ARCHIVAL ADVOCACY: REFLECTIONS ON MYTHS AND REALITIES

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ABSTRACT: Archival advocacy and public relations is a daily activity. Our publics already have an opinion about us, and that opinion is a reflection of the quality of our service and products. In other words, we practice public relations now whether or not we do so consciously. To do it well, we must understand what public relations is and how to integrate it with traditional archival functions. Advocacy, not the implementation of traditional functions, is now the core activity of the archives, but certain misconceptions about how advocacy operates and how we should practice it often prevent us from advocating. Once these misconceptions are laid aside, archivists can practice advocacy, ensuring long-term identification and preservation of, and access to, archives. When archivists understand and practice their role as advocates, certain other changes will take place affecting funding, education and training, products, programs, and collaboration which will further benefit archival institutions and the profession. This essay was originally presented as the keynote address at the MAC Fall meeting, October 6, 1994, in Saint Paul, Minnesota.

As a trustee of the Tompkins County (NY) Public Library, I have come to know the staff, and it is Roger Garrison, head of reference, who has caught my attention. Walking into the library recently for my weekly book infusion, I saw Garrison alone at his desk, without customers. One might think that he would have used this quiet moment to research a telephone question, shuffle papers, or even sneak a look at a recent novel. Instead, I watched him stand, look around the room, and call out in a commanding voice, "Is there anyone out there who needs help?"

Garrison's call to aid astounded me; I have waited thirty years to hear an archivist ask that question with the same vigor and sense of participation. We talked about it later. Garrison suggests that there are two schools of reference in his field: the *reservoir school* and the *fountain school.* Reservoir school advocates maintain a precious, exclusive well into which they invite paddlers and other amateurs, assuring them that they, the experts, will be on the shore, ready to jump in should drowning seem imminent. Fountain school advocates, on the other hand, consider theirs a public pool. Let's all get in and splash, they say, learn from each other, welcome each other to the pool. Garrison acknowledges with great cheer that he belongs to the fountain school.

As a fountain school advocate, he also exemplifies the role that one person can play as advocate for the library as an institution. He understands intuitively that he is the library, and that customer service is his particular mission. He is born to the role, but he knows also that it can be learned. He recognizes that he alone cannot save the library from the fiscal savagery that now endangers every public institution; that will require the combined efforts of all staff members, the library director, and the trustees, as well as carefully selected advocates in the community.

But he knows that his stance makes a difference. He understands that we practice public relations or advocacy daily—whether or not we do it right and whether or not we have planned it. Intentional or not, we have relations with our publics and we advocate, or fail to advocate, for archives every moment of our professional lives.

That is the first premise of this essay: that our many publics already have an opinion about our service and our significance. That opinion can change or remain the same, depending on our awareness and efforts. How it was formed is less relevant to us than the fact that it exists and that it can be reconstructed. Every time we respond to a reference question in person or on the telephone, every time we talk with a director, a university treasurer, a state legislator, board chairperson, county representative, or other resource allocator, we advocate or fail to do so. Every time we work with a donor, a county or town clerk, with a probable customer—a teacher, film maker, novelist, scientist or medical person, for example—we advocate or we do not. Every time we talk to the passerby who may eventually be the legislator, donor, or user-beyond-the walls, we establish, for good or bad, our public relations. If we do not get the attention we want at budget hearings, in the community, or with other publics crucial to our success, let us be clear that we come to them already encumbered with their perception of us, ranging from negative to neutral to positive. Those perceptions are based largely on interactions with them, either failed or successful, that occur every day at staff, professional, managerial, and policy levels.

At the level of policy, of ordering the work of the archives, the picture broadens. Our traditional view that the core work of the archivist is the arrangement and description of records was a workable view during the infancy of this profession. Today that view must be redefined in the light of present fiscal, technological, and consumer requirements. Acquisition, arrangement, description, and reference are still important functions, but they are no longer the ultimate goal of an archives. They are instrumental, not final. The ultimate archival function is to create programs that, as former New York State Archivist Larry Hackman said, "will ensure the identification, preservation and accessibility of archives for years to come."[1] To do this, we must shift our focus on records to a focus on customer relations, marketing, and long term program, seeking the support that these programs require. For this, we need a market orientation, the sense and the skills to find out what our constituencies want, to negotiate the differences, and to use those constituencies as advocates for us. Basic archival functions are important on a day to day basis, and they reinforce our relations with our many publics. But they must now be seen as conduits to, instruments of, our central function: the preservation of programs and archival institutions. And they must be seen as the job of every person in the institution, from the staff support person to the director of the archives. This, then, is the second premise: that the

central function of archives management and staff today is the preservation and broadening of the program. We do this by understanding that advocacy is daily, done by each staff member, continually.

Between the playing out of these two ideas—that the individual archivist or staff person affects public relations and that our basic function as archivists has changed from that of facilitator of research to preservers of program—lie a number of misconceptions, myths, and avoidances worth being discussed here.

Principal among these misconceptions is the view that public relations, or advocacy as we now prefer to call it, is an overlay of trickery, slick techniques, and flimflam best done by people we would prefer not to know well. Public relations in its professional sense is none of these. It is not about persuading people to do what their better selves would resist; it is not about P.T. Barnum and 'this way to the egress.' So far as our work is concerned, public relations is less concerned with what archivists do in their work, apart from their public and professional stance, than with what the information in records and the services of archivists can do for the public. That public is our customer; our customer wants service and results.

Nor is public relations a matter of media attention alone. Among its many aspects are fund raising activities, increasingly through private sources, that require a careful analysis of the quality and kind of service your archives provides; recruiting and working with volunteers, if these are useful to you, who provide access to the larger community; marketing archival services through exhibits, public outreach programs, and community service; collaborating with other institutions in the community to do what none can do alone; and working with radio, television, and print media on both good and bad news. It is reflected in top drawer reference service, staff at all levels trained to respond well to the many publics they meet each day; publications and advertisements that speak clearly to the public at which they are aimed and whose tone and appearance reflect the best view of the institution; and in active relations with allied professional organizations, many of them new to us. When we seek advocates and intermediaries to speak for us, when we build constituencies, when we plan, implement, and evaluate all of our programs from acquisition through access with a view to how the public will respond to them, we are advocating archives.

Nor is public relations primarily about raising money, though that may be high on our minds. It is longer ranging, more intentional, and more cumulative than the one-shot or once-a-year fund raising campaign, or the pursuit of funds from one's principal resource allocator. A useful operational definition of public relations might go something like this: Good public relations requires that we assess public attitudes toward our archives, keeping those views in mind as we make policy and procedural decisions. It requires that we seek to know how those decisions affect public opinion and that we choose the best possible channels to make them comprehensible to the public. Good public relations seeks advocates and intermediaries at all levels to speak for our programs, and it takes a long view, anticipating problems and searching out opportunities to preserve and advance the archival program.

In other words, make the customer the center of your program, understanding that the customer is at the heart of a constituency or is a potential change agent. Then, without compromising your professional standards, make clear to these constituencies and change agents in terms they understand and in a venue which

is comfortable to them, how you serve them. Customer satisfaction and constituent support in the interest of preserving the program—this is what public relations is about. We are all in this fountain together, as Roger Garrison would put it.

Seen from this perspective, it is easy to see the role of the traditional archival functions. We acquire, arrange, describe, and make records available *so that they will be used.* They will be used by customers who may be in the search room, in the classroom or at a distance learning station, in the exhibition hall, at home reading the publication, on Internet or in some situation using a device yet to be invented. In some private part of our minds, we may see ourselves pursuing these tasks in the interests of the priceless heritage, the timelessness of knowledge, the aura of elegance. But in terms of program survival and advancement, we do it for the customer.

In the past ten or more years, it has become clear that many archivists understand the imperative of advocacy and do an excellent job of it. They understand that support of all kinds for the continuation of the program is their primary job. Not the records—the program. One sees this in increasing press coverage of archival activity of all kinds—not scandal and controversy alone, but the ingenious ways in which archivists present programs, raise funds, seek new constituencies, and assume policy making roles in their institutions that are entirely new to them. This is advocacy, and many of us do it astonishingly well.

We have also begun to understand that we cannot do everything, although we can plan almost everything. The archivist who has begun a public relations program for his/her archives, who sees the public relations potential in every archival function, who plans advocacy, preserves the program today and advances it tomorrow. It is this attitude—that there are constituent prospects in everything that happens every day in the archives—and planning that are the basic ingredients of any public relations program. If you can only cultivate one new constituency this year, if you can write a strategic plan that engages your entire staff and can be presented to your resource allocators, if that strategic plan contains one or two goals directly aimed at better public relations, if you can become a main player in one or two collaborations, or on one or two institution-wide committees, you have begun. *Plan* and *start* are the operative words.

And how do we reach that psychological nirvana? By understanding, first, what public relations and advocacy are and are not, then by ridding ourselves of some of the more garden variety of misunderstandings and mindsets. Among these: *I do not have time for public relations. I have too much other work to do.*

To say that you do not have time to build or respond to constituencies is to suggest that you do not have time to breathe the air or take nourishment. As a colleague said bluntly, suggesting that you do not have time to build support lends entirely new meaning to the term "professional suicide."

Public relations is not an add-on; it is, fortunately, a constant. It permeates every traditional activity, and requires a willingness to anticipate, plan, and integrate. For example, when you develop your annual work plan, consider how you will publicize and build upon those activities. When you acquire a collection, ask yourself what kinds of programs, advertising, or media coverage you or your staff can produce to publicize it, and to what new constituencies it can be publicized. When you help a community group establish their own historical society, when you receive a major grant or gift, when you talk with a well

known novelist or scientist or public eminence using your collection, enlist that organization or individual to speak for you in other venues. When you acquire a collection of high general interest, ask yourself what publics, both scholarly and general, it might serve, in what formats it can be publicized to them, and how that publicity can also describe the larger role of your archives. When you talk to a donor, tell him or her how that collection can be used, how you will encourage that use, and what is entailed in preparing it for use. Eat lunch with a resource allocator, development officer, or institutional public relations person. Require your board of trustees to speak for your institution in public and political situations. Use them as your advocate, your intermediary; it is one of the most important jobs a board can do. Give them salient facts and figures, and send them into the streets on your behalf.

Public relations is done continually, not, as many think, when everything else is done. It is an ongoing, integrated activity, planned at the outset but thereafter capitalizing on every opportunity. It is done when it fits your program objectives, at any time in the progress of your program, and at all times. A newspaper column about an interesting item in your holdings, a tour of your unfinished new building, lined with boxes, accompanied by a request for help, a project with a neighborhood association to publish an historical calendar, a talk to a local club: these can be done at any time in your work year. They do not depend on the perfection of your processing or the completeness of your finding aids. *In progress* may be your best stance, providing visibility, a sense that yours is an ongoing, active program that is responsive to public interests.

Most importantly, public relations is not a series of one-time, episodic, disassociated events, though if that is all you can do to start, do so. It is a program, like your descriptive program, your conservation program, your automated records management program. Perhaps unlike those programs, it is part of each, giving a point of view and connection to all of the work of your archives over the work plan year. Unlike one-time events, which usually do not provide a return equal to their outlay and may have insufficient visibility, programs built on ongoing, daily activities create their own momentum, making in turn more opportunities and providing more return.

Integrated public relations is a mind set, one that says that every traditional operation of my archives is the instrumentality of advocacy, whose aim is to preserve and enlarge my programs. My job is to identify the potential, then use it; the time is minimal, the perspective and the planning are critical.

Another pervasive and limiting misconception: *We do public relations only to increase funding*. No solid evidence exists that good public relations increases funding. But it is clear from the experience of museums, libraries, and other cultural institutions that if you do not pay attention to public relations, your funding will either stay the same or, more likely, decline. This is probably truer in the present predatory fiscal climate than it has ever before been. Resource allocators as well as our publics expect visibility. This suggests that such abstractions as research statistics and numbers of collections described per quarter cannot alone support our budgets. Visible results of research—products—do persuade. When the New York State Archives, for example, sought to convince one of their overseers, the board of regents, of the impact of their work, they brought in secondary school teachers and their students to talk about what using records in the classroom had taught them. NYSARA did not depend upon this

device alone; they produced statistics where statistics had meaning, but they also understood the function of people talking to people about results. They spoke to the regents in their own language—that of the public and public education. It was a presentation that had been preceded by a great deal of planning and product development with a view not only to serving a specialized but very large public, but also making that service visible.

Another myth and constant thread: *Pursuing public relations will only increase the numbers of researchers I have. My staff cannot handle more researchers.* Good public relations is far more than numbers of customers in the search room, and increasing these numbers may not be your objective. Your objectives might include cultivating a given group of users, increasing acquisitions by targeting a particular group of likely donors, making your resource allocator more aware of your services. But if your efforts do encourage more users, consider some of your options. You can revamp your reference and service system by evaluating its efficiency with respect to the needs of your customers. Or, you can use your higher research statistics to get part of what you need from your resource allocators, or you can use your clientele as advocates to help you get resources. The American Library Association, under its resourceful Director of Communications, Peggy Barber, is adept at this, encouraging librarians to consider which of their customers might have influence with their resource allocators or are well enough known by the public to appeal to a wide audience on behalf of libraries. To forestall the most recent round of library closings in California, ALA with, very likely, the California Library Association, has televised public librarians discussing with well known writers the impact of the closings on national audiences. ALA has not come upon this device recently or accidentally. Rather, it understands the use of intermediaries who have been organized well in advance of crises.

A word on revamping reference service. For the most part, our reference service is geared to high intensity-low volume research. This may describe the research methods of the five to ten percent of our customers who are purely academic researchers, but it does not describe the approach of most of our clientele, who include lawyers, public policy planners, film makers, educators, and other professionals, many of whom are hired to do research and operate under strict timetables.[2] Adopting new reference styles that accommodate the research expectations of these customers may be the first move the archivist can make toward improving his/her public relations; current technologies will help this effort, though as we know, they need interpretation. In other words, by expediting service, providing electronic access to larger quantities and types of information beyond our own workstation, and giving the customer control over his or her research, we integrate public relations with a traditional archival function.[3] There is a large and intelligent literature on reference service that appears regularly in library journals, but almost never in our publications, a good indication of how much and how well we have thought about this crucial function.

Archivists also tend to think that *public relations is splashy, glamorous; I cannot afford it,* they say. Being aware of the many aspects of public relations, understanding its range, may help dispel this misunderstanding. Public relations in your institution can and must fit your resources; even the Smithsonian Institution or the National Archives feels pressed in their own sphere and must

plan expenditures carefully when public relations events cost money. But public relations can be simple. Conversations with your resource allocators cost nothing; conversations with reporters, though always enhanced by food, do not require it; tours for local groups, county or state representatives, do not require cash outlays. Simple document packages for schools can cost very little; more elaborate packages or interactive formats should require a charge to the buyer. Exhibits can be simple but handsome, and their cost can often be negotiated with corporations or public entities in whose space they might appear. You can launch elaborate programs such as major exhibits or exhibits that travel, festivals, or glossy publications. But daily public relations costs almost nothing: regular communication with resource allocators, cultivation of donors, simple reporting in local media, help to a public school, church, or historical society in organizing its records, reports to the public about services and products from your archives, created either by you or your clientele. A tight budget is not an excuse for bad public relations, though it may result from it. Money is not the issue in public relations of the sort we are discussing; mind set and planning are.

Still another confusion in the archival mind rests upon staffing. *I do not have staff for public relations,* one hears. *Anyway* (usually as an afterthought), *my institution has a public relations staff already. Why do my staff and I need to do what they do?* If your institution has a public relations professional already, that person is one of your constituencies. Perhaps a constituency of only one, that person is one you must cultivate. He or she, like much of the rest of the public, probably does not understand your holdings, their potential for the institution, or your services. It is not likely to occur naturally to your public relations person to include records in an institutional exhibit, to consider a publication including records or to help you make your services known internally, unless you suggest it and make specific recommendations. Talk regularly with that person, show him or her illustrations of significant research, the visits of notables to your search room, news about grants. Make your public relations professional one of your internal advocates, then capitalize on what he or she does for you.

What are the alternatives if you have no public relations professional nearby? You may have some of the requisite talents (if not, how would you have gone as far as you have?) but not all. Perhaps someone on your staff does have these skills, but has never been asked to exercise them. One writes good journalistic prose, another has taught elementary or secondary school, another makes excellent public presentations, a fourth is a good planner. One is a member of Rotary or Kiwanis; another is involved in local politics. Use these talents if you have not done so. *Advocating Archives: An Introduction to Public Relations for Archivists,* published in 1995 by the Society of American Archivists, was written entirely by archivists who were self taught or had some public relations experience. One was originally a fund raiser for a public relations firm who had taken a public service position in a state archives. Another was a journalist before she became the archivist of a private college; a third had taken her first full-time job, after years of voluntarism, as the coordinator of volunteers for a major public library. Assessing hitherto hidden staff skills, then reassigning work on the basis of a public relations priority, may be one of the few kinds of reorganization staff persons can enjoy: one that allows them public visibility, provides them with instant response, and invigorates them. It may also be the least costly way to do the job.

There are other alternatives. Archives in the United States and Canada are combining public service and reference positions, or have created public service positions whose incumbents are experienced in fund raising, event planning, publications, or other public relations activities. Often they are librarians or professionals who have worked in other cultural institutions, and understand the ethos. Like other professionals, including archivists, they learn the particulars of the corporate culture in which they are operating and proceed from there. Other archives managers have begun to consider the experience of prospective new hires apart from their archival background. Many archival techniques, even management, can be learned on-site, in continuing education courses, or in graduate school. But public relations skills are found in many professions; seek them out when you hire.

Finally there is the myth of isolation, one archivists cherish, to their detriment. *I do not know archivists who do public relations,* you say; *I do not do public relations, so who is doing it?* Many archivists practice public relations and advocacy, but do not call it that. They may produce a newsletter, provide material for a business group or a classroom, keep up a continuing dialogue with the university comptroller or state legislator—all public relations activities.

How do these activities differ from a public relations program? First, a program, whether it is a descriptive program, an acquisition program, or a public relations program, is planned and integrated with other functions. It may seize on chance opportunities, but it is never itself accidental or haphazard. Secondly, a public relations program is aimed at particular constituencies, not at an unidentified 'general public.' It is targeted, not scattershot. Thirdly, it fits archival objectives, whether to attract donors of money or records, users, or catch the attention of resource allocators. Intentionality, planning, and targeting are the operative characteristics of a good public relations program. It's the difference between grazing for a week and planning the menus for a week; between stopping by the used car shop and buying the first red van you see, and checking consumer magazines, then buying; between a program without direction, fraught with random and often costly activity, and one that is under your control. We all operate spontaneously some of the time, but a life that is entirely unplanned and unexamined is likely to be a wasted one; the same injunction applies to professional undertakings.

Certainly elements in your archival situation are not in your control and may jeopardize a successful public relations program. If you publicize a program or a series of events that do not happen, for example, you must compensate in some way. If the management of your institution is mendacious, contemptuous of the public, or simply incompetent, your best public relations are likely to be limited in their effect. If there is conflict within your institution which becomes public, affecting the public interest, if there is open disloyalty to upper management—moles on the staff—or if staff publicly impugn other staff, management, or your resource allocators during an emergency, for example, good public relations can only achieve the level of fence mending.

These situations operate at some time in most institutions and much of the time in a few. They provide all the more reason to pay attention to such simple matters as reevaluating your public service functions; thinking in terms of an ongoing acquisition, preservation, and customer relations program; building

constituencies wherever you find them; providing service and programs for all of those constituencies, whether they are customers in the search room, potential donors, or users beyond-the-walls; making clear to staff at every level that each has a role in their institution's future. That is, plan. Understand that many crises are avoidable by planning, but that some will nevertheless occur: the flood, the fire, the accident, the bad egg on the staff. Plan a scenario to deal with these exigencies before they happen. Only thus can you defend yourself and your program against forces over which you have little control.[4]

Let me return to my proposition that every archival function has public relations potential and can therefore be integrated into the program, rather than operating as a separate series of functions. We are all under pressure to learn about and adopt new technologies, technologies that are changing our understanding of traditional definitions and functions and altering communication in ways not seen since the invention of movable type. Many of us see this work overwhelming other activities, certainly overwhelming public relations activities. I suggest that this is not the case, that, in fact, if we become both active and influential in information technology planning in our institutions, we will be practicing excellent public relations. Let me illustrate.

I have recently become editor of a series of case studies to be used in archival training programs, graduate studies, and inservice programs on the management of electronic records and automated records management, a project undertaken by SAA under a grant from the National Historical Publications and Records Commission. Based on the actual experience of archivists in their institutions, these case studies tell me that installing technological improvements in archives, learning to deal with the archival issues raised by electronic records, and understanding the need to participate in the development of information policy in parent institutions have created ideal opportunities for archival advocacy. Archivists everywhere are talking with management, faculty, information technologists, and customers about what kinds of automated systems are needed to provide efficient information retrieval, internal and external accountability, and good archives; about new products for teaching and general public consumption, and about wider access to documentary sources. When they do this, they most certainly explain the value of records, their many uses, their capacity to engage and captivate, and the imperatives of sound archival management.

Admittedly, many archivists do not understand the need to position themselves to influence documentation policy and the value of coalition building, do not see that institutional information policy affects them, and it is a safe guess that their public relations in other quarters are not good. But the archivists who write these case studies most certainly do understand these imperatives, and the results are impressive.

One illustration will serve. The director of a rare book, manuscript, and archives department in a major university, now co-chair of the university-wide coalition on digital access, tells us how he got there. To begin, it was not by accident. He was an advocate for his archives in the university—he got into the streets—and he undertook the job because he recognized immediately that it was in the best interest of his department to be seen and to be an agent for change on his campus. He thinks advocacy. He now meets regularly with faculty who might never have used his materials, and with administrators of faculty

departments and officers of the university with whom he had never before worked. The result, he says, is that they now come to him for advice and information, not the reverse. They seek his advice on material they did not previously know about and they are supporters of the archives in places where support counts. It is true that certain more traditional functions have been set aside for the moment, to be resumed later, and it is also true that some staff resent this. But by positioning himself to lead change, this archivist has simultaneously positioned his department not only to survive but to prevail.

This is public relations at work: not fluff, but directed content; not flutter, but deliberate coalition building; not custodianship, but active service and product development; not random programs, but planning; not timidity, but an attitude of enlightened self-interest. The public relations-minded archivist seizes every opportunity to advocate, to gather supporters, to plan, to reposition the archives within the structure of the institution. Change requires a sense of public relations; public relations, seen as building support and advocacy, helps us adapt to change. Influencing the organization in which we work to adopt achivally-friendly technologies; learning the techniques of influence without authority: this is what public relations is about in the larger and longer term. It is possible that the advent of electronic records and automated records management may be the level playing field on which we will learn the value of, and many of the skills of, public relations.

It should by now be clear that practicing good public relations—advocating for archives—is fundamental to our future as a profession. In daily, operational terms some salutary changes will result from our viewing advocacy as a core function. Among these: archivists will focus on creating service-oriented, customer-oriented, constituency-based programs that will last. This means, among other requirements, changing our current and defeating absorption with records to a focus on customer relations, program marketing, and continuity, seeking the support that long term programs require. To do this, we must have a market orientation—that is, the sense and the skills to know what our constituencies need, providing it as well as we can, then using these constituencies to advocate for us.

As a corollary, we will stop whining about lessened resources and changed management requirements and view the bottle we have as half filled, not half empty. Put another way, we will become entrepreneurial about our programs, seeking funding from both private and public sources, developing new products, and forming new collaborations aimed at increasing public sensitivity and access to historical records as sources of information. Note the tone of this session description from a 1994 SAA program note to illustrate whining: "The financial situation in which many nonprofit organizations find themselves is forcing administrators to look to product development to bring revenue."[5] As an archivist who developed educational products from archival sources for more than 20 years, I am dismayed at the notion that product development is seen as a kind of financial slumming forced on the cultural elite only by hard times, rather than as a way to reach new or distant publics. The public relations-minded archivist sees exploring the possibility of product development, with its concurrent risks and expenditures, as filling the half-filled bottle. Nor is this only a matter of words. Style is content, never doubt it. It is a matter of attitude and entrepreneurship.

Education, training, and/or experience in public relations and advocacy will be a *sine qua non* of employment in many archival positions. How do we accomplish this in the short term? By taking the public relations workshops and short courses now offered by SAA and many regional organizations, but seldom filled; or, if these are not available, taking those widely offered by library and museum organizations, who have long since understood their worth; or by reading about public relations in library and museum literature, where it holds a prominent place. Advocacy and public relations will be part of every graduate program in archives management, integrated not only with management and public service courses, but those dealing with traditional functions as well. In short, public relations training will be as important to archivists as the present courses on traditional functions, and as actively pursued.

In the same vein, funding for public relations training will be as actively sought by national, state, and regional archives organizations as funding for traditional functions has been sought in the past. The New York (State) Library Association, for example, has recently been awarded a multi-million dollar grant by a Rochester foundation to train librarians, library administrators, and library trustees in public relations techniques, and is doing this via a series of newsletters, workshops, and other training devices, news of which arrive almost weekly on one's doorstep. Similarly, the New York State Archives established an independent trust, won a million dollar challenge grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities, and is now working on its part of the bargain. South Carolina has also established a trust fund, and has broadened its activities accordingly. Basic to this kind of funding is a wide-ranging advocacy program, which both encourages and supports private fund raising.

Although advocacy is primarily local, we will understand that what happens in Washington, at the National Archives, or at our state archives for good or ill affects us in our own institution. State and regional archival groups will promote archives and help local archives promote themselves by piggybacking off these events. Whether the vehicle is Archives Week, or grants to help local archives with promotion, or media support by influential citizens is not important. What is important is that we understand that what affects one affects most; that a local visit from the Pope, for example, can benefit all religious archives and that the success of the state archives in fund raising can be used by archives in that state as a hand up to their own fund raising. We all hang together.

At the same time, archivists will become experienced with and skillful in seeking private funding. In her excellent chapter, "Money Talk," found in *Advocating Archives*, Judy Hohmann provides a primer for archivists. Two of her points are worth noting here. First, the private sector is still an excellent source of funds, if only we ask. Secondly, the preparation necessary among an archives staff to write cogent foundation requests, including agreeing on a mission statement, a set of goals and objectives, and a set of priorities for action, is far more useful to it than the efforts of one person to produce the pounds of paper required by most public sector funding agencies. There are other advantages to private sector fund raising bearing on advocacy, including outreach within the community, a sense of local ownership and access to other local support, and the opportunity to build ongoing funding, not temporary, one-time project monies. And the funders become advocates. The private foundation that

supported the NYLA grant mentioned above, for example, learned a great deal about archives as it explored NYLA's needs, and no doubt now has a financial and moral commitment to public libraries.

Finally, archivists will exercise their understanding of what museums and many other cultural institutions have known for some time, namely, that the support and mediation of people and institutions that are influential in their community is essential to their well being. These may indeed be very local celebrities: the mayor of your small city, your congress person or state legislator, local but regionally known novelists, film makers, or scientists, or they may be national figures. But intermediary support, recognizable by wide-ranging groups of people, can only advantage your archives. Intermediaries do what one cannot do alone, and they are essential to a good advocacy program.

A serious practice of advocacy could change us and our institutions in many other ways. I close by referring again to Peggy Barber, ALA's director of communications, who ended a talk to a group of New York State librarians and trustees with an injunction we should hear and ponder, given the very daily requirements of our professional lives. Celebrate libraries, she said. Paraphrasing her, let us celebrate archives:

- Celebrate being part of a proud and ancient profession.
- Celebrate the ancient continuity of archives, from Alexandria to Albany, from Rome of the Caesars to the plains of Kansas, from the Doomsday Book to the U.S. census.
- Celebrate knowledge, wherever and by whomever it is sought.
- Celebrate the curiosity that brings people to the tedium of research when there is no visible or culturally approved reward.
- Celebrate the insatiable curiosity of the young, the middle-aged, and the elderly, the educated and the not-so-educated.
- Celebrate the role that the past plays in today's knowledge and the significance of knowledge in a democracy where, even in an age of know-nothings, an informed opinion can change minds.

Lyman Beecher, theologian, father of Catherine, Henry Ward, and Harriet Beecher Stowe, urged his gifted children from infancy to "Trust in the Lord and Do Good." In a more secular age, a secular profession, let's enjoin ourselves to "Trust in our Work and Do Good." Let that work, our resources, our contribution to the welfare of the public, be known to everyone we meet. At the heart of it, this is what advocacy is, what professionalism is. Trust in our work and do good.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Elsie Freeman Finch began her career in archives at Haverford College, then became head of manuscript collections at Washington University, St. Louis. In 1971 she went to the Smithsonian Institution as assistant curator of manuscripts for the nationally-based Archives of American Art, then moved to the National Archives' public affairs office. The program that she subsequently developed as chief of the National Archives Education Branch came to include not only a wide range of publications for use in upper elementary through collegiate level classrooms, but also nationally delivered teacher training programs, professional development programs aimed at community and four-year college instructors and students, and conferences, workshops, short

courses, lectures, and demonstrations for life long learners, all designed to encourage understanding and use of the National Archives' extraordinary resources. She also directed a playwriting and performance program for theater arts professionals and the general public, based on archival resources.

A leader in the development of programs to promote the wider use of records and the interests of archives, she has published widely, and has been a consultant in public programs and archives management to a variety of historical societies, cultural institutions, professional associations, and archives. *Advocating Archives*, a book of essays on public relations for archives which she commissioned and edited, was published in 1994. Currently she is project editor for a series of case studies, funded by the NHPRC under the aegis of SAA, on the management of electronic records and automated information resources, designed for instructors and students in graduate, continuing education and inservice programs.

Before becoming an archivist-cum-educator, she taught in secondary school and university, and has worked in advertising, public relations, and publications. An undergraduate in literature and history, she holds a master's degree in English literature from Boston University. Now a free lance archivist, writer, and editor, she lives in Ithaca, New York.

NOTES

1. Larry J. Hackman, "Strategies for Archival Advocacy Nationwide." (Paper presented at the Fifty-eighth Annual Meeting of the Society of American Archivists, Indianapolis, Indiana, September, 1994).
2. Timothy L. Ericson developed the idea of reference reorganization in terms of volume and clientele in his article, "Preoccupied with Our Own Gardens: Outreach and Archivists," *Archivaria* 31 (Winter 1990-1991).
3. Elsie Freeman Finch and Paul Conroy, "Talking to the Angel," in *Advocating Archives: An Introduction to Public Relations for Archivists*, ed. Elsie Freeman Finch (Metuchen, NJ: The Society of American Archivists and The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1994), 5-22.
4. James Bressor and Julie Bressor, "Troubleshooting," in *Advocating Archives*, 99-108.
5. From the program notes to the session titled "Puffy Pillows and Plush Abe Lincolns: Products from the Archives?" (Presented at the Fifty-eighth Annual Meeting of the Society of American Archivists, September 1994). It is only fair to say that products such as these are unlikely to be developed by an archives, although they might be purchased for the museum shop from a specialized vendor. I use "product development" to mean items created directly from records, such as photo-calendars, posters, postcards, educational materials, and the like.