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The History of MWERA and the Role and Scope of Its Historian

Thomas S. Parish
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Background

The Mid-Western Educational Research Association (MWERA) has an exciting history which commenced in the 1970s through the concerted efforts of those educational researchers who were instrumental in founding our association. About two decades later, MWERA was still up and running, but memories of its early and middle developmental years were in danger of gradually fading.

To address this situation, the MWERA Board of Directors commissioned Theresa (Terri) Strand and Charles (Andy) Anderson, former colleagues at ETS and long time members of MWERA, to conduct an historical study of the association. Early on these individuals identified the need to establish MWERA's archives. The extensive collection of association documents gathered and maintained by Charles Anderson, who served as MWERA's Treasurer/Executive Officer from 1980 through 1994 underwent systematic review and restructuring into the current MWERA archives, and eventually served as the basis for the completed historical study.

Historian/Archivist's Role. As MWERA's first historian/archivist, Dr. Terri Strand served as project director in organizing and assembling MWERA's archives and preparing the final report of the Association's historical study. Ensuing responsibilities include collecting, maintaining, and analyzing relevant documents; updating the documentation of the MWERA archives on an ongoing basis; and providing products and services targeted to the information needs of the association, including preparation of periodic historical documents and studies.

Scope of the Archives. Holdings of the MWERA archives are classified within the following content categories:

- 1) Archives Guides and Summaries
- 2) Official Documents
- 3) Constitution/Bylaws
- 4) Governance, Operations, and Membership
- 5) Minutes of Governance Meetings
- 6) Financial Statements and Budgets
- 7) Annual Conferences
- 8) Journals and Newsletters
- 9) Historic and Other Important Documents
- 10) Association Relationships
- 11) Election Mailings
- 12) Multimedia Holdings

The collection of documents in the Archives Guides and Summaries were prepared to provide a historic record of the many MWERA members who have served MWERA over the years. The documents include chronological listings of all MWERA presidents, secretaries, members-at-large, treasurers/executive officers, editors, council members and the years they served.

Additionally, detailed information was assembled concerning MWERA's annual conferences, including: dates, cities, and co-sponsoring organizations, invited speakers and their topics, and the titles of numerous professional training workshops and their presenters. Multimedia holding include a variety of photographs, audio cassettes, and videotapes.

Accomplishments

The major accomplishments of Terri Strand, our current Historian/Archivist, have been the preparation of the historical study and the assembly and documentation of the MWERA Archives. The study, *MWERA: Promise and Fulfillment-Historical Study of the Association from Its Early Years Through 1994*, was initially published in the fall 1997 issue of the *Mid-western Researcher* (Volume 10, Number 4).

Related accomplishments include preparation of a detailed MWERA timeline, which covered the pioneering spirit of the seventies, challenges of the eighties, and organizational changes occurring during the nineties.

Other accomplishments by Terri Strand include analysis of MWERA membership data generated by Charles Anderson for 1984 through 1994; content analyses of historic documents, including MWERA's articles of incorporation, constitutional changes, and correspondence; and supportive services for MWERA's presidents, executive officers, association journal editors, and the 1994 conference videotape producer. Planning activities for 1999 and beyond are currently underway.

Obviously, Terri has already done some very important things for MWERA, and her fondest wish is to continue doing so for the foreseeable future. To do this, however, she really needs everyone's help. So if Terri contacts you requesting information, or if you believe that you possess valuable information that may assist her in her historian/archivist role, the Board of Directors of MWERA implores you to provide her with such information in a timely fashion. Truly, if we will all do our share, Terri will do hers too, and MWERA will certainly benefit as a result.