

4009 Morningside Way  
Morgantown, WV 26505-2339

May 19, 2020

Council on Library and Information Resources  
2221 South Clark Street  
Arlington, VA 22202

Dear Grant Selection Committee,

As President of the American Institute of the History of Pharmacy (AIHP) and curator of the Cook-Hayman Pharmacy Museum at the West Virginia University School of Pharmacy I write in support of the Cannabis Museum application for a grant for the Council on Library and Information Resources *Digitizing Hidden Special Collections and Archives: Enabling New Scholarship through increasing Access to Unique Materials* project.

First and foremost, the variety of objects, ephemera, documents, a variety of print sources such as catalogs and texts and photos collected by The Cannabis Museum must surely be one of the most unique historical collections in existence. That any of these items have survived after 75 years of supposed mandated destruction is miraculous. That hundreds of these surviving items have been brought together in one collection is equally so. The aged condition and composition of much of these materials make digitizing essential if they are to maintain preservation and to make them available to scholars and researchers in a number of fields (health, social, legal and political history to name just a few) and to the public at large around the world. I can confidently say that most of the holdings of the collection have been unseen by anyone interested in the topic and digitization would provide unimpeded access to these priceless items.

The staff of The Cannabis Museum is committed to publicizing the collection and partnering with organizations and institutions to expand their audience. They have created an attractive user-friendly website and newsletter and reached out to museums and academic institutions around the U.S. For example, a number of their staff visited the Cook-Hayman Pharmacy Museum at the West Virginia University School of Pharmacy in Morgantown, WV to examine its cannabis-related holdings and explore opportunities for mutual educational efforts. This visit has expanded to include planning a health center-wide exhibit open to pharmacy, medical, nursing, dental, public health, allied health professionals and the public. Special note is made of their well-attended presentation made at the 44<sup>th</sup> International Congress of the History of Pharmacy held in Washington, D.C. last fall. The AIHP is currently exploring multiple areas of potential collaboration with The Cannabis Museum in preserving and publicizing this historical context.

With the revived national and international interest in the medicinal use of cannabis in both the health professions and the public at large, the historical background of the herb and its many dosage forms and usages is becoming ever more important. Consequently, the potential audience for the

digitized collection is quite large now and is destined for certain growth. I can think of no more appropriate use of CLIR's *Digitizing Hidden Special Collections and Archives: Enabling New Scholarship through increasing Access to Unique Materials* project than that proposed by The Cannabis Museum.

With best wishes for the success of your preservation efforts, I am

Sincerely Yours,

W, Clarke Ridgway  
President, the American Institute of the History of Pharmacy  
Professor Emeritus, West Virginia University School of Pharmacy  
Curator, Cook-Hayman Pharmacy Museum