

Advocacy for Archives

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Larry Hackman Article: “Advocacy for Archives and Archivists”

- Hackman’s interest in advocacy grew out of experiences as first director of Historical Records Program at National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC)
- “Among the conclusions I reached in those years was that many archives were locked into a cycle of low expectations and passivity and that many archivists lacked the knowledge and imagination to change the factors that limited their archives” (3).

Discussion Question: Have you been involved in advocacy work? What were some barriers or challenges?

Advocacy 101

1. Figure out what you need.
2. Figure out who has what you need.
3. Figure out how to make them give it to you.

“Day to day advocacy with internal decision makers and internal allies is the most important advocacy for almost all archives” (4)



Key Principles to Consider

1. **Develop a strong overall institutional infrastructure**
 - a. Financial resources, leadership, staff, facilities, policies, methods, etc.
2. **Effective advocacy is tied to having an effective archives**
 - a. Demonstrable positive results and success: “Advocacy, linked to demonstrated professionalism and to good results, can helpfully realize the potential of an archival program” (8).
3. **Build relationships**
 - a. Networking is key ; need allies and supporters who can also advocate
4. **Strong and effective communication**
 - a. Must be able to clearly describe *mission*, *vision*, and *priorities*, and what it needs to achieve its potential.
 - b. Communicate strengths and weaknesses of the archives

Application

Consider the importance of influence.

- a. What about power dynamics? How does this approach affect archives or special collections that are situated more at the margins?
 - i. “Archives need friends and admirers, including, and perhaps, especially, those in ‘high places’ “ (8)
 - ii. “Where archivists have developed a strategic mindset for advocacy, where they have recognized the value of building positive relationships, especially influential ones, they will find numerous opportunities to do so” (10).
 - iii. “Treat the decision makers above the archives as a prime subject of advocacy” (19).

Discussion Question: What do you think about the “influence” factor? How might advocacy efforts look different depending on context?

Practical Techniques and Tactics

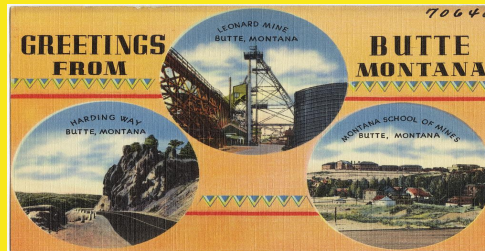
1. Describe and emphasize benefits and beneficiaries of the archives
2. Use expert consultants
3. Start close to home for media coverage
4. Seek internal leverage through external funding processes
5. Make use of both good and bad news
6. Communicate your values
7. Personalize communications and follow-up



Butte-Silver Bow Public Archives Case Study

Discussion Question #1 : In what ways do you see Hackman's advocacy principles implemented?

Discussion Question # 2: In the discussion board, Valerie raised an excellent point about how much effort and time advocacy often required: “Must libraries and special collections always be passion projects to survive? Is there an alternative?” What do you think?



Breakout Sessions

Some
Background.

Archives Aware

For this breakout session, we will be using the Archives Aware blog site.

Archives Aware is hosted by the Society of American Archivists and is focused on displaying efforts of advocacy in a variety of archives.

Case Study 1

Martha Graham Center of
Contemporary Dance

Blog Post:

<https://archivesaware.archivists.org/2017/04/03/federal-funding-impact-story-1/>

Archive Link (the collection
moved to NY Public libraries
this year):

<https://digitalcollections.nypl.org/>

Questions

1. Which of Hackman's advocacy principles do you see practiced here?
2. What recommendations would you make to the institution to further improve the outcome of their goals?
3. Take a look at the institution's website, what are some examples of advocacy you can find and what are your thoughts on how they are implemented?

Case Study 2

Indianapolis Museum of Art
Blog Post:

<https://archivesaware.archivists.org/2017/04/25/federal-funding-impact-story-3/>

Archive Link:

<https://discovernewfields.org/archives>

Questions

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Case Study 3

St. Joseph County Public
Library, Indiana University
South Bend Archives, IU South
Bend Civil Rights Heritage
Center

Blog Post:

<https://archivesaware.archivists.org/2017/06/16/federal-funding-impact-story-6/>

Archive Link:

<https://michianamemory.sjcpl.org/>

Questions

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Case Study 4

Mississippi University for
Women
Blog Post:

<https://archivesaware.archivists.org/2018/03/15/federal-funding-impact-story-9/>

Archive Link:

<https://www.muw.edu/library/archives>

Questions

1. Which of Hackman's advocacy principles do you see practiced here?
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Let's Reflect.