



A More Complete Record: The Case for Archival Partnerships The Radcliffe Workshop on Technology & Archival Processing

Thursday, April 12
Knafel Center, Radcliffe Institute | *Public*

Transcript

3:00-4:30 **Scholars Report on Research Experience | *Panel Discussion***

Moderator: **A'lelia Bundles**, journalist and author of *On Her Own Ground: The Life and Times of Madam C.J. Walker*

- **Garrett Felber**, Assistant Professor of History at the University of Mississippi and Visiting Scholar in the Charles Warren Center for Studies in American History, Harvard University
- **Valerie Boyd**, Charlayne Hunter-Gault Professor of Journalism and Director of MFA Program in Narrative Nonfiction, University of Georgia; author of *Wrapped in Rainbows: The Life of Zora Neale Hurston*
- **Anastasia Curwood**, Associate Professor, Director, African American & Africana Studies, University of Kentucky

- Good afternoon, everyone. That was so incredible, Beverly and Craig!

[APPLAUSE]

Like Beverly, I wish I'd written that book. And Beverly is somebody who's helped me with my research for many, many years. My name is A'Lelia Bundles.

And I'm so proud. This is my alma mater. And I'm so proud of what is happening today.

[APPLAUSE]

And there are so many faces of people that I'm seeing who have helped me with my research for the last several decades as I've been writing about members of my family-- probably most well-known, Madam CJ Walker. But I've seen people who literally helped me four or five decades ago, because I am that old.

But you know, a special thanks to Sarah Thomas, to Marilyn Dunn, Jane Kamensky, and Amanda Strauss. I know lots of other people have worked very hard. But the vision that came from conversations with Julieanna Richardson and Marilyn Dunn and Hollie Smith, and others who-- Khalil Muhammad-- and others who've been talking about something like this for so long, and to see it actually happening and to know the relationships that are going to-- some that are already-- that already exist. And the relationships that are going to be built as a result of this day and a half, just makes me very, very happy, because I know the value of archives.

It is a pleasure for me to introduce you to our panelists. Our focus is going to be, as we talked on the phone, to prepare the richness and value of collections that are both inaccessible and accessible, the great discoveries and positive experiences that we've had and the help that we've gotten from often overworked and under-resourced staff and institutions, the challenges that we faced when working in some of the collections and talking about-- someone asked earlier about where people should donate their papers, so we will be talking about that.

But it's my pleasure first to introduce Anastasia Curwood, who is an Associate Professor of History and Director of African-American and Africana Studies at the University of Kentucky. Her scholarship focuses on the interface between private life and historical context for black Americans in the 20th century. Some of her family papers are here at the Schlesinger Library. She is a native of Cambridge.

And her current project is a critical biography of Congresswoman and Democratic candidate for United States President Shirley Chisholm. Anastasia?

[APPLAUSE]

She will be-- I'm going to introduce all three. But we should give you applause. It's also my pleasure to introduce Valerie Boyd, who is the author of the critically acclaimed biography, "Wrapped in Rainbows, The Life of Zora Neale Hurston., winner of the Southern Book Award and the American Library Association's Notable Book Award.

Valerie and I met because we shared an editor at Scribner many years ago. She is a Professor of Journalism and the Charlene Hunter-Gault Distinguished Writer in Residence at the Grady College of Journalism and Mass Communication at the University of Georgia. Simon and Schuster 37 Ink will publish *Gathering Blossoms Under Fire, The Journals of Alice Walker* in 2019, which Valerie's editing.

And finally, Garrett Felber is an Assistant Professor of History at the University of Mississippi and a Visiting Scholar in the Charles Warren Center for Studies in American History at Harvard

University. He is the co-author of *The Portable Malcolm X Reader* from Penguin Books with Manning Marable and is currently working on a manuscript titled *Those Who Know Don't Say*, *The Nation of Islam*, *Black Nationalist Politics* and *The Carceral State*.

He helped found Liberation Literacy, an organization dedicated to building social justice literacy and re-imagining community through education and conversation inside and outside of prisons in Portland, Oregon. So we will first hear from Dr. Curwood.

[APPLAUSE]

- Well, I'm very excited to be here. And as a scholar, I appreciate being able to address those of you who are making my work possible. There are people here who have specifically made my work possible. And I'm excited about this project to make-- to start to ensure some better access or work in partnerships to ensure better access to archival material, treasures that we have scattered around the nation in archives that belong to HBCUs.

And I think my job here is to report from the field of play a little bit, what it's like to be a scholar and to have my livelihood in many ways depend on these institutions-- and my livelihood and my passions in my work. So I'm going to comment on my experiences in three areas-- at the Archives, as a member of a donor family-- A'Lelia just alluded to that-- and as a contact with possible future donors in the course of my scholarship.

So as a researcher at the Archives, the things that work well when I've gone to HBCUs have been that the staff are unbelievably dedicated under sometimes extremely trying circumstances. And I think Holly said, she's gone. But she said, we beg, borrow, and steal. People make a way out of no way to try to preserve these materials and create access for them.

And when I show up, people know what I'm working on. And they genuinely care what I'm working on. There are people in this room who have said, oh, hello, yes, oh, here's what-- I'd like you to look at this, or I think it would be a good idea for you to look at that. So that level of engagement with the work of the scholars coming in has been absolutely essential to what I've been trying to do as a scholar.

And I haven't noticed that degree of engagement at other institutions. There's one institution here in town I've done research at and I thought, do they even want me here? I'm using the materials. But it's very inconvenient for me to be here. That's not always the case at PWI's, not by a long shot. But that feeling has existed.

What happens, as I've been a researcher, and I've noticed in some of my HBCU experiences, is sometimes materials just aren't accessible. So they might be in storage. They might be not processed. Their hours tend to be shorter because there isn't as much money for staff.

So the costs for the researcher might go up if you need x number of hours to work with the materials, then you can't get to them except for between certain hours. And then you wind up

spending a long time. This happens at the New York Public Library, which is not an HBCU. But it's an interesting situation.

But those hours-- those of you who have researched in the New York Public Library at the Schomburg know that those are short hours and certain days. And it's not cheap to stay in New York. So you have to stay longer.

And so there are some issues related to the under-resourced problem that Beverly Guy-Sheftall alluded to. And those shift some costs on to researchers. So those are my-- I'm going to leave it there with my experiences as a researcher. And I'll talk for a moment about my experience as a member of a donor family.

So my grandmother was a 1956 PhD in social psychology here at Radcliffe. So she was an alum. She was one of the very early-- I actually don't know what number she is in terms of a black woman PhD from Radcliffe. But she was pretty pioneering.

And the first contact we got from Schlesinger was from Eva Mosley. And I mean, she was on us immediately. She said, what are you going to do with those papers? And she had paid attention. She knew when my grandmother passed on and she asked about them.

Well, we didn't do anything about them. And as it happened, I wound up finding some of her personal papers and using them in my first book, which was about African-Americans' marriages. And there are some personal letters between her and my grandfather that are incredibly riveting.

We finally, I don't know, 20 years after-- yeah, I think it was 20 years after that first contact we finally donated the papers. Cathy [? Kraft ?] and Kathy Jacobs came up, helped put them into boxes, and they sent a moving truck. It was absolutely a painless process that resources help with.

And then I got a finding aid within a few months. They'd been processed. It was astounding.

So most of her professional papers are accessible without permission. But one of our family members really wanted to have the very personal love letters to have some sort of gate on them. So I'm that contact. When people need permission to access those papers, I get the email.

It's actually been-- it's been wonderful. Because I found out who's working on them, and I've made professional contacts. And I've actually made some friends that way.

But I say all this to suggest that we have never doubted that these papers are well taken care of. And yes, she had this connection with Radcliffe. And that's why her papers are at a PWI. But also, we know that they're extremely, extraordinarily well taken care of.

Now on the other side of that, I've been in contact with possible donors. I've had people say, oh, yeah, I've got these papers. What do I do with them? And this is where I get in a dilemma.

So I've written out lists to email to people when I've been researching families of historical figures. And I say, well, this archive can do this. This archive can do that. This one is a really good fit. This one is better funded. And I lay it out for them, these are the choices.

Because on the one hand, you might want, if you have an illustrious family member who is important in African-American history, you want their papers to be at an HBCU. On the other hand, I've been asked about, well, can somebody pay for my papers? Well, there's somebody, at least one person in this room, who has the capacity to pay for papers. Not everybody does.

And so that's something to balance. I guess I'm not answering the question about advising about donors. But as a historian coming into contact with donors, family members of the people who I'm researching, it has come up. And I want to send people to wherever their papers fit best. It does contain some dilemmas within it.

- We'll talk about that more as we go on. Valerie?

- Hi, everyone. It's good to be here. Archivists are among my favorite people. Because I am an author who writes from the archives. And so, you know, like Anastasia, I've had amazing experiences with archivists at some of the institutions where you work. So I'm happy to be here on this panel to talk about my experience in the archives.

I want to thank A'Lelila Bundles for pulling this panel together. And also thanks to Beverly Guy-Sheftall and Craig Wilder for that amazing opening session, which really was thought provoking and provided some great context for what we're talking about here on this panel. I think that was a great way to sort of start us off in this ongoing conversation.

So for my book, *Wrapped in Rainbows, The Life of Zora Neale Hurston*, I spent about 4 and 1/2 years in various archives. Everything that was in Hurston's possession at the time of her death in 1960 is at the University of Florida in Gainesville, because that's where she wished it to go. But a lot of the other archives that I had to consult are spread out all over.

So I ended up researching in various archives, including state archives throughout the South, where I was trying to kind of find the missing Hurston years. There were about 10 years when she sort of disappeared from the public record. And so my theory was that she was in an unhappy common law marriage at the time.

So I was searching for actual documentation of a marriage. But also searching hospital records and those sorts of things in various state archives in the South, because I could pinpoint her being somewhere between Florida and Baltimore during that period. So I was doing that kind of research, but I was also getting to spend time at the Library of Congress, the Auburn Avenue Research Library in Atlanta, the Moorland-Spingarn Center at Howard, Beinecke at Yale-- so a

real range of archives that I got to explore both at HBCUs and other small black institutions as well as large PWIs. So I got to see archives with various levels of staffing and resources.

And for my current book project, I'm curating and editing the journals of Alice Walker, which are housed at the Rose Library at Emory University. So Alice Walker started keeping journals in 1962 when she was 18 years old. And she's now 74. So there are more than 50 years of journals in more than 65 separate handwritten notebooks that I've spent the past four years reading and transcribing.

I have a graduate assistant who is amazing. So together, she and I have transcribed every word. And so now I'm pulling together a kind of representative sampling of those 50 plus years of journals for a book that will be published next year by 37 Ink, which is an imprint of Simon and Schuster. As A'Lelia said, the book will be called *Gathering Blossoms Under Fire, The Journals of Alice Walker*. And it's been an extraordinary-- as you can imagine-- just labor of love to do that.

What's also made it wonderful is the Emory Library itself. I mean, it's a well-resourced institution. The reading room overlooks downtown Atlanta, the skyline. I walk into the reading room, and you know, there's this kind of vault sound when the door closes behind me. And I feel like I'm just immersed in this center of intellectual goodness and resourcefulness. And you know, it's all right there for me, and I can sit there and read the journals and do that transcribing.

So that's been wonderful. But I have to echo what was said earlier. In my years of research in various archives at both PWIs like Emory and HBCUs, large and small, I have to say that I've encountered extraordinary support from most of the archivists I've met, no matter the size of the institution.

So the archivists at Emory are amazing. But I've encountered also amazing archive archivists at the Auburn Avenue Research Library, which is very much under-resourced when compared with an institution like Emory. So even at some of these small archives that are understaffed and under-resourced, the archivists have still been most helpful, most knowledgeable and dedicated to making sure the archives are well-used and well-valued.

However, I have encountered differences in, for instance, the amount of time it took to process my requests, or to mail me the photos I ordered, or these sorts of things. So while the archivists themselves have been helpful and willing and very knowledgeable, sometimes they seem to have been stymied by the lack of resources and the lack of support at the institutions where they work. And so this question of staffing and resources certainly played a role when I recently decided to place my own archives at Emory University and why I've recommended it to others.

So one of the reasons I chose Emory was because of the other collections that my own collection would be in conversation with. My collection is naturally in conversation with the collection of Alice Walker, the collection of Pearl Klag, Lucille Clifton, Mari Evans, and other black women writers I admire and who have influenced my own work. But another main reason

was resources, frankly. I knew from my experience as a researcher as a researcher at Emory that my archives would be well-cared for and that Emory has the resources to process the material efficiently and lovingly and to quickly make it available to researchers.

So I mean, Randall Burkett approached me 10 or 15 years ago about placing my archives at Emory. And I was, like, get out of here. I'll think about that when I'm 75. You know?

But this last year, I had some conversations with friends-- a friend, in particular, Lisbet Tellefsen, who had placed part of her archives at the Beinecke. And you know, she is, like me, in her 50s and decided-- I mean, she placed her papers at the Beinecke, and we had a conversation about it. And she convinced me that our archives are vulnerable in our homes.

And I was about to sell my home and move to another place. And I thought, rather than moving my materials again, now may be the time. And so I spoke with Pelham McDaniels and Randall at Emory, and you know, told them I want to do this.

And I think Pelham expressed surprise, because I teach at the University of Georgia. And he was surprised that I wasn't placing my papers at University of Georgia. But one of the reasons I chose Emory is because it's in Atlanta, and because I grew up in Atlanta and I feel like my story is an Atlanta story, not necessarily a Georgia story. You know, there is a kind of dome of progressiveness over Atlanta, and then there's Georgia. So I'm more of an Atlanta type of person.

So I wanted my papers there for that reason. And also, as I said, the resources-- seeing how Emory has worked with other people's papers, seeing the level of staff that they can dedicate-- all of those things influenced my decision. And I mean, after the archivist came to pack up my archives from my home, about three weeks later, I got an email that they had a preliminary finding aid ready.

And I was amazed. Like, wow, that was quick. And so that kind of resourcefulness is what attracted me to placing my papers there. But you know Beverly Guy-Sheftall raised this question of distrust of partnerships. And so that's still a factor, and that was a factor for me. And it's also a factor for people who come to me asking me where should they place their papers.

And when I say think about Emory, those questions of distrust do arise. And so I would say another huge factor in addition to financial resources is human resources. Basically, it's important that PWIs have a diverse, sensitive staff that fully understands the historic and cultural value of the collections that they're seeking to acquire. And it's important that the people who are considering placing their archives in an institution see archivists of color in positions of influence at these libraries.

That was really important for me, and I know it was important for Alice Walker. Beverly mentioned that earlier, when Alice Walker was considering placing her papers somewhere, she

reached out to Beverly and me and asked us what do we recommend. And she was a bit surprised when we suggested Emory.

But we talked about the resources that Emory had. But I think the selling point for Alice Walker was Rudolf Byrd, who was an amazing African-American faculty member at Emory. And he was involved in the acquisitions process. And I think that's what made her feel comfortable placing her papers there.

When Pearl Klag decided to place her papers somewhere, she called me as well and said, what do you think? And we had a long conversation about Emory. And then when I got ready to place my papers, I called Pearl back and said how's Emory treating you? Is this the right place for me to place mine?

So people are having these conversations and what's important to us in those conversations is making sure that the institutions-- even though they're PWIs and they have these financial resources which are attractive-- making sure that they actually have people in place within those institutions who have some influence and power. So it helps me for instance that I have the Emory has someone like Yolanda Cooper or Pelham McDaniel's in visible positions of leadership.

But I think it's also important, as we talked about earlier, having faculty members who are also partnered with those libraries and who can help assure-- as Rudolph did with Alice Walker-- help assure that the collections will be well-regarded and well-used. So basically, institutions that are trying to acquire black collections need not just Negro files, but actual Negroes on their teams. And that's a conversation that I've had with some of the folks at Emory. And I feel strongly that they are committed to that.

And that's part of why I'm comfortable with my papers there. And I've been urging other people to place papers there as well because of the conversation that those papers are in with existing collections. So I'll stop there, and look forward to interacting with you with your questions.

OK, so that was the quote of the day-- Negro files.

[LAUGHTER]

Thank you. That sounds like the title of an article. Thank you very much, Valerie. Garrett?

Yeah, so first I just want to say how humbled and grateful I am to be on this panel. I certainly lack a lot of the experience and years and contributions, I think, to this type of work. And I just really appreciate being invited to be a part of this conversation. To give you a sense of how I got into this work in the first place, I started pretty out of my depth.

I was doing a master's in African-American studies at Columbia. And after my first year, started as the lead researcher on the Malcolm X project with Manning Marable. So at about 23, I was in

charge of this 67 linear foot archive, which had been made up of sort of culling all of the archival materials on Malcolm X from around the country.

And then the next year, as Professor Marable's health was failing, we started working with his personal papers as well. So that was sort of my introduction to archival work. And I think-- I'm so thankful for this particular type of gathering, because it has a really concrete set of aims and objectives to produce something.

So I want to sort of get straight to reflecting on my own work in ways that I think these partnerships could be productive out of my own experience as a graduate student working on this book. So one of them, just to begin, is the importance, I think, of digitizing student newspapers and making those accessible. So one of the particular chapters that I was working on for the dissertation was on Malcolm X's college lectures and debates during the early 1960s.

And he gave this series of several dozen debates on integration or separation. And it was that a range of institutions from Ivys to R1s to HBCUs. And these have generally been talked about in isolation-- so the Berkeley debate or Howard. And what I was trying to do was give a full sense of what the impact on the student movement and the free speech movement these debates about black nationalism on-- especially predominately white campuses in the early '60s has had.

And what I ran into was the real disparity in terms of access to student newspapers. So for example, The Harvard Crimson and The Yale Daily News, both institutions where Malcolm debated, their digitizing goes back to the 1870s. And at Howard, where Malcolm debated in front of Stokely Carmichael and other really influential activists of the student movement and Black Power later, The Hilltop, founded by Zora Neale Hurston, has 1924, the year it was founded. And then it jumps to 2015.

And to just find one or two potential student responses to Malcolm's visit, I couldn't justify that as a graduate student to go to DC to look for that. And I felt like that was such a missing piece of that chapter, to be able-- I really wanted to know. What is the difference when Malcolm debates integration or separation at an HBCU like Morgan State or Howard versus Yale and Harvard? And that was a really tangible moment where I felt the need to digitize student newspapers at places like Howard, which still is the only HBCU to have a daily newspaper.

So this is where I get out of my depth in terms of how digitization works on the archival end. But I know that it takes money and resources and machinery. So to the extent that institutions that have that capacity can begin to help other institutions digitize student newspapers and things like that, I think that would be really valuable.

Another experience I wanted to share that was just really incredible for me was at an HBCU. It was that Clark Atlanta University, the Woodruff Library. And they had C. Eric Lincoln's papers. And C. Eric Lincoln wrote the first book length study of the Nation of Islam, The Black Muslims in America.

And they have a travel grant that's available. It's \$1,500, competitive grant. And I was awarded that, which allowed me to go to Atlanta and look at the collection.

But not just that-- they, as part of the stipulation, had me give a 30 minute presentation on how my work related to the collection and how the collection related to my work. And they invited all the library staff. And they were so tremendously engaged and followed up with me after the fact with emails, and said, I was thinking about this other collection.

And to me that was just such a rich experience in terms of allowing me to come down there and access the materials, but also to have a conversation about the way that those materials impacted my own work and could be of value to other scholars. So I would suggest really a two-way, I think, partnership, in terms of sending students to HBCU libraries to be able to access the work and talk with archivists at those institutions. But also students from HBCUs-- to fund them to come to other institutions as well and have those sort of experiences. And also just to host these conversations between scholars and archivists, to talk about the ways in which you're using the work and what it means.

And lastly, I sort of want to broaden the conversation that we're having about sort of collections of and about under-represented communities also in terms of access by those communities. So many of you are probably familiar with Michelle Jones's case at Harvard. And Michelle Jones, as well, who is a first year PhD student at NYU and was originally accepted at Harvard before that being revoked by the Harvard administration.

And I had been writing to Michelle while she was incarcerated the year before and talking to her about graduate schools. In part, Michigan, because I was trying to help get her there. And the thing that people generally don't know about Michelle's case is the thing that made her such an incredible candidate for all of these PhD programs was that she had taken part, in prison, in a History Project called the Indiana Women's Prison History Project, where women had been doing collaborative research to write the first 15 years of the first women's prison in the United States, IWP. And during that time, Kelsey Kauffman, who was an emeritus faculty, was bringing in librarians and archivists.

And the students were asking questions, research questions. And the archivists were bringing in materials and photocopying them. And what they had found, essentially, was that none of the incarcerated people at IWP in the 19th century had sex-related offenses, which didn't make any sense, since that was the main way in which women were engaging in the informal economy during that time.

And they found that these women were actually being held since the 1840s at these places called Magdalene Laundries, which were essentially private Catholic-run prisons for women who were sex workers. So in this way, these women actually are rewriting the history of women's incarceration and gender violence in the United States. They now have a book deal with New Press to publish this. And I think this is just one example of the incredible way in which incarcerated scholars can really benefit from having access to archival materials as well.

So one of the things that we have a proposal forward right now-- I'm working with Elizabeth Hinton in the History Department in AAAS here-- is to start a similar project at Norfolk prison, which is the first community prison, and Framingham, which is the second oldest prison in the United States. And not just to get sort of histories of prisons in, but also, the Schlesinger, in particular, has this fantastic array of radical women of color-- Pauli Murray, Ana Livia Cordero, Flo Kennedy, Angela Davis-- to be able to get some of those archival materials into incarcerated scholars, as well, I think, is a way that we can think about partnership in a different way. And I'll stop there.

So we all, as you can tell, I think our panel is kind of a love letter to archivists who have helped us along the way. Because we couldn't do the kind of work that we do without that help and without that sort of helping hand. I've been doing research long enough that I've gone from microfiche and microfilm to being able to search digitized databases in my pajamas in the middle of the night when I have insomnia. You know, from the rolls of quarters to the money-loaded cards, to again, being able to just replace the cartridge in my computer. And from crashing on a friend's couch because I couldn't afford a hotel room to being able to do this in my pajamas. So the digitalization makes a difference.

But there is no substitute for actually going and seeing the original documents. And so I was looking through my book, *On Her Own Ground* to just sort of get an idea of how many archives I'd been to and how many people had helped me. And there's just no way to actually count that.

But I began to think of the range, as Valerie mentioned, the different archives. And so I think about people like the Clerk of the Court in Delta, Louisiana, in Madison Parish, who actually had their ledgers from pre-Civil War. Because the Clerk of the Court had buried the records during the Civil War. So it was one of the few places where they existed. And she climbed up on a ladder in a rainstorm and kept the courthouse open for me until 10:00 at night to get those ledgers down so I could see the actual property transfers on the plantation where Madam Walker had been born.

So there are people who go out of their way. Randall Burkett, who spoke earlier-- Randall was one of those people who would come down to the room while you're doing research and say, have you thought about this? Did you think about that collection? Something that you never would have thought about.

I see Ida Jones. And while Ida and I have not done a lot of research together, going to Moorland-Spangarn through many years, where people like Joellen ElBashir, when things weren't processed, would kind of sneak me in and pull a box for me. I mean, people are so dedicated. I still want to find the Emmett Scott papers at Morgan State, but they haven't been processed. But there are people who truly, truly go out of their way. My list is long.

And I'm somewhat of an evangelist now to get people to make sure that they donate their papers. And I guess I'm fortunate to have had a grandfather who was an attorney, who

understood the importance of documents, and who saved a lot of the personal family papers that I have. And maybe he was my first example of an archivist. But maybe I was just from a long line of pack rats. And so I appreciate that about him.

But what I've learned through what he saved and through going to so many archives is that if there isn't a piece of paper, the story doesn't exist. And our stories have been erased, intentionally. And then sometimes, people just don't want to save Grandma's stuff, and they throw it away.

A friend of mine that I grew up with, whose father was the assistant coach at Crispus Attucks, where Oscar Robertson went to high school-- her father died at 101, not too long ago. And I'm sorry to tell this story and out her. But she said she threw away all his photos. She said, what do I need those for?

So I'm like the person who wants to strangle people when they don't save it. But instead of that, I want to be more positive and let them know how important it is to save these things. Because having a letter or a photograph makes something real.

It can also reveal a dimension that kills a myth. And that's important, too, whether it's the Spellman archives killing the myth. So I have a couple of images. I'm actually going to stay seated while I do this, and I hope I hit the right thing.

OK, so these are the ladies that I write about-- Madam CJ Walker, her daughter A'Lelia Walker, and my grandmother, Mae. And this first thing I want to show you-- this is the St. Louis Public Schools' archives. There is a wonderful woman named Sharon Dolan, who got fired some years ago because she got sideways with the superintendent. But she sort of singlehandedly was preserving these records in the St. Louis Public Library-- I mean, St. Louis School archives.

I don't think you can really read this. But discovering this-- this is A'Lelia Walker's enrollment in school in, like, first grade or somewhere around there. But she had many of the years. I wouldn't-- you know, just to be able to document that, to be able to document where they live, that she had perfect attendance for a few years and then she had really spotty attendance. And I figured out that that's probably because her stepfather was acting up. You know, you can begin to draw conclusions because these records exist.

This is Knoxville College. A wonderful man, Robert Booker, who ran the Beck Cultural Center in Knoxville, who's a graduate of Knoxville College, has stuff sort of on shelves and not climate controlled. But he had the school records from Knoxville College. I could tell that A'Lelia Walker went to Knoxville college for about a year and a half because her name appears there.

So that was documentation for me. There were myths-- oh, she went to college and graduated. She was there for a year and a half and was demoted to eighth grade because she wasn't really well-prepared. There are all kinds of conclusions you draw when you have a document.

This is from Spelman. Beverly was so kind to have me come. Taronda Spencer-- the late Taronda Spencer was there. They really opened the door for me. And because of this, I was able to see the commencement issue when my grandmother Mae graduated from Spelman Seminary in 1920 and to learn that she won the Seymour Finney Prize for having the highest grade average. For \$12-- and she got \$12.

But I knew she had gone there. I had gotten some correspondence earlier from the archives that showed A'Lelia Walker writing to the administrators, asking if she could come. And Margaret Mary Washington saying she was a person of good character. And another letter saying she didn't really want to wear the black stockings that they had. But she had to wear them.

But then to find that she had won the highest academic prize made all the difference. But that was because people were so welcoming. And then this is another thing that's not really an archive.

But this is an autographed copy of *The Weary Blues* from Langston Hughes to A'Lelia Walker on February 3rd, 1926. So I knew that Langston had given her a copy of this book. And then I will wait to tell you how I eventually found this copy.

But I knew about that because, on February 6, in one of the books of Langston Hughes's and Wally Thurman's letters, Wallace Thurman had written to Langston Hughes saying, "Madam Walker was tickled pink on your inscription. She just must meet you." And then this book this book was autographed on February 3rd.

And then there is a letter in Emily Bernard's book with the letters between Langston Hughes and Carl van Vechten, where Hughes is writing to van Vechten saying, "I think I'll be in New York on Friday. Of course, I want to come see you sometime during the weekend, if you'll let me." If you know about Langston and Carl, you know what that-- you know, you can read stuff.

And he says, "Miss Sargent said something about my meeting Mabel Dodge, too. And also this trip, I am supposed to meet A'Lelia Walker. Last time, she sent two books for me to autograph for her, but I didn't get to see her."

Now so I knew this book existed, that he had signed the books. But I had never-- I didn't have it in the things that my grandfather had saved. And then, about a year ago in Indianapolis, where I grew up, the grandson of the founder of Stuart's Moving Company-- moving and storage company, where my grandfather had not paid the storage bill, and so lots of stuff was still in storage that I thought maybe thrown out or given away-- the grandson of Stuart's Moving Company said I have a box of things for you that I think you might be interested in. And that book was in that box.

So that just reminds me of one other story, where somebody contacted me on the internet. And they said, I sort of researched these pictures, and I think you might be interested in them.

And they were photographs-- A'Lelia Walker, of my grandmother, of my uncle, that were taken in the 1920s that had been apparently in a chest of drawers that was in a storage unit somewhere in Indianapolis. And the person contacted me, and I got them.

So these things, our family things, are all over the place. To just sort of finish what I'm going to say before we go to questions, our stories are so important. Our stories are scattered. There are amazing collections, as all of you know, both in historically black institutions and predominantly white institutions.

One of the things that I love about the Schlesinger Library is that there's always been a consciousness of having a wide range of things. Charlotte Hawkins Brown's papers are here. Patricia Williams's papers are here now. Angela Davis's papers are here. But that's just sort of the tip of the iceberg.

And we will talk more about how you make the decision of where you put your papers. But the most important thing, and the reason that I'm an evangelist, is that we must save our papers. And we must encourage our family members to do so.

OK, so there's so much that we could talk about. And this is kind of a little bit unfair to ask you to have a solution. Garrett touched upon it a little bit. But thoughts about what you think, what kind of partnerships you think would work, how can the experiences that we've had working in a wide range of collections inform some of the conversation today?

- Well, one of the things that I mentioned that was part of my experience as a donor and actually as a scholar is processing. I wonder about processing partnerships, lending personnel for that purpose, because that takes highly trained people such as yourselves to do it. And so on my list I have, in addition to digitization, which I think people are already talking about, processing these collections is absolutely central to making them accessible and even ready to be digitized so you know what you're digitizing.

- Sally?

- Yeah, I would agree with processing and digitizing, as Garrett also mentioned. Also I think Garrett mentioned kind of funding for cross visits across collections and institutions for students to work-- students from HBCUs to be given assignments that would require them to go to PWIs and do research and to give white students at major well-resourced institutions assignments that would require them to go to a Spelman or a Howard to do research, so that there's that kind of awareness of what each of these kinds of archives hold. And I think that kind of funding would be an important partnership.

And I also like what Garrett talked about in terms of hosting conversations. I've done research in libraries, too, where there was a moment at the end of the week or something like that where I had to give a talk about what I was researching. And I've always found the archivists and library staff to be very engaged in those kinds of presentations.

I found it also very helpful when students are invited to those presentations and can actually get-- sometimes for students it's revelatory what's actually available at their institution. And they don't even know what the libraries hold until they hear someone speaking about it and speaking about the research they've done. So I think those kinds of public programs that will have visiting scholars talking with faculty, staff, and students could be a rich area of partnership as well.

- Shoot, I ruined all my pragmatic solutions earlier. So now I have to think of new ones. I think just to pick up on this idea of processing-- if there are ways in which we can sort of, again, get a two for one and have graduate students who would want to work in collections that are not open, help in the processing of those. I think, in general, we just need to create more ways in which graduate students are doing archival work that's not just seeing archives that are already processed, but as I was fortunate enough to do, actually being engaged in the process of seeing how a finding aid is created or in terms of how things are cataloged. I think everyone benefits from those sort of partnerships.

Another thing that I was thinking about earlier just in terms of the human resource aspect that you spoke to of finding people who value it is-- and this is something maybe that faculty, in particular, can do-- is putting pressure on institutions that don't seem to have the political will to do what's right with papers or get them processed in a timely fashion. Just any ways in which we can mobilize when there doesn't seem to be a political will. Because I think it's just a shame when resource-rich institutions get papers and lack the will to do something with them and to make them publicly available.

- So before we go to questions, I'm just going to ask the panelists if there's anything they wanted to make-- any points they wanted to make. Because you know, when you make presentations, you forget, like, something really, really important that you're supposed to mention. So I'm looking at Susan Sutton, who is sitting there, from the Indiana Historical Society. And you know, one of the things that we're really grateful for is that the Madam Walker collection is at the Indiana Historical Society.

And there was a whole cultivation and romance of the 90-year-old secretary, Madam Walker's secretary, who agreed to give the papers in the 1980s. And that has really been a very good relationship, because the Lilly Endowment, the Lilly money can take care of those papers. But I think it has been something that has led the way at the Indiana Historical Society to be more cognizant of collecting papers and representing the story of people of color in Indiana.

Wilmer Moore, who was the longtime archivist, retired a couple of years ago. And there is now a position open. So if anybody in the room should talk to Susan, there is a position to do the African-American collections. But we're excited and remain excited. Because it is, I believe, the most popular, the most requested collection at the Indiana Historical Society.

So those papers really help tell the story. The other things are in my house. I will be donating them to the Schlesinger, and other things to the Schlesinger Library. But I've also donated

things to the National Museum of African-American History and Culture and loaned things to other institutions. So Susan, I just wanted to give a shout out to you.

- I'd like to give a shout out to Yolanda Cooper, who's the University Librarian at Emory, because I was working in the archives at Emory on the Alice Walker material. And the journals are actually embargoed until 2027, or after her death, whichever comes later. So Alice Walker had to write a special letter giving me permission to actually read the journals.

And those journals had not been processed in the way that everything else had been, because they're not available to scholars. So when they brought the cart out to me of journals, it was just a pile of notebooks. And they were in the same condition they were when they were taken from Alice Walker's home.

So the her partner at the time had actually tied ropes and ribbons around the journals to prevent prying eyes from looking at them, because these are personal journals. So when they rolled out the cart to me, they also brought some scissors and gave me the scissors. And I'm, like, nervously cutting the ribbon on these journals and opening them for the first time since they left her home.

And so it was clear to me right away that-- I mean, I opened a notebook that was from 1983. That was the first one I opened. So they needed to be placed in some kind of order. So I asked Alice Walker if she would give permission for the archivists to at least look at them enough to place them in chronological order, which would be helpful for me as I was reading them. And so she did, and the librarians did that.

And then I actually hired a graduate assistant to work with me. And because I teach at the University of Georgia, which is in Athens about an hour and a half away from Emory, I couldn't really get a UGA graduate assistant. Because I needed someone in Atlanta who could be there, looking through and reading and transcribing the journals alongside me. And a student at UGA, which UGA would have funded, would not have been available for that.

And so Lawrence Jackson, a faculty member at Emory University, helped me identify some Emory graduate students who might be able to serve as a graduate assistant for me. And I ended up working with a great graduate student, Nicole Moore. And I was for I was paying her out of my own pocket, because UGA wouldn't pay.

And I sort of ran out of money. And I told Nicole, OK, you can stop. I need to find some more funding to pay you. You know, so you can stop for now, and I'll let you know when I'm ready to rehire you.

And she said, I'm not going to stop! I need to see what Alice is doing today. You know, so she refused to stop and kept working through that.

And then Yolanda Cooper, the university librarian, we were having lunch one day, and I mentioned this to her. And she actually created an Alice Walker scholarship, essentially, to pay my graduate assistant to continue working with me. So that kind of leadership is what I mean in terms of taking the leadership and having a commitment to making sure that scholars can really do the work that they're there to do.

I mean, that was an extraordinarily generous gift for my student who could continue working with funding. And you know, that wouldn't have happened without an innovative leader in that position. So just a public shout out to you, Yolanda, for doing that. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Yes, that need-- [LAUGHTER]

[APPLAUSE CONTINUES]

- I mean, just more generally, I have this word document of keeping track of all the archivists I need to thank in the book. And it's getting so long. And I'm so paranoid that I'm going to miss someone. Like, more so than-- I mean, I have mentors who have been so fabulous to me. But I'm more paranoid that I'm going to forget some archivists, because just the length.

And I know these requests that I send are so crazy, where I'm, like, I think this folder-- I just think there's something in there. I know it says this other thing. But I'm pretty sure there's something in there. Like, can you just take a peek? I know this is really-- and so many people are willing to do that.

And I'm so grateful for that. So if anyone in this room that I forget, I hope not. But I'm thanking you now.

- That is a source of fear for me, too. I just wanted to acknowledge something we've talked about as a panel, but we haven't explicitly addressed. Which is our role as teachers-- all of us are faculty members and are teaching.

And as far as developing partnerships is concerned, I think these ideas about involving graduate students are fabulous. And also involving undergraduates and undergraduate research-- as a frequent teacher of undergraduates, I'm at a PWI. But I have snuck black history into the lives of history majors who were required to take a research capstone course with me. And they show up at the library, and this is what we show them.

They are an immense resource. And so I will say that at the University of Kentucky, my colleagues in the library have gone out of their way to seek pedagogical opportunities for introducing the archives. And so getting to us, to faculty members as teachers as well as researchers, could possibly bear fruit. I haven't articulated how it might, in my mind. But I think there's a lot of possibility there.

[APPLAUSE]

So for our panelists. I think we're all eager to take questions. So please line up. Great. I see somebody coming. And I would love it if you would say your name and your institution.

- Good afternoon. My name is Kari Smith and I'm the institute archivist over at MIT down the road. One of the things that I always struggle with is talking to people who have collections or who have connections to collections that keep them at home, keep them wherever they are, either because of distrust or because they just don't know where else to put them. But another part is historians that have gathered things along the way that keep them because they want to write about them themselves, which is sort of antithetical to what the archives does, which is to make them available to everybody.

And so I always find this is sort of like-- like, the impetus is we want to keep, we want to save, we want to make sure it's there for the future. But if it's not accessible, then we're not really doing the service to the community, to everybody that we have. And so it's a hard conversation to have with people. And I find it hard to express-- probably I'm not doing a good job right now-- of what the quandary is like in my brain and trying to think about it.

But the ideas around sort of using collections and then sharing your research-- I was engaged for a long time with a group of people who-- they didn't really want to share their research. Because they didn't want anyone else to know what they had found, because they didn't want to be scooped in certain domains, in certain fields. And so there's just kind of all this stuff kind of wrapped up in my head.

And in this idea of the more complete record, how is that record available to people if it's kept in everybody's individual homes, or if it's kept in every individual places? At least surely somewhere is better than-- that has access or can give access is better than keeping it ourselves. Maybe that's in 50 years. It doesn't have to be right away, but just expressing that.

And as scholars, I'm trying to think about when you're looking for that information, you think there's something there. Where is it? You know? How do you deal with that when it might just be in people's individual homes or collections and not in those archives yet? How do you talk to people who have them themselves to try and suggest that better access, broader access helps to make the complete record and really helps to tell the stories?

- So I'm not as enlightened as Valerie. I can't part with my stuff quite yet. But there's something I'm working on now. When it's finished, I am. But people can give portions of their collections, as you know.

But you know, one of the examples might be Patricia Williams's papers that have been given to Radcliffe. But she's actually-- I think she's a fellow this year. So she's a fellow and able to organize and go through the papers while she's here. So that's one model.

But yeah, there are some people-- I have this sort of mission where I'm trying to-- I have a subset of people whose papers-- obviously, Kenji, you know, because I bug Kenji about this all the time, [LAUGHS] whose papers, I think, who need to donate their papers wherever they go. And there are people who think papers? Who cares what I have to say? But you know. sometimes it's just a cultivation and a convincing.

- Yeah, and I would add-- like, for me, your question gets at exactly why I decided to go ahead and place my papers in an archive. Because yeah, they're vulnerable in our homes. And I know that some of the research I've done on Hurston, particularly, will be of value to future Hurston scholars. And I wanted the material to be accessible.

And part of that, for me, was because of the example of Robert Hemenway, Hurston's previous biographer. His biography of her was published in 1977. When I was doing my early research on my Hurston biography in the late '90s, obviously-- I mean, Hurston lived from 1891 to 1960. So most of the people who had known her as a peer were no longer with us.

And Hemenway had interviewed all of these people in the '70s when he was doing his research. And so I mean, first of all, Hemenway sort of inspired me to even pursue a biography of Zora Neale Hurston. Because I heard him talk at the Hurston festival in Eatonville, Florida. And this was in 1994, I think.

And in that talk, he critiqued his own book and pointed out things he felt he had missed because he was a man writing about a woman, because he was a white American writing about an African-American. And he said, it's time for a new biography to be written, and it needs to be written by a black woman. And I felt this kind of, you know, inner calling slash panic. Like, oh, that might be me.

And so when I approached him a couple of years later and said, I'm going to be the black woman to take up that challenge, he invited me to visit him at the University of Kansas where he was then chancellor. And when I got there, his assistant said, those are the Zora file cabinets. There's a copy machine. See you later.

So he gave me access to all of the material he had collected over the years-- transcriptions of interviews, audio tapes of interviews with people like Richard Bruce Nugent who had been Hurston's roommate in the early days of the Harlem Renaissance, amazing material that was just no longer available to me because these people weren't here. A two hour interview with Zora's first husband, Herbert Sheen-- that kind of material that so enriched my book. So because of that example of extraordinary scholarly generosity, I felt like I needed to pass that forward and make my material available to future scholars, too.

And one thing that helps with that is the fact that-- like you were mentioning, Patricia-- I can actually go to Emory and access my own files. You know, people contact me. The Hurston family contacts me sometimes about family tree issues, because I know their family tree better than I know my own.

And I have to consult my files, but they're 20 minutes from my house. And I can go to Emory and access the material myself. So that was also an important factor in making the decision to place my papers there.

- Anastasia or--

- I mean, just-- I think, really quickly, one-- just to say again how incredible it is when scholars, if they're finished with a project, I mean I've used Taylor Branch's materials that he used for *Parting the Waters*. And especially with-- I deal a lot with FOIA requests and state files. And the '90s are different than today, and there's some things that people got in the '90s that I've been trying to request on my own.

And even just something like who redacted what in 1995 versus now. So you can get these things like an FBI file from someone who was researching in the 1990s that they just don't redact things that they probably should have. And I'm so grateful for the scholars who wind up putting those papers. And I guess the other thing I'll say is, just on a smaller scale, I think that scholars just being-- those are kind of the big gestures.

But the small gestures of just sharing with scholars-- there's so many times when scholars have asked me for something, or I've asked them. And they've shared things. I mean, Eula Taylor, I want to shout her out. Because she's been working on the Nation of Islam for years, and she's been so generous with me. And I sent her stuff that I thought, I don't know what I'm going to do with this. But this would be great in your book. And I just think those kind of little interactions are more important, even, than the big gesture of kind of donating your papers somewhere.

- Anastasia?

- I'll just say very quickly that I have thought about-- the work I'm doing on Shirley Chisholm, she doesn't have a single archive. She's got a little bit here, a little bit there. So yeah, I've pulled it together.

I guess sometimes that we think, as historians, oh, well, what we do isn't important archivally. And I've actually scolded some of my colleagues when they've said, oh, I'm cleaning out my office. I'm throwing so much out. I'm, like, how can you do that? We're historians. So I guess it sort of takes somebody asking, too. And say, hey, have you thought about donating that?

- So I think just-- I see Kenvi is the last person in line. I think, if we take the four questions and answer them, then we will be right-- no, no, no, no. I want you to stay there. Don't go away. I'm just sort of doing the cut off now and giving people warning. All right, please.

- So first thing is I want to thank you all for your presentations. The second thing is my name is Sony Prosper, and I'm currently a master's student in library information science at Simmons College. So question begins with-- that last question.

So the title of this workshop is A More Complete Record, The Case for Archival Partnerships. So with that title in mind, what are your thoughts on the workshop structure? And when I say your, I'm not just referring to the panelists, I'm referring to everyone here.

Because when I first heard about this workshop and I saw the speakers list, as an information professional, the first thing I saw was the absence of archivists on stage. So I was just wondering where your thoughts are on that.

- Well, I don't know. Beverly is an archivist. And I think there are archivists who are here and who are in conversation. And this morning, there was a workshop with archivists. So I don't want to be defensive about it. But there are plenty of people here who are archivists, and I hope are in conversation with each other and will challenge us. This panel is essentially, we love archivists, because we know you're here.

- I understood our job to be to report as people who explicitly work as scholars in the archives. So that we're not trained as archivists, but we're coming from that perspective.

- Tomorrow-- tomorrow more archivists.

[LAUGHTER]

- I'm so sorry. I was seated, so you didn't get to count me. So I'm going to try to be quick. I apologize.

- That's all right. I saw you.

- My name is Athena Jackson. And I work at Penn State. And I serve on the advisory board for this conference, so I can underscore that the goal for this particular panel was to have a look into what we're doing while we're looking out at whom we're doing it for. So thank you so much. And I hope that helps a little bit, answer your question? Good.

I wanted to speak, Garrett, to you about two things you said. As a head of special collections myself with a large staff of professional archivists, of professional librarians, and I don't want to create that schism, but it sometimes exists. I'm kind of agnostic about the formats, myself, because I want to be. Because my own background, my personal story, can't be told without dance. You know, I'm from southern Mexico. And we don't have a lot of paper for our history.

So anyway when you mentioned that you had called the archivist or e-mailed or maybe used your [? Aon ?] account and said, hey, could you look at that folder one more time? I know it says this, but it might have this in there. And what I want to convey to you is that I love having graduate students work in special collections. I think it's so powerful.

I think having them with us makes us more important to the integrity of the intellectual mission. I also really do believe in the professionalization of the archival field. And I think

there's a lot that goes into that decision for that label on that folder. That even if it's ambiguous to you, there was a lot of structure behind that. That if we yielded some of that to people who may still be learning about research, we may even be more perplexed to find that for you.

So my goal is, when I bring a graduate student into our archives, I want them to bring their sort of context and passionate energy behind their research agenda. So I tend to have them look at ways to dismantle a very homogeneous descriptive record-- the way we describe, and the languages we used to redescribe were derived decades ago when people like me who didn't have a decision about how they're going to choose to use phrases like illegal alien or things like that. So I want them to go in there and drill and re-help us think about how we're describing our collections and help us build and buttress our profession. So I don't want to discount having graduates in our archives. But that's really, really important to me is the power in professional work behind archivists, particularly as we diversify our field, as much as I want to.

And now I have a question to Valerie. I apologize. I'm going so-- but I wanted to just say, you mentioned how you communicate with your peer group about repositories that would be ideal for your collections to interact with each other and engage. And I wonder, now we're thinking about radical technology and kind of diffusing the physical and opening the doors, do you feel like someday maybe your successors will talk about-- well, they're going to talk to each other everywhere. Because there's going to be capacity, because this is all born digital, or much of it is.

Now I am a rare books person. So I still-- I am one of those people that loves the book and the artifact. And I'm sure many of you do, too.

But I'm curious if you feel like that's going to be the next dialogue. It's not necessarily going to be the institution. But I really feel like the power is going to be in the institutional partnerships that we're trying to talk about today. I wondered if you could speak a little about that. Thank you so much.

- Yeah, I absolutely agree. I mean, part of what I placed at Emory were two old Mac computers. I don't know what's on those computers. I trusted them to take those computers and access that material and place it as part of their archives.

And the whole digitization is very exciting. I mean, obviously, I mean, Angela Davis's collection here will be in conversation with Alice Walker's collection at Emory. So we're no longer limited by those kinds of distances. So I definitely think that's key.

And like Anastasia said, I also kind of talk people through various possibilities. Like, well, there's the LGBTQ Collection at the Schomburg that you might consider. But then there's also this collection at Emory that you might consider. So it's a more nuanced conversation, where we're talking about where their papers might be at home. But you're right-- the whole technology piece makes physical location less important than it might have been in the past.

I also am curious, like, one thing I want to talk with you all about-- and maybe we can do this draw on Archivists' Day, one thing I'm curious about is-- first of all, I was amazed that they could just take my old PC and take disks from things like Magnavox Sky Writers that no longer exist and access that material. But I'm also curious about the future of archives in such a digital age.

So I have said publicly that I think the next frontier, and you all probably know way more about this than me, but the next frontier is that there's going to be, like, probably in the next three to five years, some kind of precedent-setting lawsuit where a researcher sues AT&T for access to someone's text messages. Because that is the equivalent of letters that Langston Hughes and Zora Neale Hurston were exchanging in the 1930s.

So if I were doing a biography of Whitney Houston, I would want her email exchange with Bobbi Kristina, her text exchange. And it seems to me like that's got to happen really soon. There's going to be a precedent-setting case where that happens.

And those kinds of digital, born-digital materials are part of the archive. So I'll save that question for you all tomorrow, and you can answer what that frontier is. But the digitization is key, yes. And it eliminates the physical barriers. So thanks for that question.

- I wondered if you could--

- Identify yourself.

- Sorry, thank you. I'm Cecily Marcus. I'm from Umbra Search African-American History and the University of Minnesota. You mentioned, Dr. Curwood, that there is no one archive for Shirley Chisholm, that you've pulled together pieces.

And I think that, if we as curators and archivists followed the bibliographies of all of your scholarly works, we would be able to step forward into connecting our collections with others as well. But I wondered if you have thoughts about how, perhaps it's with in collaboration with scholars or with our sister institutions, but how do we do better to collect those collections together that are speaking across each other, to each other, even when they're not at the same institution?

- That's a great question. I guess it's been happening through word of mouth. So it's talking to the researchers as we show up. And where we've been, and maybe collecting some of that information-- where have you researched this topic elsewhere?

I can't help but think about the old-fashioned bibliographies that people used to prepare. And actually there is-- there's an old bibliography about Shirley Chisholm. It doesn't-- it's not up to date. But people used to do that.

And I don't know-- I mean, I could get no credit as a scholar for doing such a thing. I mean, it wouldn't work for a tenure book. It wouldn't work for a promotion to full book. So I don't know.

If people aren't getting rewarded for that kind of work, it's frankly a labor of love. But to create some sort of incentive for people to make those connections-- that would seem to be where I would go.

- I mean, it does seem to me the parallel is the public syllabi, the sort of collaborative syllabi that people have been doing. I did one on prison abolition. There's Ferguson and Charleston. And those tend to be secondary source driven, but we certainly included primary sources. So I think if scholars wanted to take up, or archivists as well, take up public syllabi that point to themes or people in particular that are primary source driven.

This might be a small thing, but the other thing that I know a lot of archives do is-- Schlesinger does this. If you say, look at June Jordan, it will say, you might also be interested in these other-- but I mean, they never point you to another archive, right?

[LAUGHTER]

So it's, like, our other collections you might want. I mean, so another thing could just be connecting people to other-- if you like Shirley Chisholm here, you also might be interested in Shirley Chisholm across the country. So I think that could be a very simple way just to kind of connect the archives.

- But Garrett, how much credit did you get for your syllabus, your digital syllabus in your home institutions?

- I mean, I guess it depends how you assign credit. I mean, I'm one year into-- I'm one year out of my degree.

- I'm just prodding on that point. Because we, as scholars, especially in the academy, which is in crisis, we have these bread and butter issues about keeping our jobs. And so that's a reason that some things are done and other things aren't-- can come to that.

- But I think that's part of the power of crowdsourcing these sort of things, right, is that I was in conversation with scholars about prison abolition. And we just decided, this is insane. Instead of us all instant messaging each other on Twitter, we should just put this out there in the world. And so I think it's something that can be done at the archival level as well.

- All right. And where did Kenvi go? Did she sneak away? Oh, OK, good. I just didn't see you.

[LAUGHTER]

- OK.

- So my name's Aaron Rubenstein. I'm an archivist at the University of Massachusetts-Amherst. And I just want to thank you for what's been a really fascinating panel so far. My question, I

guess, is really for Dr. Curwood and Dr. Boyd. Having to do with the nature of both donating archival collections and managing family legacies and providing sort of advice and guidance to others who are interested in donating.

We've heard a lot about the benefit of donating to a very well-established archives, and an institution with a large staff, and the ability to sort of turn around archival processing very quickly. And being an archivist in a major research library, that's one of our major selling points is being able to offer those kind of services. But I wonder if, as part of your deliberations, you sort of consider the potential nature of the transformative aspect of donating a high profile collection to a developing archives or a small archives. And how often those types of collections can actually help build up infrastructure to build staff and to bring notoriety to an institution that might not quite have the resources at that point to build on that kind of thing. So thank you.

- The answer is yes.

[LAUGHTER]

- That is certainly part of the consideration and the conversation that I think we would have with someone who was thinking about doing that. And also, I think the idea of a donor requesting a partnership. You know, saying, well, I'm going to place my papers at this historically black institution. And I know this PWI across town has resources that could help with this.

So actually requesting some kind of partnership in the processing period or something like that. Randall. I think Alice Walker requested some kind of involvement of Spelman when she placed her papers at Emory?

- But it didn't happen.

- But it didn't happen, Beverly said-- yeah, promises, promises. But I mean, as an instance like that, where someone decided to place their papers, but wanted to make sure that there was involvement from other institutions. I mean, I think people who are in a position to place their papers somewhere may have the power to request, as Alice Walker did, to request a collaboration that would make them more comfortable with their decision. So those kinds of conversations are part of my deliberations as well as my interactions with others when I'm advising them on what to do with their work.

There is a collection that has been at a small historically black institution for four years and has not been processed. And the people who gave that collection came to me and said, what do you think we should do? And I advised them to get it out and move it and place it somewhere where it would be processed. But to try to have some kind of relationship with the current institution so that it's not just taken away from them, but that they can be involved with that

process at an institution that's better resourced to deal with the collection. Because it might as well be in her basement if it's in a collection and not accessible.

- Anastasia, anything?

- Um, no.

- OK. So I would take a stab at this. Just that there are so many places where there are such rich holdings, and they're just not accessible. I mean, it's not that Fisk or Morgan State or Tuskegee-- I mean, they could get new collections. But there are things that are there that aren't processed or that there's not staff who can make it accessible or there's not somebody who can make the copies.

And then there's the issue of future acquisitions. And I sort of say this as somebody who was admitted to the class of '74, which was the first class admitted after, recruited after Martin Luther King's assassination-- and what that cohort means from then and going forward. That all of the people, people of color who have collections, who've done amazing things across the spectrum professionally and community organizing, and other things that people have papers-- we are approaching an amazing moment of possible acquisitions, where those papers are going to go. And they will go to a variety of institutions.

But maybe there is a model that says instead of asking an institution for money to buy your papers, you give money to process the papers. Or there are consortiums of collaborations so that these institutions have money to process the papers so that there is a catch up. I mean, even the Schlesinger Library had a backlog. And there were resources that were put into that so that they could be caught up. And that's a really long process and it takes a lot of commitment to it. But I think that's what we're trying to talk about during these two days. Kenvi?

- I'm Kenvi Phillips. I'm from the Schlesinger Library. And had a lot of things, but we are over time. So I'm going to say briefly, thank you, A'Lelia. It's not bugging me. I really appreciate the relationship that we have with scholars in helping to bring in new collections and new donations and bringing different relationships to the library.

There was a point that was made as I was standing and someone's come behind me that libraries and their finding aides often refer researchers to other institutions all the time, including the Schlesinger. Maybe that was the collection you were looking at, Garrett, I'm not sure. But we often are in conversation with one another.

And that was the one point that I wanted to make. And I'll save everything else for tomorrow is that-- today, being one of the public portions of the workshop does not highlight archivists on the stage. But it is in part to get a conversation started so that we can have partnerships to make things more accessible. And this is simply a beginning. So we don't want archivists to feel slighted, especially those archivists who are in the audience. So that's it.

- All right. So I would just thank our panelists. Thank all of you for your great questions. But the afternoon is not done. We're going to hear from Julieanna Richardson. Marilyn, do you want to do a transition for us?

- I am [INAUDIBLE].

- Excellent.

[APPLAUSE]

- Oh, let's just talk. And then, we'll all leave together.

- I'm Marilyn Dunn from Schlesinger Library. And before I introduce Julieanna to wrap up, I'd like to thank some people. Jane very kindly thanked lots of people today. But we should acknowledge Radcliffe Institute for providing us the opportunity to do this conference.

And I particularly wanted to thank the events management people-- Wendy Froehlich, Justin Gillis, Alex Schmidt-- they do wonderful work every day. And I'm very grateful for their dedication and the work that helped put this workshop together today. Our communications department helped to publicize it. And I'm sure there are lots of other people that I should be remembering right now. And I'll remember you at 6:30 or something.

So our final session today is going to be with Julieanna Richardson, who I was introduced to by A'Lelia Bundles. And I want to thank you for that introduction. Julieanna is the founder and executive director of an online resource that I'm sure many of you are familiar with-- HistoryMakers.

This national treasure is a collection of nearly 3,000 digital video interviews, some of them almost three hours or more long, with prominent African-Americans. They preserve and provide access to the history, life, and contribution of African-American men and women. This is a resource that belongs in every library.

Julieanna has a background in theater, television production, and cable TV industries. She is a graduate of Brandeis University and Harvard Law School. She's dedicated to extending the record of African-American history in paper and in digital form. I'm really happy to introduce her today, because she is a very large part of the inspiration for this event. Julieanna Richardson.

[APPLAUSE]

- Thank you, Marilyn. This has been just a wonderful day. And just before the last panel, I went over to Marilyn, and I said, Marilyn-- oh, you don't need to worry about it-- I said, Marilyn, just look at this room.

Because it's one thing to have an idea. It's another to act on the idea. And the turnout here is amazing. And the conversation has been even much better.

And I'm supposed to lead the Q&A session. But there's not a lot of time. But hopefully we can do that and we can at least maybe get some other questions on the table. I do want to thank A'Lelia Bundles, because it was A'Lelia who was at-- where is A'Lelia? She was-- A'Lelia was-- she's modest. But she also should get her damn papers here in these archives. There, excuse me. You can? OK, yeah, soon.

OK. But she was chair of the National Archives. And it was then that I started to talk to her. Because we had at the HistoryMakers-- and there are two of our Fellows here-- Scott [? Ahern ?] and Crystal [? Apia, ?] and now we have Johann Sinclair.

But we had been-- back in about 2008, we had been the recipient of an IMLS grant to train African-American archivists. Now we were an unlikely place, since we're an archives that has grown outside the Academy, almost to my dismay in some respects. But someone asked me earlier was that a blessing or a curse?

I can tell you that we've raised \$17 million. Our collection is 10,000 hours strong. We're the largest attempt to record the black experience since the WPA Slave Narratives. I could also tell you that of the 3,000 people that we've interviewed, probably 90% of them probably don't even know what archives are, even though they're in a archive.

The other thing I would say is that most of them have not or will not write or have written their biography on them, or autobiography written by them. And somewhere along the way, I became very, very concerned. Because I started to ask people about what they were doing with their papers. And it was very concerning to me.

The other thing is we had this grant. And unfortunately, I had not visited the places where we were placing our Fellows until the third year of the grant. And so this is what I found.

I've been in conversation with Fisk, Jessie Carney Smith, and I had been asking her, because of Betty Leonard, who had actually been part of the Schlesinger Archives and had been involved in the Oral History Project that the Schlesinger had done. You know, those oral history interviews were really groundbreaking. And so I have been told that there were interviews at Fisk of James Weldon Johnson and Countee Cullen.

And so every year, I was calling Dr. Smith, saying, you know, if you find them, I could help process them. And wouldn't that be great? And then when we have our fellowship. And when I went there, they had all walked from Fisk. They were no longer there.

The other thing I found was, when I went to Princeton, literally walking the stacks-- now they have Toni Morrison. They had nothing black in their collection, not one thing. And so when I read, when Craig did his book, *Ebony and Ivory*, it was not a surprise that Princeton was the

place where slaveholders sent their families. And what I was seeing was really the vestiges of their history there.

We had other places-- the Birmingham State Archives, the Maryland State Archives, Mamie Clayton Avery Research Center. And so my concern, because I started to ask the people we were interviewing about what they were doing with their papers, and I could not believe that lots of well-known people had no plans for their papers, no concern for their papers. Didn't even think that they had a legacy.

Now this does not include Nikki Giovanni, who I consider our poster child. Mainly because at age 28 of Boston University Archives, Howard Gottlieb had approached her. And she's been sending her collection to the Gottlieb Archives two and three times a year for 47 years. That's exceptional, exceptional.

But that didn't include people like Vernon Jordan and even Danny Glover and icon James Earl Jones-- all these people that we've interviewed for our collection. And it gave me concern, because I'm thinking, OK, this is sort of low hanging fruit.

I've gotten to know people in the archives. Here we are. I'm not going to do paper. That's not my interest. Well, I can play matchmaker. And that's where the rubber hit the road in some respects.

So this is the thing. 3,000-- 3,000 people we've interviewed-- I would say of that group, I know 20 that have made provision for their collection. Now maybe I'm mistaken, and maybe let's put it at 100. This represents significant, significant twentieth-century-- and to the extent that there is family history-- 19th century African-American history that's about to go by the wayside.

And so what I say is that we are in a crisis of untold proportions. The conversations that we have had as an advisory board leading up to this have been profound in many, many ways. And today's conversations have been profound. Even of the beginning panel today about our leadership institute, because I recognize, though I won't say that I was an advocate of that, the morning panel. But today, I was thinking how brilliant to have that presentation this morning.

Because we actually have to look at the leadership, both in the HBCUs or the minority-serving institutions and the majority-serving institutions. And it has led me to many discussions or thoughts about value. What is the value quotient in a world that even as we speak today, minorities and their value to society is being questioned?

And so unless we can answer these questions, it will be complicated. And I want to tell you that-- I want to share with you some of the things that I have learned along the way. And I want to acknowledge the Schomburg Library, because it was at the Schomburg Library that, as a young sophomore at Brandeis University, that I found my history and my sense of identity. And it was profoundly impactful-- so impactful that I would ditch my Harvard Law School degree to come and reside among people who chose archives as their profession.

I beg you, as archivists, not to be an insular group. I beg you. Because as I stand here and speak to you, I can tell you that my board leadership for our 18 years of existence has asked me to get rid of the term archives. And I keep ignoring them. But that was the subject of even the last board meeting that I had.

I also say that until we start talking to the larger community-- and even today, I was thinking if I could just have my HistoryMakers here-- you know, this would have been a profoundly impactful time for them and for us and for our society and larger community. So I went to Yale. And I'm going to call some institutions out. But Yale has a profoundly wonderful collection as it comes to writers of the black experience.

They have James Walton Johnson. They share that with Fisk. They have Richard Wright. They have Arna Bontemps.

In fact, I thought that Yale would be a perfect partner with Fisk. And it was really-- Marilyn doesn't know. But when we were at that meeting at Yale and we were talking about the fellowship, I knew she was a kindred spirit because I was sitting there-- we're talking about the fellowship-- but I'm sitting there thinking, can we talk about a partnership with Fisk?

They were sort of clueless. And I really think, in many ways, it's how the collection came to them. The collection came because of Carl van Vechten. They really had no clue. And still, in some respects, minus the tenure of [INAUDIBLE] they don't in present day have really a sense of what they want to collect.

They weren't like you, Beverly, for you could very clearly articulate your collection and what you were looking for. I have had some embarrassing moments of recent, where I thought that, OK, this is low hanging fruit. You know, I could go to the collection. I can connect people.

One was with UCLA and the chairman of the board of Motown. The other was a recent situation I don't want to discuss. But the fact of the matter is that the only way this is going to be corrected is with partnerships. And that's a very, very, very complicated thing.

Why is it complicated? Because in the Academy, and I often-- you know, we've been licensing our digital archive into the Academy. And this was my first time back, really, operating in the Academy. And the Academy, I would have said, were our blue states in a sea of red. But then I start getting in, and I was finding that the blue states had a lot of red in them.

[LAUGHTER]

And so when I would ask them who they collected-- because I want to be respectful. I mean, I'm not going to say to the archives what you should collect. I'm asking what are you interested in collecting? Or what have you collected about the black experience?

And what did I find? I found for the most part they don't even know their African-American alumni, period. So I'm a graduate of Harvard Law School. With Marilyn's blessing, I approached the law school. And we decided this would be sort of a good thing.

You know, they have two black people in their collection-- William Hastie and Clyde Ferguson. Clyde Ferguson had been one of the professors there after Derrick Bell. And we had a very positive meeting. But we were talking about the early people as sort of doing some discussions, the early people that had formed the black experience at Harvard Law School.

And we found that two of them were at Moorland-Spingarn collection. So this is the thing-- and Lopez knows this, because Lopez-- we had talked about this anxiety and concern. So I had said to them in the meeting, you know, well, wouldn't it be a good idea if we could help process the collections?

Charles Hamilton Houston-- I don't know if it's processed, but Charles Hamilton Houston-- who was the founder, was a graduate of Harvard Law School, but was a founder of Howard Law School. Wouldn't that be a great thing? Well, what came back was that they were going to ask Howard Law School to deaccession those collections.

Now I said, oh, no, no, no, no, no, no. I did not say that. And frankly, think about this, guys. When Charles Hamilton Houston was coming along, it was only Howard that thought him important. He wasn't even on your radar screen.

So these issues of one knowledge of what has value, what doesn't have value, in a world that is terribly expensive. Archives are expensive. Special collections are often-- it doesn't matter where they are-- special collections often are the stepchild of the library. And so in the discussions that we are going to have, I'm hoping that we will deal with some of these fundamental issues that go beyond or let's say, inform issues of trust and ownership and accessibility.

With that said, I want to say also that our organization, which was formed outside of the Academy-- and it wasn't purposefully done that. I couldn't find any college or university that wanted to help take or house or project or take us on. But out of that, there's no way that our organization would be in existence if there were not three partnerships that I'd like to point to. One is the Carnegie Mellon University. They have worked with us for 16 years, almost with no funding from us.

They have created our digital archive singlehandedly. No fanfare, no contracts, no agreement, no funding-- literally for 16 years-- now I was thinking about, what is the quid pro quo? They have been wanting for our collection, which they love as much as I love the collection, to get out and be accessible. I can't tell you why that happened. I can tell you, though, I approached them, and I asked them to adopt us.

The other is the Library of Congress, which we have a phenomenally amazing experience with. This was someone's suggestion, who came to me. And I was desperate in terms of how was I indexing, what I was going to do. How was I going to preserve it?

And he said, your collection belongs in the Library of Congress. Now It took us about three or four years to negotiate. At first, they wanted-- I thought they were going to take my tapes, because I needed a place for long term storage of my tapes. I digitized everything and that had saved them, they said, a million dollars when I delivered it.

But when it came to right before that process, what they did was they said, we don't want your tapes. We just want your digital. And I said, oh, no way! Where are these tapes going? They have no place to go. They have to come here.

So we have had a marvelous experience. And they are our long term repository. The other thing recently is the Center for Research Libraries is now going to be our exclusive licensing agent in licensing our digital archive in all academic libraries in the US and Canada.

But I say right now, and I'd like to open it up, oh, my God. We don't have much time. But I'd like to open it up for questions about we have a big problem here, a big problem. Maybe we don't call it a problem. Maybe we say, we have a big opportunity. Think about this, all of these brilliant minds in the room.

Some institutions, well-resourced, though even the well-resourced institutions are always crying money problems, and some, lesser resource. Some institutions that have diversity issues that we talked about earlier, a lot of diversity issues, that are not going to sort of go away. And others that have a great deal of diversity. They could sort of answer the diversity issue.

There is the issue also of giving back. And the question is even-- could it be possible, from the president's level-- could it be possible from the president's level of an institution-- that the archives become the answer to the diversity issue? Could that be possible?

In the meantime, do we have to, maybe, operate sort of under the radar screen? Because I talk about Carnegie-Mellon, the president-- that no one knew, really knew, any of what was going on. All of that's been sort of done under the radar screen.

If we can work to solve these issues, think how profoundly impactful it would be. And in the meantime, if we can educate, really educate people. Because archives still, to the public, seem old and dusty and not of much use. They don't really sort of understand what happens in these places or why it costs so much.

But if those questions can be answered in a way that is creative and impactful, what will the future or could be the future of this profession in a way that we're saving material while we're actually processing and making it accessible and diversifying the profession all at the same time? So with that said, do we have any? We don't have time? OK.

Does anyone have a question or a comment about what I've just said?

OK. OK. I want to thank everyone. I'll let Marilyn take it over now.

[APPLAUSE]

- Well, all that's left-- you know, the person I forgot was Nika Sremac. So I want to thank her. She's on the library's staff.

So that's it for today. And I want to thank you all for being with us. And some will be back tomorrow. Ken are you telling me I forgot something else? [LAUGHS]

OK. And so I want to thank Julieanna. She's left us with a lot to think about. And for those of us who'll be back tomorrow morning, I think we can carry those questions with us, and return sort of filled with energy to try to answer them at that time. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]