A BRIEF HISTORY

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A BRIEF HISTORY

On November 3, 1978, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) and Vietnam signed a peace and friendship treaty. Great Britain granted the Central American island of Dominica its freedom. Panama celebrated its 75th year of independence. The rock group the Cars began a European tour. Kate Capshaw and Dennis Miller turned 25; Roseanne Barr, 26; and, Michael Dukakis, 45. James Taylor and Carly Simon celebrated their sixth anniversary. In Kansas City, the temperature rose to a record-breaking 85 degrees. Seven archivists met that day at 3:30 p.m. at the Kansas City Public Library at 12th Street and Grand.

Those seven¹ were

- Marc Beveridge, Curator, Liberty Memorial
- David Boutros, Archivist, Kansas City Public Library
- Nancy Ehrlich, Director, Jackson County Historical Society Archives
- Robert Knecht, Archivist, Federal Archives, Kansas City
- Beth Pessek, Archivist, Kansas City, Museum
- Jerry Roy, Curator, Johnson County, Kansas Library
- Sharron Uhler, Archivist, University of Missouri at Kansas City

This was the first meeting of the organization that would become the Kansas City Area Archivists.

Jackson County Historical Society hosted a second meeting a month later on December 6, 1978; the Federal Archives, a third, February 21, 1979, and the Truman Presidential Library, a fourth. Between meetings, a core group of archivists met unofficially at the Minsky's Pizza in Shawnee, Kansas, half-way between Lawrence, Kansas, and Kansas City, Missouri. By the fifth meeting at the Liberty Memorial, the group, though still undecided about geographical boundaries, organizational purpose and name, knew they wanted to poll regional archivists and to produce a directory of local archival repositories. The group elected Beth Pessek and Sherry Williams co-chairs. Within six months, a questionnaire had been mailed and a name chosen and changed. The Area Archivist Alliance became the Kansas City Area Archivists. In February 1981, the instigation of dues necessitated a treasurer.

At two years of age, the association rose in protest against certification requirements proposed by the Society of American Archivists. At three years Kathi Whitman of Hallmark Collections and Archives published the first newsletter *Extra*

¹ An eighth person, Larry Larsen, Professor of History at the University of Missouri-Kansas City (UMKC), had intended to come.

Format with the help of co-editor Cam Stewart, Kansas Collection, University of Kansas, and then Pat Michaelis, Kansas State Historical Society. *Extra Format* was published every other month from April 1981 through May 1982. Beginning in August 1982, Editor Steve Cooley, archivist for Church of the Nazarene, changed the publication to a quarterly format and in October 1982 changed its name to *The Dusty Shelf*. At four years, the association presented its first educational symposium, *The Lasting Image: The Identification and Preservation of Historic Photographs*. At five years, the association incorporated as a not-for-profit organization, published *A Disaster Preparedness Manual*, and hosted the Midwest Archives Conference.

All of the activity necessitated formation of committees. The first committees were the Purpose & Bylaws Committee and the Constitution Committee. Both served a needed but temporary function in 1981 – 1982, as did the Auditing Committee in 1984. After planning and successfully presenting its first symposium, the Forum for Historic Photography Committee became the Education committee. The Calamity Committee was revived three times until it became the Disaster Planning Committee. Other useful but short-lived committees were the Committee to Review KCAA Structure, the Midwest Archives Conference (MAC) Arrangements and Program Committees, the Auditing Committee, and the Automation Committee. The purpose of the Automation Committee was "to promote interaction between those who are currently using computers and those starting or interested in becoming users."² The Membership and Newsletter Committees were formed in 1981; the Awards Committee in 1982.

The Membership Committee often fulfilled a dual role as the Membership & Publicity Committee. When merged, the Membership & Publicity Committee planned events to increase the numbers of archivists in KCAA such as family picnics at Wyandotte County Lake, (July 25, 1981) and Loose Park (August 5, 1982) and dinner at the Berliner Bear Restaurant (February 12, 1982).

The Publications Committee originally called itself the Directory Committee after the name of its first publication, the *Directory of Archival Collections for the Greater Kansas City Area.* The *Directory*, first published in 1981- 1982, achieved one of the association's first goals: to produce a directory of local archival repositories. Following that original success, the Publications Committee continued with a *Disaster Planning Manual* published in 1982 – 1983, a *KCAA Brochure* published in 1984 – 1985, and an updated and revised *Directory of Archival Collections* in 1986 – 1987. Also in 1987, the Publications Committee published *Keeping Your Past*. The first printing of 500 copies sold out in less than a year. In 1988 KCAA membership approved a second printing. The latest recorded edition of *Keeping Our Past* was published in 1989 – 1990.

At the age of five years, the organization expressed its growing pains as unresolved tensions in a like titled opinion from the "Corner Chair" column in the October 1984 newsletter. Steve Cooley, senior co-chair, wrote of the group's struggle with "the tension between a desire for an informal, free-wheeling, open fellowship and an organized professional society with structure, budgets, and reports." This tension was

² Dusty Shelf, Vol. 7, No. 4, (January 1988), page 2

what he liked best about the organization, he wrote, and concluded, "We insist on the best of both."

One month later, KCAA hosted the three-day annual Midwest Archives Conference, November 1 - 3, 1984. Half a year later, June 29, 1985, KCAA sponsored a symposium *Bridging the Gap - Bringing History to the Community*. Fifty people attended.

As those who study psychological turning points know, the seventh year is crucial in any relationship, be it personal or organizational. By November 1985, after the massive mobilization and organizational efforts, the membership tired. KCAA turned inward and renewed itself. In the September 1986 *Dusty Shelf* editorial from the senior co-chair, Paul Eisloeffel of the Kansas City Museum announced a new structure for the organization. The structure resolved the previous tension between an informal fellowship and a professional society by creating a defined stable framework which ensured professionalism and fellowship. In addition to defining responsibilities of officers and chairs, the new framework provided a basic yearly program:

As the association looked inward, it also turned outward with its first Outreach Fair at Oak Park Mall, Overland Park, Kansas on April 12, 1986. Other Outreach Fairs followed with three at Ward Parkway Center, Kansas City, Missouri on May 2 - 3, 1987, May 12 - 15, 1988, and May 18 - 21, 1989.

The outward vision extended nationally. At ten years of age, spurred by the question of national professional certification, KCAA wrote proclamations, signed petitions and generally became "a recognized force or (nuisance) within the archival profession."³ The senior co-chair Alan Perry defined KCAA as a "mature, vital organization of real note."⁴

During the same time frame, the number of people involved in publishing the quarterly newsletter had risen steadily – from one, to two, to three, to five in 1983, eight in 1984, and to twelve in 1987. The number of pages grew from four to 18. Also in 1987, the membership voted to add "Preservation Notes" to *The Dusty Shelf*.

In December 1988, KCAA established new goals.

- Refine, publish, distribute internship guidelines
- Draft policy on consulting services
- Draft policy on referrals
- Continue work to establish a Midwestern Archives Institute
- Continue work on certification issues

Most of the work fell to the Professional Standards Committee which changed its name to the Professional Development Committee. The committee's responsibilities were defined as "promotes and coordinates activities relative to professional development in the membership region." The committee's stated goals that year were to:

³ The Dusty Shelf: A Newsletter for the Kansas City Area Archivists, Vol. 8, No. 1 (June 1988), 17.

⁴ The Dusty Shelf: A Newsletter for the Kansas City Area Archivists, Vol. 7, No. 3, (October 1987), 6.

- Develop and distribute KCAA internship guidelines
- Coordinate consulting and referral services for members and the public
- Promote professional training programs in the region
- Encourage institutional self-evaluation
- Promote awareness of and involvement in issues that impact on the profession as a whole
- Serve as liaison with other regional and national organizations as they concern professional development

In addition to working with the certification issues, the committee previously had surveyed the Jackson County Historical Society Archives in 1986, and in 1987, surveyed the Kansas City Native Sons Collection. To accomplish the 1988 goals, committee cochairs Nancy Hulston and Paul Eisloeffel were empowered to call upon other co-chairs and members as needed. Soon, the Professional Development Committee had developed internship guidelines, formalized its previous work of lobbying and of providing consultations. The committee developed a scholarship program to assist with professional training. That program spun off into a committee of its own – the Scholarship Committee. In short, through its work, the Professional Development Committee accomplished many of the association's 1988 goals. Talk of a Midwestern Archives Institute fell by the wayside as the practical issues took precedence.

In the summer of 1989, the association appeared to be cycling to another period of burn out, possibly fueled by frustration on the issue of national certification, or perhaps from the challenges of technology. The October 1989 issue of *The Dusty Shelf* revealed a change from typing to word-processing. The minutes of the 1989 annual meeting read that "due to the lack of a response to the call for nominations for KCAA officers, the current officers have agreed to serve another year."⁵ By autumn, however, the organization took on new life as it confronted a new preservation issue: fax paper.⁶

A degree of excitement infused the organization when in the early 1990s, KCAA developed a t-shirt for sale. The t-shirt reproduced a cartoon. The cartoon pictured a man laden with boxes resembling Hollinger boxes asking an off-screen presence, "Do I file these under stuff or junk?" The caption above the cartoon read:

Junk is Stuff We Throw Away Stuff is Junk We Keep

The t-shirt came in three sizes (large, x-large, and xx large – what does this say about the shape of archivists?) and six colors (red, teal, ash, white, jade and peach). With Ann McFerrin as coordinator, the t-shirt sold not only in the region, but throughout the nation and as far away as Australia.

Through the early 1990s, Alan Perry further internationalized the association by writing a newsletter column from his job as Territorial Archivist for the Virgin Islands. Paul Eisloeffel's regular correspondence from Nebraska could be equally interesting,

⁵ *The Dusty Shelf*, Vol. 9, No. 1, (July 1989), 9.

⁶ The Dusty Shelf, Vol. 9, No. 2 (October 1989), 4.

though not as exotic. Bob Knecht kept the membership laughing with his irregular humor columns.

On March 21, 1992, the night before its seminar on *Saving the Moving Image* in Independence, Missouri, the association held a film festival in Kansas City, Kansas. The following year's seminar April 23 – 24, 1993, reprised and modernized the Disaster Preparedness program of ten years earlier.⁷ Two of the next three seminars emphasized technology as the burgeoning developments of the computer age extended into the archival profession. *The Cutting Edge: Digital Formats for Access and Presentation* was held March 26, 1994; *Untangling the Web: Computer Access to Historical Materials*, July 15, 1996. The intervening seminar, *Archival Law and Order: Legal Issues in Archives and Manuscripts Collections*, was presented on April 1, 1995.

In 1990, the Professional Development Committee investigated professional liability and initiated work on a minority internship program which became yet another spin off committee.

At the beginning of the decade of the 1990s, the *Dusty Shelf* newsletter was 16 pages long. At the decade's mid-point, the size of the newsletter had doubled to 30 pages.

As technology has progressed, so has KCAA. Not only is the listing of awards posted on the web, but the *Directory of Archival Collections of the Greater Kansas City Area* is now published and easily updated on-line at <u>www.umkc.edu/KCAA/KCAADIR/KCAADIR.HTM</u>. *The Dusty Shelf* is now available on-line publication at <u>www.umkc.edu/KCAA/DUSTYSHELF/DUSTY.HTM</u>. The 37 Awards of Excellence and two certificates of appreciation to KCAA Fellows selected by the Awards Committee over the last 25 years appear on the web at <u>www.umkc.edu/KCAA/Awards/Awards.htm</u>

Although 25 years have passed, three of the original seven founders⁸ are still members of KCAA:

- 1. David Boutros, now Associate Director, Western Historical Manuscripts Collection – Kansas City
- 2. Robert Knecht, now Archivist, Kansas State Historical Society
- 3. Sharron Uhler, Manager, Center for the History of Family Medicine, Archives of Family Practice⁹

Other long-term, defined as more than 20 years, members include

- Marilyn Burlingame
- Anthony Crawford
- Carol Dage

⁹ The silent first member, Larry Larsen, is also still a member of the association. He is now Professor Emeritus, Department of History, University of Missouri-Kansas City

⁷ June 17, 1983

⁸ Marc Beveridge is Museum Registrar, Truman Presidential Museum and Library; Nancy Ehrlich, retired, Beth Pessek is an international traveler; and Jerry Roy is still with the Johnson County Library.

- Paul Eisloeffel
- Nancy Hulston
- Janice Lee
- Patricia Michaelis
- Gerald Motsinger
- Alan Perry
- Rebecca Schulte
- Nancy Sherbert
- Pauline Testerman
- Ferne Malcolm Welles

In its 25 year history the Kansas City Area Archivists Association moved with the rest of America from typing, carbon paper, whiteout, and mimeographs to word processors and dot matrix printers, to computers and websites. More importantly the association moved from a group of 7 people who wanted to professionalize and socialize to a well-regarded professional association of over 150 archivists. The Association has accomplished an admirable amount of work in its 25 years by uniting the archival community and professionalizing it.

KCAA is needed more than ever for another 25 years of excellence, not only for itself, but for the world outside itself. In the "Corner Chair" column of *The Dusty Shelf* in the January 1990 issue, senior co-chair David Boutros wrote of tension inherent in the association: juxtaposition of competitive demands among archival institutions and need for cooperation among those same archival institutions. He believed that KCAA had avoided conflict over the inherent contradiction because it had been spared prima donna personalities.¹⁰ That may be so, but it may also be that archivists, whose daily mission is to envision how the future will view the past, have a far-reaching perspective. Archivists understand that long-lasting principles must supersede current opinion. KCAA should spread that understanding beyond its boundaries.

¹⁰ The Dusty Shelf, Vol 9, No. 3. (January 1990), 3

Year		Senior Co-Chair	Junior Co-Chair	Secretary/ Treasurer
1978	1979	Beth Pessek		Sharron Uhler
1979	1980	Sherry Williams	Donna Graves	Sharron Uhler
1980	1981	Kathi Whitman	Cam Stewart	David Boutros
1981	1982	Pat Michaelis	Gordon Hendrickson	David Boutros
1982	1983	Gordon Hendrickson	Steve Cooley	David Boutros
1983	1984	Steve Cooley	Gordon Hendrickson	Eugene Decker
1984	1985	Steve Cooley	Susan Wilkerson	Eugene Decker
1985	1986	Susan Wilkerson	Eugene Decker	Marilyn Burlingame
1986	1987	Eugene Decker	Paul Eisloeffel	Marilyn Burlingame
1987	1988	Paul Eisloeffel	Alan Perry	Rebecca Schulte

Table 1 KCAA OFFICERS, 1978-1988

Ye	ear	Senior Co-Chair	Junior Co-Chair	Secretary	Treasurer
1988	1989	David Boutros	Bob Knecht	Bob Knecht Rebecca Schulte	
1989	1990	Bob Knecht	David Boutros Rebecca Schulte Carol Dag		Carol Dage
1990	1991	David Boutros	Becky Schulte	Rita Klepac	Kathy Otto/ Gerry Motsinger
1991	1992	Becky Schulte	Carol Dage	Rita Klepac	Gerry Motsinger
1992	1993	Carol Dage	Ann McFerrin	Rita Klepac	Gerry Motsinger
1993	1994	Anna McFerrin	Rita Klepac	Angela Windsor	John Mark Lambertson
1994	1995	Rita Klepac	Ron Romig	Angela Curran	John Mark Lambertson
1995	1996	Ron Romig	Denise Morrison	Angela Curran	Matthew Veatch
1996	1997	Denise Morrison	Bobbi Rahder	Amy Leimkuhler	Matthew Veatch
1997	1998	Bobbi Rahder	Lynn Ward	Jelain Chubb	Mary Hawkins
1998	1999	Lynn Ward	Eric Page	Jelain Chubb	Mary Hawkins
1999	2000	Eric Page	Deborah L. Dandridge	Letha Johnson	Mary Hawkins
2000	2001	Deborah L. Dandridge	Cynthia Laframboise	Letha Johnson	Mary Hawkins
2001	2002	Cynthia Laframboise	Angela Curran	Letha Johnson	Mary Hawkins
2002	2003	Angela Curran	Mary Hawkins	Letha Johnson	Jean Bischoff
2003	2004	Mary Hawkins	Audrey McKanna	Ann Schultis	Jean Bischoff

Table 2 KCAA OFFICERS 1989-2004

Ye	ar	Awards	Education	Membership	Newsletter	Publications	Calamity	Automation
1978	1979							
1979	1980							
1980	1981							
1981	1982		Alan Perry	Bob Knecht	Steve Cooley	Sharron Uhler		
1982	1983	Mark Corriston	Reed Whitaker	Connie Soper	Jean Skipp	Dave Boutros		
1983	1984	Mark Corriston	Reed Whitaker	Bob Knecht	Jean Skipp	Dave Boutros		
1984	1985	Pat Michaelis	Sharron Uhler	Sherry Williams	Jean Skipp	Constance Soper		
1985	1986	Sherry Williams	Alan Perry	David Boutros	Pat Michaelis & Bob Keckeisen	Dan Fitzgerald	Ann McFerrin	
1986	1987	Sherry Williams	Alan Perry	David Boutros	Pat Michaelis & Bob Keckeisen	Dan Fitzgerald	Ann McFerrin	
1987	1988	Gene Decker	Bob Knecht	Kathryn Otto	Nancy Hultston	Dan Fitzgerald	Terry Harmon	David Boutros

Table 3 KCAA STEERING COMMITTEE/COMMITTEE CHAIRS, 1978-1988

Ye	ar	Awards	Education	Membership	Newsletter	Publications	Professional Development	Publicity
1988	1989	Alan Perry	Connie Menninger	Marilyn Burlingame	Sheryl Williams	Rick Clement	Nancy Hulston & Paul Eisloeffel	
1989	1990	None	Pat Shalada	Marilyn Burlingame	Stan Ingersol	Darrell Garwood	Nancy Hulston	
1990	1991	Bob Knecht	Ron Romig & Rita Klepac	Marilyn Burlingame	Stan Ingersol	Matthew Veach & Rebecca Schulte	Deborah Dandridge & Deborah Hickle	
1991	1992	None	Ron Romig & Rita Klepac	Marilyn Burlingame	Stan Ingersol	Rebecca Schulte		
1992	1993	Jennifer Parker	Ron Romig & Rita Klepac	Matthew Veatch	Stan Ingersol	Rebecca Schulte		
1993	1994	Jennifer Parker	Ron Romig & Rita Klepac	Matthew Veatch	Stan Ingersol	Rebecca Schulte	Deborah Dandridge	Jack Nesbitt
1994	1995	Jennifer Parker	Chuck Hill	Matthew Veatch	Stan Ingersol	Rebecca Schulte	Deborah Dandridge	Jack Nesbitt
1995	1996	Bill Worley	Ann McFerrin	Jelain Chubb	Stan Ingersol	Rita Klepac	Deborah Dandridge	

Table 4 KCAA STEERING COMMITTEE/COMMITTEE CHAIRS, 1988-1996

Ye	ar	Awards	Education	Membership	Newsletter	Publications	Publicity	Scholarship Fund	Minority Internship
1996	1997	David Boutros	Bob Knecht	Jelain Chubb	Stan Ingersol	Lynn Ward	Mary Hawkins	Ron Romig	
1997	1998	David Boutros/ Angela Curran	Bob Knecht	Marilyn Burlingame & Bettie Swiontek	Stan Ingersol	Katherine Long		Denise Morrison	
1998	1999	Ron Romig	Bobbi Rahdner	Marilyn Burlingame & Bettie Swiontek	Stan Ingersol	Pam Kontowicz		Denise Morrison	Pat Michaelis & Amy Williams
1999	2000	Ron Romig	Bobbi Rahdner	Marilyn Burlingame & Bettie Swiontek	Stan Ingersol	Pam Kontowicz		Lynn Ward	Amy Williams
2000	2001	Angela Curran	Bobbi Rahdner	Marilyn Burlingame	Stan Ingersol	Pam Kontowicz		Eric Page	Amy Williams
2001	2002		Nancy Sherbert	Marilyn Burlingame & Nancy Pieperbring	Mary Burtzloff			Deborah Dandridge	Amy Williams
2002	2003	Cynthia LaFramboise	Alan Perry	Marilyn Burlingame & Nancy Pieperbring	Mary Burtzloff	Paul Edwards		Cynthia LaFramboise	Amy Williams
2003	2004	Cynthia LaFramboise	Alan Perry	Marilyn Burlingame	Mary Burtzloff		Audrey McKanna/ Judy Sweets	Angela Curran	Amy Williams

Table 5 KCAA STEERING COMMITTEE/COMMITTEE CHAIRS, 1996-2004

YEAR	RECIPIENT
1983	Thomas F. Eagleton
	Kansas State Historical Society
	Church of the Nazarene
	Federal Archives and Records Center
1984	Theodore Zecy
	M. Joan Huse
	Leroy Morrison
1985	Ferne Malcolm Wells
	Steven D. Cooley
1986	James P. Devine
	Robert J. Keckeisen & Terry H. Harmon
	Marilyn Dell Brady
	American Association for State and Local History
1987	Alan Perry
	Medical Media Services Division of the Veteran's Administration Medical
	Center
	KTWU-Channel 11, Topeka, Kansas
1988	Thomas Ryther
	Sharron Uhler
	Gordon Hendrickson
	Paul Eisloeffel
1989	Laird Wilcox
	Charles B. Barr
1990	Dr. E.W.J. Pearce
	Dennis Richardson
	B. Edgar Johnson
1992	Gerry Ray
	Gale Morgan and the MaceRich Company
1993	Dr. Niel M. Johnson
	Philip D. Lagerquist
1994	Dr. Kenneth LaBudde
1995	Dr. Harold F. Smith
1999	Jonathan Kemper and the William T. Kemper Foundation
2000	Dr. L.F. "Pat" Robinson
2001	Carolyn Bailey Berneking
2002	KSHB TV NBC-41
2003	None awarded
2004	Jack Denzer
	Project Team for the Kansas Department of Revenue's Central E-Mail Record
	Archive (CERA)

Table 6 KCAA AWARD OF EXCELLENCE RECIPIENTS

Year	Program
1982	The Lasting Image: The Identification and Preservation of Historic Photographs
1983	Disaster Planning on a Budget or Shoestring
1983	Microfilm Symposium
1984	Midwest Archives Conference
1985	Bridging the Gap - Bringing History to the Community
1986	The Archivist is In
1986	Computer Symposium: History On-Line: Computers and Historical Collections
1987	Thesaurus Workshop: Subject Headings as Finding Aids
1988	MARC/Archival and Manuscripts Control Format: What it is and How to Use It
1989	Mixed Up About Mixed Media and Mysterious Photographs
1990	Marketing History: Reaching Your Public
1990	Speaking of HistoryAn Exploration of the Methods and Uses of Oral History
1991	Drawing New Patrons: Principles and Techniques of Public Programming
1992	Grand Granada Gala Alias Jimmy Valentine
1992	Saving the Moving Image
1993	And the Walls Came Tumbling Down: A Diasaster Preparedness Symposium
1994	The Cutting Edge: Digital Formats for Access and Presentation
1995	Archival Law and Order: Legal Issues in Archives and Manuscripts Collections
1996	Untangling the Web: Computer Access to Historical Materials
1997	Everything About Archives You Never Learned in Kindergarten for Archivists,
1998	Librarians, Curators and Records Managers ARCHIVES FROM 0 TO 1: Using digital technology to make your holdings accessible

Table 7 KCAA SYMPOSIA, 1982-2004