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Ann Bowers Retires as CAC Interim Director



Ann Bowers was recognized for her service to the University by Omicron Delta Kappa, a national leadership honor society in 2003.

And where did those twenty-nine years go? In 1975, I started my archival career as a local government records specialist assigned to the Northwest Ohio-Great Lakes Research Center, a university academic center reporting directly to the Provost. By 1977, the Center had moved both physically and administratively to the Library, and I became the University Archivist. By 1983, the name was changed to the Center for Archival Collections and soon I added Assistant Director to my title. That would be one way to quickly highlight my career, but it would skip the absolutely wonderful people with whom I have worked and, through all of our efforts, watched the CAC grow and mature into an archives with a strong national reputation in collections, preservation, access and outreach programs. It would also skip the amazing people of northwest Ohio; those people who lived everyday lives but left behind diaries, letters, photographs, journals and scrapbooks highlighting rural life, community development, labor organizing and strikes, war time sacrifices, politics and political reform, and the contributions of women and minorities.

I have been blessed with the personal relationships formed with many donors, experiencing their happiness and contentment knowing that their papers or those of family members now have been properly preserved and made accessible to any researcher. I am thankful for all of the opportunities and challenges provided to me by staff, faculty and administrators at BGSU, to teach, to develop outreach programs, to write grant proposals, to take on new responsibilities, and to grow as a professional archivist. Although my full-time career as interim director of the CAC will end on December 31st, I plan to be involved with the CAC on a part-time basis, still challenging myself and others with new programs and projects. As you will read in the next article, CAC staff members look forward to the future and are actively planning ways to ensure that our quality programs continue. Thank you everyone.

--Ann M. Bowers



CAC, HCGL Look to the Future

We see it every day in the business and organizational records we prepare for researchers' use—a change in administration always marks a review of the direction of an organization. With the retirements of Paul Yon, and now Ann Bowers and the austere budget situation at Bowling Green State University, the CAC and HCGL are going through just such a time. The rest of the staff is still here, and we have a long history of working together to actively acquire and preserve the documentary history of northwest Ohio, the Great Lakes region, and BGSU, and to make these materials accessible to researchers. Our commitment to this mission is unchanged. The challenge of the years ahead is to continue this work while taking advantage of the new opportunities to come.

Continued cooperation. We have always worked closely with the staff of the University Libraries and Bowling Green State University at large, serving on committees and sharing our expertise with other departments. Our staff assignments include serving as the history and Canadian Studies subject specialists and work with the library's development, web, and preservation committees, as well as campus-wide contacts with the administrative and classified staff councils and the Educational Memorabilia Center. Manuscripts processing and book and paper conservation are just two of the areas in which our staff's knowledge and skills are called upon by other departments.

More training. As part of an educational institution, we have an obligation to serve the historical community by preparing a new generation of archivists and records managers. The Paul Yon and Ann Bowers Internship in Archival Studies will help support a graduate student who plans to pursue a career in this field. Preservation workshops are also planned to train library and museum professionals in basic conservation techniques for their small institutions.

More preservation. We plan to continue our micrographics work, still the best method of preserving and duplicating unique records. As digital technology makes advances in stability and accessibility, we will be investigating ways to supplement the micrographics component with new media. New funding sources to support this activity will be necessary.

More access. Our web presence has been crucial in helping us reach out to researchers all over the world, and even all around campus. Ongoing transcription projects dealing with Civil War and World War II correspondence allow us to make these valuable manuscripts available and readable to anyone interested in the subject. The Historical Collections of the Great Lakes has made great strides in organizing and making accessible thousands of its photographs, linking them to descriptive and historical information previously unavailable. Yet we have barely scratched the surface of what is possible. Through cooperation with other institutions in our area, as well as working systematically with our own holdings, we hope to increase both the depth and the breadth of access to our collections. Meanwhile, we anticipate a new look to our reference area, combining the ready reference materials from the CAC and the HCGL into a single reading area.

More acquisitions. History did not stop with the end of the horse and buggy era, nor with the invention of the personal computer. As the twentieth century moves farther into the past, we would like to build on our holdings of such manuscripts as World War II correspondence and 1960s era student diaries, as well as better document our minority communities and the everyday life of all the people, organizations, and businesses of northwest Ohio. To do this, we must rely on strong word of mouth from satisfied researchers.

Our foundation is strong. We're building toward the future.

--Lee N. McLaird