun and engaging sessions in recent memory with filmmaker Jeff Krulik's examination of the intersection of archives, popular culture, and local history. In a state with less than twenty professional archivists, I have become involved in the West Virginia Caucus, with colleagues representing academic, public, and business archives. The caucus recently developed a resource guide with archival basics for West Virginia archives and has been reviewing abandoned property laws in neighboring states with a goal of engaging West Virginia lawmakers to propose similar legislation in our state.

While I am thrilled to say "I'm back!" after attending the recent SAA annual conference in Washington, DC, I am also happy that the pandemic gave me the opportunity to restore a relationship with a regional archives conference. I hope to see some of my Mid-Atlantic ACDA colleagues at a future MARAC conference!

[Learn more about MARAC](#)

American Catholic Historical Association (ACHA)

Stephanie Jacobe



As a graduate student in history one of things your professors advise you to do is to seek out history organizations in your areas of specialization to make professional connections. As I wrote my doctoral dissertation as a biography of one of the major patrons of the American Catholic Church, I sought out the American Catholic Historical Association. I started attending meetings in 2008/2009 as I was finishing my coursework and have been an active member ever since. In the ACHA, I found a welcoming group of scholars, archivists, and professionals that immediately make you feel like you have found a home.

The American Catholic Historical Association was founded in 1919 through the efforts of Father Peter Guilday (1884-1947), who was a professor at the Catholic University of America. Guilday taught an important seminar in American Catholic history, and he promoted the preservation of Catholic archives. In that vein, the ACHA sent surveys to the dioceses of the United States seeking data on their archives in the 1920s and fifty years later in the 1970s.

Though much of the membership of the ACHA are those who teach in colleges and universities, many members have extensive experience with archives at universities, within religious orders, or even within dioceses. As historians of the Church, they have been called upon to help with preservation of Church archives that Father Guilday advocated for over a century ago as he founded the ACHA. The members are the face of the Church with priests, men and women religious, and lay people with about 20% of the membership being graduate students in history and religious studies.

The ACHA Annual Meeting is held in concert with the American Historical Association, and consequently, is held in a few select major cities that can hold a conference of that size. If you want to attend, you can register just for the ACHA and attend their sessions without paying the fees for the larger conference. The ACHA also has a bi-annual Spring meeting held in smaller cities or a host college or university. If you have an interest in promoting the history of your local Church or want to learn more about what historians across the country are working on a membership in the ACHA is the way to go. You will encounter a warm and friendly group all ready to talk excitedly about our shared history.

[Learn more about ACHA](#)

ARMA International

Katie Oubre



ARMA International is a membership organization for records management, information management, and information governance professionals. If you're a member of any professional organization, you've probably seen at least one call for volunteers to serve on a committee or group. I decided that a good way for me to learn more about the records management side of my job would be to answer one of those calls for volunteers from ARMA International.

For over 2 years, I have served on their Conference Education Management Group (CEMG). This group serves as subject matter experts who help with the content side of planning ARMA InfoCon, their annual meeting. As a group member, I review and score sessions proposals (anywhere between 5 and 10 initial proposals). After the final sessions are chosen, I work with 3-4 specific presenters, reviewing their presentation slides to make sure they meet the style guide requirements, don't contain any copyrighted materials, and meet the standards of professionalism that ARMA is looking for.

It is a time commitment, but not one that I have found to be overly burdensome. Along the way, I've had some great conversations with speakers I've been assigned to (like the 1 hour Zoom session that turned into an almost 3 hour session as we discussed the presentation topic further, and what we both wished we'd learned earlier in our careers). Every year that I have served as a member, ARMA has also offered free conference registration as compensation for time spent serving as a member of CEMG. If you are interested in learning more about my experiences with ARMA, let me know!



[Learn more about ARMA](#)

Society of American Archivists

Angelique Richardson



I've been a member of SAA (Society of American Archivists) since I was in graduate school. For many years, I didn't get involved in any capacity and just lurked on the section listservs. It wasn't until I began working at the Archdiocese of Atlanta that I was encouraged to become more involved and to volunteer my time with a professional organization. I had friends who had been involved in various sections over the years, so I reached out for advice on where to begin and everyone suggested section leadership as a great way to learn more about how SAA functions. I started small with a member-at-large position on the Archivists for Religious Collections Section (ARCS), which is low commitment and a great way to sit in on meetings, but without a lot of responsibilities.

After two years, I decided to switch gears to the Business Archives Section (BAS). I'd already been a member for many years, so I was familiar with their programming and their great Colloquium each year at the SAA conference. However, attempting to get involved with that section was a much more difficult task as they have pretty competitive elections! I ran for Vice-Editor/Editor, a two year position that managed their social media and newsletter, three times before actually winning the election. It was disappointing for sure and I almost didn't run that third time, but I took my mom's mantra of "three strikes, you're out" to heart and said okay to a third election. The Vice-Editor/Editor position is a great one if you enjoy doing communications/marketing type work. It puts you in contact with a lot of the membership since people submit articles and content for you to distribute via the section's various social channels. I made a ton of connections and met a lot of super interesting people through that initial BAS role. It also gave me some visibility within SAA and gave me confidence in my professional skills.

Not only did I love meeting other archives professionals, but I also learned quite a few transferable skills, such as working within a committee structure, project management, public speaking, managing various personalities, etc. These (and more!)

have all benefited me as I moved up within the Archdiocese and as I volunteered with other organizations such as ACDA.

I've volunteered my entire life, but the work I enjoy the most is with other archivists. And as much as I love ACDA and my fellow Catholic archivists, I do also love SAA and the BAS! It fulfills a different part of my professional well. ACDA is fabulous for Catholic specific archives problems, but as I tell people regularly when I explain why I'm at business archives events, the Catholic Church is also a multi-million dollar non-profit corporation with many of the same issues that any other businesses encounter (though usually on a smaller scale). That's why I'm just as active with the business archivists as I am with the Catholic archivists.

Overall, the main takeaway I hope you have from reading this is that while your path to becoming involved with SAA may not be smooth or always easy, it is worth it to persevere because in the end the benefits you get from a group that is similar, but different, to ours is 100% worth the effort. The archives community in general and the business archives community in particular is an incredibly welcoming one. BAS members are always willing to answer any questions I may have or even offer up a tour of their space if I'm in town (and their schedule allows!).

I will continue to be actively involved with both ACDA and SAA for many years to come. I will also continue to push for more ACDA members to get involved with SAA, either by becoming a member and attending conferences or by running for committees or giving presentations. We (ACDA-ers) have a lot of valuable knowledge we can share with SAA if we just look for the opportunity to do so!

[Learn more about SAA](#)

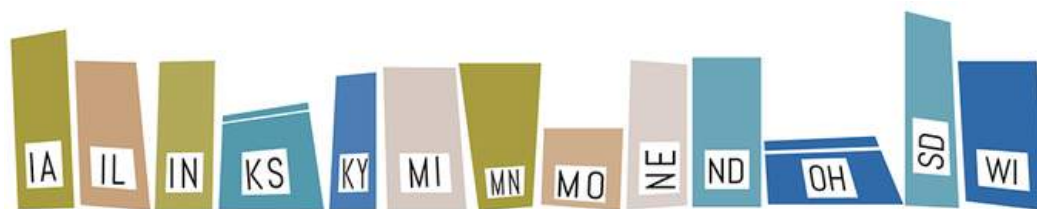
[Learn more about SAA's Business Archives Section](#)

[Learn more about SAA's Archivists of Religious Collections Section](#)

Midwest Archives Conference (MAC)

Rena Schergen

MAC midwest archives
conference



The Midwest Archives Conference (MAC) covers the 13 states in the Midwest region. MAC is a very active archival professional organization, and you get a such big bang for your buck! The individual membership fee for MAC is about a quarter of that for SAA, yet it offers a substantial array of membership benefits.

There are two meetings per year that are hosted in different locations each time. The main conference in the Spring hosts workshops and tours before two full days of lectures. The two-day Fall symposium is like a robust workshop that focuses on a narrower theme, such as disaster planning or digitization. Because MAC has a modest membership, it's easy to network and connect with others at the conference. Moreover, the panels and presentations offer a wide representation of archives, which generally makes the content more accessible to those of us who work in small shops with limited means.

MAC produces a quarterly newsletter that promotes newsworthy items and events regarding members and member institutions. *Archival Issues* is a hearty peer-reviewed journal published biannually that features research articles, case studies, opinion pieces, and book reviews.

The MAC Speakers Bureau is another great way to pursue professional development. For a \$50 fee, a Midwest institution can host a workshop (virtually only since 2020) for local archivists, but participants do not need to live in the same city to attend the workshop. MAC will pay the speaker a \$250 honorarium and publicize the event through its media channels.

MAC is a great professional association due to its accessibility, collegiality, and professional development opportunities. It's well-worth a look, especially for (but not limited to!) those who are working in the Midwest.

[Learn more about MAC](#)

The Audrey P. Newcomer Continuing Education Scholarship Report

Tanya Taylor-Norwood Diocese of Trenton

Archivist definition, a person responsible for preserving, organizing, or servicing archival material.

Am I a “true” archivist? NO! But I strive to be and will be, that’s my goal!! And my being awarded the Audrey P. Newcomer Continuing Education Scholarship will help me achieve that goal.

I applied to the position as Archivist because of the “key words” that were in the job requisition. One of the words that I clearly remember was compliance. I felt the draw of the entire position but for some reason compliance was the word that pulled me in, and because it had more of what I could offer and what it could offer me, I was so excited for this position that I applied for it twice! Once hired, I knew that my analytical skills, computer skills, and customer service skills would not go to waste, but missing was REAL archivist skills. As I walked myself through the daily processes, I knew I needed to improve in the archivist arena, but where do a start? Try attending the ACDA conference, so this was a must for me to do. This was also where I met the best archivist supporting work and faith.

I MUST be that REAL archivist!!!

After attending the conference my research for training began. Going over the documentation from the conference and looking over ARMA’s information. I asked one of our highly consulted archivists for her opinion regarding ARMA’s *Essentials of Records and Information Management Certificate Program*. I thought it to be good feedback and signed up. When I heard about the Audrey P. Newcomer Continuing Education Scholarship, I was very hesitant. With all the other experts in the field applying, would I stand a chance!? Why not? I want to ease the cost of the course to the Diocese of Trenton, and it would mean a lot to me and the goal I am looking to achieve. I am going to apply.

Best decision I have ever made, and I was shocked to be honest. THANK YOU, Scholarship committee.

What am I gaining from this educational opportunity? First and foremost, the essential archivist skills required to successfully support my role. Taking on more responsibilities in managing records and learning how to properly arrange archival documentation. Basically, learning the **value** of information and then storing this information in a way that people can access the information and make sense of it.

Once I complete this course, I may host an ACDA session, *just kidding*, but I will be an ARCHIVIST!



WARNING!

More Smiles with Tanya coming at this summer's ACDA conference.



Help us name the newsletter!

You might have noticed some changes to this issue of the newsletter! We are re-vamping our publication to bring it more in-line with the needs of the organization. To celebrate these changes, we would like to also give our publication a name! (Something more original than the ACDA Newsletter, which is what it has been called for years.)

We know there are lots of creative ACDA-ers out there! Bring us your best ideas, and your suggestion might be the new title!



Submit a title here!

About ACDA

The Association of Catholic Diocesan Archivists is here to serve the specific needs of the Roman Catholic diocesan archivist. ACDA offers a variety of information and support to both veteran and beginning archivists and records managers.

The Association of Catholic Diocesan Archivists is committed to the active promotion of professionalism in the management of diocesan archives in North America as reflected in our work to establish an archives and records management program in every diocese and to assist bishops and chancellors in the development of such programs.



News & Updates

- ◆ Dominy Williams, Diocese of Hamilton, Ontario was appointed to fill the vacant board member-at-large position (created by Thomas Lester's election as Vice-President). Dominy will serve the remaining 2 years left in the term.
- ◆ Rena Schergen, Archdiocese of St. Louis, was appointed Program Director for the upcoming conference. The other core members of the committee are Thomas Lester (Boston, MA), Geoffrey Hetherington (Atlanta, GA), Mark Prindiville (Saginaw, MI), Emily Ahlin (Cleveland, OH), and Brianna LoSardo (Newark, NJ). Other committee members are Amy Lisinski (Milwaukee, WI), local arrangements and Timothy Olson, financial arrangements.
- ◆ The call for proposals for this summer's SAA meeting in Chicago has opened! Find more information about the meeting [here](#). Find the collaborative Google sheet for panel proposal ideas [here](#).



ACDA members at last summer's meeting in Washington, DC.

Do you have any news or information about an upcoming event that you would like to share? Complete the [form here!](#)

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