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Evolving Advocacy: The Society of Georgia Archivists and the Georgia Archives Budget Crisis

Courtney Chartier and Sarah Quigley

The misconception by our publics and by those with the power to allocate resources to our repositories strikes at the heart of our existence and ability to function.

~David B. Gracy II¹

INTRODUCTION

Ask an archivist what she or he does and you will get a myriad of answers. You might hear “I serve the public,” or “I preserve our history” or even, “I teach people about the past.” Despite the variety of answers you might get, all archivists are united as a part of a universe of colleagues and records. We face the same challenges in preservation, management, and especially funding and public awareness of our profession and our collections. The reality of being an archivist is that we must also be advocates for ourselves and our home institutions, but also for that shared universe. When the largest and most visible of archives in our professional community is threatened, we must all pull together to advocate as one. Advocacy may not be taught in our schools, but it is an essential function of our profession, whether we practice it in a corporate boardroom, a university, or a county office.

The Georgia Archives is the official archives and records management facility for the State of Georgia. Over the last several years, the Georgia Archives has faced a series of significant budget reductions that eliminated staff, endangered grant funded programs, and dramatically reduced public service hours. At the time of the crisis, the Society of Georgia Archivists (SGA), the statewide professional association for all archivists and supporters of the profession, had only recently established a formal arm for advocacy efforts by forming an Outreach Committee. We saw the reductions at the Georgia Archives as threats to not only archives professionals, but also the continued preservation of important historic records, and therefore SGA decided to focus the work of the Outreach Committee on bringing public awareness to the issues of the Georgia Archives and advocating politically for the reinstatement of funds. Even with this mission and committee in place, the effort needed to conduct an awareness campaign in support of the Georgia Archives was unexpected.

In many ways, we at SGA were “thrown in the deep end” by the Georgia Archives budget crisis. However, it provided the organization with a valuable political education on how to structure communications, how to advocate in the political arena and the best ways to interact with local legislators, and how to harness available tools to encourage and inform public awareness of an issue. The immediacy of the crisis led us to make many mistakes, but also allowed us to build a basis for a sustainable program of advocacy in Georgia. This article provides a short description of the evolution of organized SGA advocacy activities, a history of

¹ David B. Gracy II, “Archives and Society: The First Archival Revolution,” *American Archivist* 47 (1984): 8.

the Georgia Archives crisis, and an analysis of our lessons learned. It is our hope that this information can be applied by archivists involved in all arenas of advocacy, from the elevator to the State House.

SGA OUTREACH HISTORY AND ITS INVOLVEMENT IN THE GEORGIA ARCHIVES

The position of Outreach Manager is a relatively new one for SGA. In just a few short years, the position, and even the concept of outreach activities have changed radically.

In 2009, then President Christine de Catanzaro brought together a small group of SGA Board members to discuss the promotion of the annual meeting. Because 2009 was the 40th anniversary of SGA, de Catanzaro felt strongly that the event deserved some additional promotion. The meeting attendees formed an ad hoc “Outreach Committee” with the goal of promoting the annual meeting through social media tools, and the SGA listserv and newsletter.

In January 2010, SGA established Outreach as a standing committee and the President appointed Courtney Chartier, a member of the original committee, as Chair. Nine volunteer members, including Sarah Quigley, worked together for two purposes: to establish the essential functions of the Committee, including an official handbook entry, and to “support other Committees through [the] promotion of workshops, programs, and the annual meeting.”²

At this time, our primary function on the Outreach Committee was to administer SGA’s various social media outlets, including Blogger, Facebook, and LinkedIn, with the goal of general promotion of SGA activities to the membership and the public. Among other responsibilities listed in the first handbook entry for Outreach was “at the direction of or in conjunction with the President, conducts archival advocacy activities.”³ There was no further definition for this activity. As a preliminary exercise, we created a “Legislative Action” section of the SGA website, which served as a place to link to various archival advocacy efforts.

The work of the Outreach Committee in 2010 was restricted to the promotion of SGA programs, heavy promotion of the annual meeting, and solicitation and submission of a nominee for the SGA President’s Award. In October 2010, the SGA membership voted to approve the Outreach Committee as a permanent committee and then President Christine Wiseman reappointed Courtney Chartier as Chair.

Then, in 2011, the work and structure of the Outreach Committee changed significantly. We decided early in the year to focus advocacy efforts on assisting with the national [Preserving the American Historical Record \(PAHR\)](#) initiative, as well as to continue established duties of promotion and updates to social media. We slightly refocused promotional efforts by creating long format articles on Georgia institutions and initiatives for the SGA blog.

In the spring of 2011, we learned that the Georgia Archives was under threat of severe budget cuts. We learned about the matter from a message posted to the SGA listserv by a

² Society of Georgia Archivists Administrative Handbook, 2010.

³ Ibid.

member of the [Friends of Georgia Archives and History \(FOGAH\)](#), a non-profit friends group that supports the mission of the Archives through volunteer activities, general advocacy, and fundraising for educational programs.⁴ The proposed budget reduction was just another in a series of cuts that had, over a 10 year period, reduced the staff of the Archives by 82%, public service hours by 60%, and the budget by millions.⁵ In consultation with the SGA President, we decided that the threats to staff and the preservation program at the Georgia Archives constituted a threat to the profession in Georgia, and therefore warranted the energy and resources of the Outreach Committee. In response, we created a press release about the situation, wrote a form letter of concern for members to send to their legislators, and created and distributed a contact list for Georgia State Appropriations Committee members. We also collated a statewide press contact list, divided by region and media type. Ultimately, the budget for the Georgia Archives was reduced.

In order to continue raising awareness of the dwindling Georgia Archives budget, the Committee expanded its promotion of Georgia Archives Month (GAM) in general, and in particular, the traditional signing of a declaration of GAM by the Governor each October. Because GAM is an event that involves archivists from across the state from diverse institutions, we felt that it would be an ideal time to not only bring more archivists into the fight, but also use the existing structure of promotion to bring attention to the importance of archivists and archival collections. The Committee worked with GAM organizers by sharing their press contacts, writing a press release about the event, and encouraging attendance by SGA members. This resulted in a significant increase in attendance at the GAM proclamation. We also continued to encourage SGA membership to contact their state legislators about the constant threats to the Archives budget.

Despite some success, by the end of 2011 SGA had determined that the Outreach Committee structure was not sufficient for the demands of professional advocacy work. The Georgia Archives budget situation often called for immediate responses to events, and a committee of seven or more people was unable to respond in a timely fashion. Other routine duties, such as social media updates, were better handled by a single person.

At the 2011 SGA annual meeting, the membership voted to transition the Outreach Committee into a two person team. The Outreach Manager would be appointed by the President, and serve for two years: one year as a junior Co-Manager and then one year as Manager. Courtney Chartier was appointed the first Outreach Manager, and Sarah Quigley was appointed as Co-Manager.

Advocacy work in 2012 began immediately, with a meeting with Senator Jason Carter, attended by Chartier, Quigley, new SGA President Marie Force, and FOGAH representative and well-known Georgia genealogist Kenneth H. Thomas, Jr. In preparation for the meeting with

⁴ Friends of Georgia Archives and History, accessed July 6, 2013, <http://www.fogah.org>.

⁵ Our Georgia Archives, Our Georgia History, accessed July 6, 2013, <http://www.fogah.org/sitebuildercontent/sitebuilderfiles/gaemergencydeckprint.pdf>.

Senator Carter, Force, Chartier and Quigley helped create an “emergency deck” for legislators.⁶ The deck consisted of 10-12 slides detailing the crisis at the Archives and explaining the value of the Archives to the state of Georgia. The goal of the deck was to provide Senator Carter with an attractive, well-designed document that he could keep and share with other legislators, that was full of compelling statistics that would encourage his support.

The meeting with Carter was fruitful for SGA. Not only was he generally supportive as a legislator committed to education and the grandson of former President Jimmy Carter (whose presidential library is located in Atlanta), he also provided us with some of our earliest insights into the political process. The first lesson was learning exactly why Carter was willing to meet. In December 2011, in response to encouragement from SGA, several employees of Emory University contacted Senator Carter. He was very frank about the importance of having Emory as a constituent and that the emory.edu email address was a significant factor in his decision to schedule the meeting. It became clear to us at that point how crucial it is to involve well-known community stakeholders in the advocacy process. Having access to the right corporate email address can open doors that a regular Gmail account cannot.

This point was reinforced by the presence at the meeting of Marie Force, Archives Manager at Delta Air Transport Heritage Museum. Carter suggested that Marie contact other corporate archivists in Atlanta, from companies such as Coca-Cola, Home Depot, and UPS, to create a letter that could be sent from all of them to Governor Deal. Carter emphasized how important it would be to show that we had the support of major economic players in the state.⁷ Within a couple of weeks of the meeting, Force had secured the support of other corporate archivists in Atlanta, and together they sent a letter to Governor Nathan Deal urging him to protect the Georgia Archives budget.

Carter also emphasized how important our emergency deck would be in communicating with other legislators. Our ability to boil our argument down to the financial bottom line and to show in concrete numbers the devastation of the Archives staff and budget would be central to persuading them to support our cause. As would our ability to concisely articulate how those slashed budgets and decimated staff numbers would negatively impact specific legislators’ ability to serve their own constituents, and how the success of the Archives was directly tied to the economic stability of the entire state. For example, one slide in the deck describes the Archives as an “anchor destination” in developing Clayton County as a cultural and tourist hub. The slide shows the Archives in proximity to the NARA southeast regional branch and Clayton State University, and also includes statistics on the number of visitors to the Archives from 2009-2010. The point, of course, being that if over 6,000 people visit the Archives each year and the

⁶ Much of the credit for the emergency deck goes to Marie Force’s sister Sarah Fuoto, who donated her time and was responsible for the beautiful design work.

⁷ This lesson was reinforced at the January 2012 FOGAH reception for legislators at the Capitol. Many of the legislators who attended were primarily interested in talking with the corporate archivists present, expressing surprise that companies like Coca-Cola and Delta had invested heavily in their own archives.

average visitor comes from 130 miles away, each researcher at the Archives is also a consumer in the state of Georgia, spending money in restaurants, hotels, convenience stores and gas stations, and potentially visiting other heritage sites.⁸

Carter also stressed the importance of personal contact from constituents, emphasizing that personal visits to legislators would be more effective than emails or letters, particularly if we could reproduce the emergency deck and leave copies in legislative offices. We learned that the hierarchy of legislative communication was real, and much more important to our success than we initially thought. Letters and emails may prompt legislators to assess constituent opinion on a given issue; however, they also allow legislators to respond with nothing more than a form. Personal visits demonstrate personal passion and commitment to an issue and also make your voice harder to ignore. It's easy to file a letter without registering its importance and it's equally easy to tally the yays and nays from constituents on any given issue. A conversation with a legislator, however, gives them an opportunity to ask questions and they are much more likely to register the content of your argument when it is spoken directly to them.

As a result of this meeting, we began to alter our approach to advocacy. Despite its minimal effectiveness, letter writing is an easy way to get people involved in a cause, and we continued to provide the SGA membership with form letters to send to their representatives, while we began to think about other, more direct methods of communicating with Georgia legislators. For example, in January 2012, FOGAH hosted a reception for legislators at the Capitol. Outreach managers created individual invitations for each legislator and distributed copies of the emergency deck. Several legislators attended, including key representatives from Morrow, Georgia, where the Archives is located. We also focused on ways to empower members in the advocacy process by creating general tools, made available via an "[Advocacy](#)" webpage. These included instructions for both professional and legislative advocacy, and covered topics from identifying and contacting legislators to composing an elevator speech. Ultimately, the Archives budget for 2012-2013 was still far below adequate.⁹ The expectation was that the organization would be able to limp along with the reduced budget, and supporters would be prepared to resurrect the advocacy campaign the next year.

Throughout the spring, we focused much of our attention on creating awareness of the Georgia Archives' budget troubles with the public. While social media is an effective way of reaching members of the public who already have a vested interest in your cause, it does not attract as many new followers as a press piece. Contacting and cultivating relationships with the press is essential to advocating any issue, but those contacts are difficult to maintain. Journalists and editors frequently move from publication to publication and email contacts can change rapidly. In the case of the Georgia Archives, the press contact list created by SGA in 2011 was

⁸ Our Georgia Archives, Our Georgia History, accessed July 6, 2013, <http://www.fogah.org/sitebuildercontent/sitebuilderfiles/gaemergencydeckprint.pdf>.

⁹ In 2012 the Georgia Legislature returned \$67,000 to the Archives budget, but only after cutting \$300,000 in 2011.

almost unusable in 2012, as many contacts had changed jobs, or as news outlets folded. Constantly updating a press list is tedious work, but it must be done on a routine basis.

Summer was a quiet season for SGA's advocacy effort. We sent a letter to Senator Carter, thanking him for his time and attention, but also gently reminding him that there would be more work to be done. We understood that expressing our gratitude would be integral to keeping supporters on our side, but we didn't want them to forget that the issues at the Georgia Archives were unresolved. We were expecting our work to ramp up again near the end of year when we would begin planning for the 2013 legislative session. Then, quite unexpectedly, on the afternoon of September 13, 2012, Georgia Secretary of State Brian Kemp announced that budget cuts mandated by Governor Nathan Deal would result in the elimination of all public access hours to the Georgia Archives as well as the loss of seven staff positions.¹⁰ Governor Deal had asked each government agency to reduce their budgets by 3% for the remainder of the fiscal year. Public access hours already had been slashed from 40 hours per week in 2010 to a mere 17 hours per week in 2011, and staff numbers had dropped from 54 in 2002 to 10 by the beginning of 2012. Yet, public demand for access to the Archives' rich resources had not dwindled; between July 2009 and June 2010, the Archives served 62,190 patrons, including on-site and remote researchers, student tour groups, workshop attendees, and government officials.¹¹ Kemp's original press release promised that the Archives would remain open by appointment, but those appointments would be limited by the schedules of the remaining two professional staff. Supporters of the Archives were left to wonder how the remaining staff could possibly keep up with researcher demand. A follow up press release on September 14 announced that the last work day for the seven terminated staff members would be October 31.

Following these announcements, SGA and the archival community in Georgia ramped up its advocacy efforts into high gear. A number of organizations joined together to form the Coalition to Save the Georgia Archives, including the Friends of Georgia Archives and History (FOGAH), the SGA, the Association of County Commissioners of Georgia, and the Georgia Historical Records Advisory Board (GHRAB), among others. Because the crisis needed immediate response, the structure of the Coalition was ad hoc, and it served as an overarching organization that other groups could join to show their support for the Georgia Archives. The lines between work done by SGA, FOGAH, or other parties with a stake in the future of the Georgia Archives were often blurry. Furthermore, none of the organizations in the Coalition had ever conducted political advocacy on this scale. We not only had to learn how to conduct this kind of advocacy campaign, but also how to do it in a fashion that coordinated efforts between groups with significantly different missions and abilities. For SGA's part, we maintained our

¹⁰ Statement from Georgia Secretary of State Brian Kemp on Public Closure of the State Archives Effective November 1, 2012, accessed July 6, 2013,

http://www.fogah.org/sitebuildercontent/sitebuilderfiles/kemp_pressrelease_2012-09-13.pdf.

¹¹ Our Georgia Archives, Our Georgia History, accessed July 6, 2013,

<http://www.fogah.org/sitebuildercontent/sitebuilderfiles/gaemergencydeckprint.pdf>.

focus on disseminating information to the press and the public about the issue, and specifically worked to increase the social media presence of the Coalition by creating a Twitter feed (@SaveGAarchives) and a [YouTube campaign](#).

Archival leaders from around the country rallied to help the Coalition plan its campaign, and many scholarly and professional organizations wrote to Secretary Kemp and Governor Deal in support of the archives. A petition to keep the archives open was started, and was ultimately signed by over 10,000 individuals. SGA led efforts to speak with the press and keep media informed of updates. The closing garnered press coverage around the country, including in the [New York Times](#).¹² SGA leaders also continued to update the emergency deck of slides for redistribution to legislators.

At the September 19 signing of the proclamation declaring October Archives Month in Georgia, Coalition members presented Governor Deal with the petition and signed letters of support. He pledged his support of the Archives, but offered little detail about what form that support would take. On October 3, 2012, the Coalition sponsored a rally at the Georgia State Capitol during which protesters called for a complete restoration of the Archives budget. Those in attendance heard from scholars, genealogists and state legislators including Dianne Cannestra, President of the FOGAH; Kaye Lanning Minchew, Co-Chair of the Coalition and Director of the Troup County Archives; Emma Davis-Hamilton, Chair of the African-American Genealogical Society; Jim Cobb, Spalding Distinguished Research Professor, University of Georgia; and Bob Barr, former U.S. Attorney and Congressman. All spoke eloquently of the value of the Archives, to their individual work, to the legal protection of Georgia citizens, and to the transparency and effectiveness of the state government. On October 11, FOGAH retained the services of Joe Tanner and Associates, a governmental affairs consulting group, to help guide the Coalition through the legislative budget process and hopefully lead us to a successful conclusion.

The partnership with Joe Tanner and Associates was advantageous for the Coalition. The firm was able to provide leadership and insights that the Coalition lacked, and they proved instrumental in the continuation of our political education. They started by hosting training workshops for volunteers, which reinforced the hierarchy of political communication that we had first learned about from Senator Carter. They also emphasized the importance of connecting with our legislators on a personal level. It is incumbent on us as advocates to know the people we're asking for help, and then to approach them first from common ground. Is your state representative a regular at your favorite coffee shop? Do you like the same music? Are you both alumni of the same college? While it may seem trite, it's no less important to remember that simple things often pave the way for long-lasting relationships. Ultimately, the goal stretches far beyond the immediate solution to a problem to the cultivation of long-term relationships that will continue to benefit your organization.

¹² Kim Severson, "Budget Cuts to Close Georgia Archives," *New York Times*, September 26, 2012, accessed July 6, 2013, http://www.nytimes.com/2012/09/27/us/budget-cuts-to-limit-public-access-to-georgia-archives.html?smid=fb-share&_r=2&.

Joe Tanner and Associates were also key players in the construction of a unified message. Prior to our work with them, we had often struggled to keep our message from getting diluted by the fact that the message was filtered through numerous organizations with divergent motivations for getting involved. Tanner and Associates were adamant in their instruction to us that our message should be focused entirely on support for the transfer of the Archives and whatever budget the Board of Regents deemed appropriate. In the midst of the crisis, anything else would be distracting and the time had passed for lengthy philosophical conversations about the value of archives and the good inherent in their preservation. It became necessary for us to support what was, ultimately, the only solution for keeping the doors of the Georgia Archives open.

As we were simultaneously learning as much as we could about the political process and trying to keep the Archives crisis fresh in the minds of supporters, Governor Deal announced on October 18 that he would restore \$125,000 to the Archives' budget to keep it open to the public and retain two additional staff until June 30, 2013. The announcement also laid out Deal's plan for the future of the Archives. On July 1, 2013, it said, responsibility for the Archives would transfer from the Secretary of State to the University System of Georgia's Board of Regents, pending approval of the Georgia General Assembly. The General Assembly would consider the transfer, as well as the FY 2013-2014 budget during the 2013 legislative session.¹³ Following this announcement, the Coalition began to prepare for another round of conversations with legislators. In January 2013, a task force was formed by the Board of Regents to plan the transition of the Archives.¹⁴

Before the legislative session began, the Regents submitted a budget request to the House Appropriations Committee requesting an additional \$225,000 be added to the Archives budget.¹⁵ This would be the minimum amount necessary to extend public access hours and replace a portion of the staff lost in the fall. During this time, SGA and the Coalition worked to mobilize volunteers to call and meet with their representatives in support of the Board of Regent's budget request. We provided supporters with talking points focused entirely on the narrow message crafted with the help of Tanner and Associates. We also made sure that all of our communication with the press centered around our support of the transfer of the archives.

As we continued to work with Joe Tanner throughout the fall and spring, we found him to be an indispensable source of information. His insider access to the Georgia Legislature in turn gave us access to facts and details that we would not have had otherwise. This became invaluable to us in dispelling rumors during the legislative session. As the bill to transfer the Archives

¹³ Deal, Kemp to Keep Georgia's Archives Open, accessed July 6, 2013, <http://gov.georgia.gov/press-releases/2012-10-18/deal-kemp-keep-georgia%E2%80%99s-archives-open>.

¹⁴ Task force members were Dianne Cannestra, member, Friends of the Georgia Archives and History; Lorene Flanders, library director, University of West Georgia; Dr. Toby Graham, deputy university librarian and head of the Hargrett Library, UGA; Dr. Catherine Oglesby, professor of history, Valdosta State University; Richard Pearce-Moses, professor and director of the archival studies program, Clayton State University; Merryll Penson, executive director of Library Services, University System of Georgia; Dr. William Potter, university librarian and associate provost, the University of Georgia; and Dr. Lamar Veatch, executive director of the Georgia Public Library Service.

¹⁵ Personal communication with author, April 2013.

progressed through the house and senate, rumors of hold ups and political manipulation flew with regularity. With the help of Joe Tanner and his colleagues we were able to counter those rumors with accurate information that we could then funnel to our supporters.

On March 5, the Georgia House of Representatives voted unanimously to transfer the Archives to the University System. The House also agreed to add \$224,000 to the Archives budget. Two weeks later, the Senate followed suit and unanimously voted to transfer the Archives to the University System with an additional \$300,000 in the budget. When the appropriations committees of both houses met to reconcile their budgets, they agreed to restore the \$300,000 recommended by the Senate. These additional funds are over and above what Governor Nathan Deal had recommended in his budget for FY14, however, the total Archives budget is still far below where it has been in the past. In June 2013, the Georgia Archives announced that it would hire a full time Archivist and a full time Conservator. On July 1, 2013, administration of the Georgia Archives was officially transferred from the Secretary of State's Office to the University System, and at the end of July, public access hours will extend to four days per week.¹⁶

LESSONS LEARNED

The most crucial element of any advocacy campaign is planning. In a crisis, we often fool ourselves into thinking there is no time to plan. It feels critical to take immediate decisive action instead of stepping back, taking a breath, and formulating a clear and detailed strategy for moving forward. But it cannot be overstated that the success of any campaign depends largely on the ability to designate strong leadership, clearly define responsibilities, initiate and maintain open communication, and create an environment that values the input of all stakeholders. Success also depends on the ability to define a consistent message and effectively communicate that message to supporters and volunteers. Groups and individuals who support a cause likely do so for a variety of reasons. Coordinating their efforts and keeping the message consistent across diverse (and sometimes divergent) motivations is an essential piece of the advocacy puzzle.

Though the 2012-2013 campaign on behalf of the Georgia Archives ultimately ended in success, the effort suffered in areas that lacked the proper planning and oversight. Messaging was a particularly knotty problem for us to work out, due in large part to the diversity of stakeholders involved in the campaign and the ad hoc nature of the Coalition. We learned quickly that genealogical researchers, professional archivists, and legislators all have very different investments in the Archives and equally different reasons for wanting the doors to stay open. In an effort to avoid diluting the message, or conflating a number of different issues into one mega-issue, our advocacy efforts often focused on the loss of public access to the Archives. This was effective in terms of drawing attention to the issue and it enabled us to mobilize supporters based on their emotional reaction to the loss of a resource that belongs to the

¹⁶ Ellen Reinhardt, "New Era for the State Archives," *GPB News*, July 1, 2013, accessed July 6, 2013, <http://www.gpb.org/news/2013/07/01/new-era-for-the-state-archives>.

taxpayer. However, it also meant that very often we were not talking about issues of preservation, the practical matter of transferring government documents to the Archives or staff's ability to arrange and describe them, or the government's legal obligation to maintain the Archives. These issues all came up over time, of course, but often were not the focus of the conversation.

It is also important to organize the advocacy effort under a leader or organization that has the capacity to handle multiple tasks at once. Firmly drawn lines of responsibility between collaborators and/or volunteers are crucial both to staying on message and avoiding duplication of effort. Identify the people who will be in charge of communicating with the press; identify the people who will spearhead the drafting of talking points; identify the people who will take responsibility for pushing communications out to group members. Assign responsibilities based on a frank and honest assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of the groups involved. For example, because of their professional positions, the past two SGA presidents were limited in their abilities to speak publicly about advocacy for the Georgia Archives. This meant that press and other communications had to be handled by SGA Outreach, and this was done with the full support and authority of the SGA leadership.

It is also necessary to create some kind of online presence via online sharing sites in order to raise your profile with the press. After SGA distributed one of our first press releases, inviting reporters to the State Capitol for the FOGAH reception for legislators in January 2012, local reporter Scott Henry wrote [an article](#) taking the Coalition to task for not having any online presence, not even a Facebook page.¹⁷ While somewhat glib, Henry's point was well-taken: how do archives advocates expect to engage diverse communities in their struggles, or even teach them about our value, if we do not engage in the tools of everyday life?

Email listservs, Blogger, Twitter, Facebook, Change.org, and YouTube were all used in the campaign for the Georgia Archives. Use of these tools was essential for sharing immediate news but also demonstrated the need for streamlined communications. While the Twitter account and YouTube were administered by the SGA Outreach Managers, the Facebook page and online petition were created by a supporter of the Georgia Archives. Within days, the page and petition had thousands of "likes" and signatures. It would have been completely ineffective to create competitive pages within those same tools, but key messaging was not always immediately sent to their administrator, leaving the manager of two essential public relations tools out of the loop. A more minor example of a communications snafu was not sharing the Twitter hashtag for the Capitol Rally widely enough; the proliferation of different tags made it difficult for people to follow the event, and to discover the official Twitter account for the Coalition.

Despite the ease and availability of online tools, the biggest challenge to any advocacy campaign is still getting people involved. In the fall of 2012, SGA member Wendy Hagenmeier came to us with the idea of launching a YouTube campaign to show support for the Georgia

¹⁷ Scott Henry, "OK, Kiddos, Let's Have Fun with Old Archives," *Creative Loafing*, January 23, 2012, accessed July 6, 2013, <http://clatl.com/freshloaf/archives/2012/01/23/ok-kiddos-lets-have-fun-with-old-archives>.

Archives. The plan was to create a series of short videos of people talking about why they thought the Georgia Archives should remain open. We had hoped to recruit subjects from a variety of stakeholding communities, from the users of the Archives to other archivists who understood the impact budget cuts have on the profession.

A local filmmaker volunteered to create the first video, and former Georgia Congressman Bob Barr agreed to be filmed for the [inaugural video](#). We considered this a coup. Barr had spoken at the Capitol Rally for the Georgia Archives and has a level of local name recognition that encourages people, especially the media, to pay attention. After the initial video was posted, we announced the program and asked SGA members and other supporters of the Georgia Archives to shoot their own videos, and either email them to the Outreach Managers or share them on YouTube with a specific tag for searching. We also took a camera and tripod set up to the SGA Annual Meeting to film interested members for the campaign. There were no volunteers.

National professional organizations can also bring attention to a local or regional issue. From early on in the Georgia Archives crisis, the Issues & Advocacy Roundtable of the Society of American Archivists (SAA) actively responded by sharing information on their listserv and encouraging members to call family and friends in Georgia and ask them to contact their legislators. The Roundtable also sent a letter to Governor Nathan Deal, alternately asking that he work to save the Archives' funding, and showing support for his proposal to transfer the Archives to the University System of Georgia.

Professional organizations from allied fields, such as the American Alliance of Museums, the American Historical Association, the American Library Association, the Association of Canadian Archivists, the Council of State Archivists, the National Coalition for History and the Special Libraries Association, released open letters opposing the budget cuts to Governor Deal in September 2012. A letter to Deal was also prepared by SAA's Government Affairs Working Group. In February 2013, after the transfer was announced, SAA co-signed a letter of support with the Council of State Archivists and the National Association of Government Archives and Records Administrators. Despite the letters and public show of support, SAA offered no other resources to the campaign. Their position was reactionary and primarily served to share news from Georgia. This taught us an important lesson about national support: while national organizations are good for some kinds of support, they cannot be expected to be involved on a deeper level.

Many of these lessons speak to one overall theme: in order to be successful advocates, you must plan preemptively. It is not enough to have a strong reaction when a crisis comes. It is essential to be prepared for any kind of crisis. If you are personally well-organized, find the strongest planners in your organization and ask them for help. Identify the stakeholders in your organization, from researchers to administrators and your local and regional colleagues, and collaborate with them frequently. Collect local press contacts and create an email list. Learn to write a press release, either by researching examples online or by asking a communications

officer at your workplace. And if your organization does not have an online tool in place to disseminate information quickly, create one now. Most importantly, consider designating a position in your organization to act as an advocacy officer and route planning and communications through them.

We have enjoyed some truly significant victories for the Georgia Archives and they are victories that prove advocacy works. Despite the hiring of new professional staff and the extension of public service hours, the Archives is not close to fully staffed, the preservation program still operates in a reduced capacity, and we have no way of knowing how the University System of Georgia will treat the Archives in the future. There is much work to be done to see the Archives budget fully restored and we can expect the fight to last for several more years. SGA is committed to contributing to a long campaign to in collaboration with FOGAH in support of the Georgia Archives, as well as cultivating an overall culture of advocacy for archives professionals in the state. We want archivists in Georgia to have the tools to not only advocate for the biggest and most visible of us in the community, but also for themselves. The true goal is not only the ability to respond to a crisis but a sustainable framework for advocacy. As we take the time to assess our successes and failures now that the crisis has passed, we will begin to identify and implement the tools necessary to build that framework. To be successful will require long term planning and cooperation as well as the establishment of a truly collaborative network of supporters that does not just mobilize in crisis but that regularly works to keep the Archives in the public eye.

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Conference's Fight for Social Change," based on the collection. Since 2011, she has been part of the permanent MARBL staff, working with a variety of collections documenting Southern history, African American culture and history, and British and Irish Literature. She is currently Outreach Manager for the Society of Georgia Archivists, as well as a member of and Georgia Key Contact for the Society of American Archivists.