



**ORAL HISTORY  
ASSOCIATION**

NEWSLETTER

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## Montreal's Concordia University hosts fall OHA conference

In a departure from customary arrangements for convention hotels as the sites for fall OHA conferences, the 2018 gathering will be hosted by Concordia University in Montreal. The conference is Oct. 10-14 and features

the theme: Oral History in Our Challenging Times. Conference events will take place in various campus buildings.

Founded in 1974 through a linkage of Loyola College and Sir George Williams University, Concordia prides itself on making positive social contributions and has a rich resource for oral historians in its Centre for Oral History and Digital Storytelling, <http://storytelling.concordia.ca/>

OHA conference planners have arranged conference rates at seven area hotels, where blocks of rooms are set aside for varying combinations of dates. So check out your options here sooner rather than later <http://www.oralhistory.org/local-hotels-montreal-2018/>. The site also lists other nearby hotel options including several without OHA conference rates.

If your schedule permits, consider extending your stay in Montreal, which Lonely Planet <https://www.lonelyplanet.com/canada/montreal> calls the second-happiest place on Earth. You'll find a bilingual city where French and English are both welcome and an assortment of art galleries, museums and performing arts options as well as bicycle-friendly outdoor spaces.

Fun fact: Montreal is headquarters of the world renowned Cirque du Soleil.

Start here <http://www.oralhistory.org/annual-meeting/> for more details about the 2018 OHA conference.



President's Letter



Co-Executive Directors Report

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# Meet OHA's new first vice president

The OHA Council has named Council member Allison Tracy-Taylor, an independent oral historian and expert marksman, to fill the unexpired term of first vice president Curtis Austin, who resigned in March.

A Reno, Nevada, native who got her first taste of oral history as a student worker at the University of Nevada Oral History Program, Tracy-Taylor was in the first cohort of students in Columbia University's Oral History Master of Arts Program in 2008. But she credits OHA past president Mary Larson, for whom she worked in Nevada, as her "professional fairy godmother," who taught her the basics of oral history methodology and got her involved in interviewing for a project on the history of women's athletics at the university.

In addition to eventually working as coordinator of the UNOHP, Tracy-Taylor also worked for the Stanford Historical Society as its oral historian and for the Kentucky Historical Society as administrator of the Kentucky Oral History Commission before becoming an independent oral historian in Sacramento, California.

While in graduate school, Tracy-Taylor attended her first OHA meeting in Pittsburgh and since then has served on the Education Committee and on program committees for four annual meetings. She was elected to the OHA Council in 2015.

Tracy-Taylor said her involvement with the OHA "keeps me invigorated and excited about oral history."

For many people, she added, "to do oral history is to be transformed by it, and the opportunity OHA provides me to engage with others who are passionate about oral history has been phenomenal."

When she's not wearing her oral history hat, she has worked for nonprofit organizations serving victims and survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault. And you also might find her tackling a DIY project, like the décor for her wedding.



*Photo Credit: Jacqueline Photography*

# OHA election nominees outline views

OHA members will vote online this summer on first vice president, three new members to the OHA Council and three new members of the Nominating Committee. Here are the biographies and short personal statements of candidates for first vice president and OHA Council. The next newsletter will include biographical information and candidate statements for the Nominating Committee candidates.

## First Vice President

### Daniel Kerr

Daniel Kerr, associate professor of history at American University (AU), is the director of AU's Public History Program. His work focuses on the methods and ethics of doing collaborative, community-based historical research, especially with those living in extreme poverty. Kerr founded the Cleveland Homeless Oral History Project, directed the Shenandoah Valley Oral History Project, which interviewed working-class and marginalized people in the region, and founded the D.C. Homeless Voices Amplification Cooperative, which has interviewed people experiencing homelessness in the nation's capital.

Kerr has served on the OHA executive council, co-chaired the program committee for the 2017 annual meeting in Minneapolis, and chaired the executive search committee that culminated with MTSU serving as OHA's new institutional home. Kerr serves on the editorial board for *Oral History Review* and has won the OHA Article Award for his essay reflecting on the radical roots of oral history practice in the United States.

### Personal statement:

"In 1998 I attended my first OHA meeting in Buffalo, N.Y., where conference co-chairs, Cliff Kuhn and Debra Bernhardt, demonstrated a robust willingness to embrace creative risks by including me on the program and making me feel welcome as a newcomer. I realized that OHA was a place to push the boundaries of my practice in a community that was and still is committed to the values of inclusivity, democracy, equality and human dignity.



“I have had the opportunity to see the association undergo profound changes that have demonstrated its strength and vitality. This growth has helped deepen OHA’s commitment to its core values - the very values that drew me and continue to draw me as well as many others to the association.

“With our transition to our new executive office, OHA is well positioned to continue to evolve and expand our influence, given an expanding popular interest in storytelling. There are challenges, however, in this potential growth moment. OHA’s very existence depends upon the vitality of our conferences, the enormous contributions of effort and money from our members, and the association’s ability to address the needs of our diverse array of constituents from grassroots community activists to well-established, and not so well-heeled oral history centers and programs.

“I am honored to be nominated as OHA first vice president. If entrusted with the opportunity to serve in this capacity, I will address the future challenges OHA faces by reflecting upon the core values that hold us together. In dialogue with you and OHA’s other members, I will seek out solutions that deepen those values.”



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## Council, Position 1:

**Sarah Milligan**

Sarah Milligan heads the Oklahoma Oral History Research Program (OOHRP) at the Oklahoma State University Library, overseeing the production, access and preservation of the 1,000+ interviews in the

collection. She has worked extensively in oral history outreach, including providing training for new interview production as well as technical assistance to oral history collection holders throughout the country.

Milligan previously was the administrator for the Kentucky Oral History Commission, managing the KOHC's archive of more than 10,000 oral history recordings, a long-standing statewide oral history grants program and an extensive outreach network. She has worked for more than a decade in the public history and library/archives and is a member of the 2015 class of Harvard's Library Leadership in a Digital Age. Milligan has served on numerous OHA committees, including chairing the nominating committee, co-chairing the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary annual meeting and co-chairing the current committee to revise the longstanding OHA standards and best practices document.

### **Personal Statement**

“After over a decade of involvement with the Oral History Association, I am honored to be considered to serve on the OHA Council. I have benefited tremendously from the work of the OHA throughout my career in oral history and I am delighted for the opportunity to help move the organization forward.

“I have worked in the oral history field since 2005. I have continuously come back to the OHA as a training ground and networking provider for whatever challenges in oral history theory and methodology currently stand in front of me. I have a history of working with community historians, academics, students and educators, as well as a wide-variety of professionals who touch the oral history field through their own disciplinary use of oral history.

“I bring to this position a strong background in administration and organizational structure and an understanding of the critical need for stability and sustainability for continued growth of the OHA for another 50 years.”

### **Troy Reeves**

Troy Reeves has led the oral history program at the University of Wisconsin-Madison Archives since June 2017. From 1999-2006 he directed the Idaho Oral History Center in Boise. In both positions, Reeves oversaw key components of managing an oral history program—collecting and curating oral history recordings as well as communicating and collaborating with interested individuals about the art and craft of oral history.

In these positions, Reeves has managed nearly 20 oral history projects in Wisconsin and Idaho on myriad topics, including cultural, political and environmental history. Several historical journals, including the *Western Historical Quarterly*, the *Public Historian* and the *Oral History Review*, have published his oral history-related writings. Along with these projects and publications, he has held OHA leadership roles, including chairing the task force that created last year's membership survey and co-chairing the Best Practices/General Principles task force. And, he just finished a six-year term as the managing editor of the *OHR*.

### **Personal Statement**

“Since I joined the Oral History Association in 1999, I have tried to give as much to it as it has given me. Serving on several OHA committees and task forces has allowed me to learn about the organization and learn from those I have been privileged to serve with. Managing the day-to-day operations of the *OHR* over the last six years has increased my ability to problem-solve, to work with a diverse group of people and to meet deadlines. And, currently, having been given the opportunity to finish the last year of an OHA Council member's three-year term has offered me a valuable education in how OHA's executive leadership functions.

“If elected to my own council position, I will build upon all of this history and memory and continue to give back. I will do this by assisting the new host institution and executive office with their continued transition; by listening to those interested in oral history, particularly those from non-academic settings, to work with them to make OHA as useful to their projects and efforts as possible; by seeking to improve the annual meeting while building on its historic strengths; and by finding or continuing to offer ways to those who cannot attend the yearly gathering to build their knowledge of oral history in general and the OHA in particular.”



## Council, Position 2:

### Alexander Freund

Alexander Freund is director and co-founder of the Oral History Centre (OHC) and professor of history at the University of Winnipeg (Canada). His research focuses on the history of migrants and refugees in 20th-century North America. Since 2011, he has focused on training student and community researchers in oral history with the goal of enabling community groups to study their own history.

Freund is an advisory board member for Palgrave Studies in Oral History, the *Oral History Journal* and the *Oral History Forum d'histoire orale*. Previously, he served as co-editor of *Oral History Forum d'histoire orale*, co-president of the Canadian Oral History Association, and on the Council of the International Oral History Association. He also served as a member of the OHA International Committee and of the Book Award Committee.

### Personal Statement

“Looking back over the past quarter century, when I conducted my first oral history interview, oral history has always seemed to be at a crossroads. The OHA has provided much-needed stability, guidance and innovation at such junctions, helping oral historians to evaluate different paths open to them.

“At our Oral History Centre (OHC) and at our university, we have identified several current crossroads that oral historians and other



researchers may need to grapple with over the coming years. One is that of the so-called digital revolution, in particular the challenges of the Internet. How do we best navigate the Internet's potential for openness and democratization on the one hand and, on the other hand, the potential dangers of its increasing corporate control and political misuse?

“A second junction is that of dissemination and access. At the OHC, we have worked closely with educators and learners who have taught us that they need more guidance in accessing the increasing number of oral histories available online. A third critical crossroads is that of indigenization. Our university, where over one in 10 students are indigenous, has initiated a number of indigenization projects to support indigenous students and faculty, establishing indigenous-settler alliances and creating awareness of white settler colonialism and its legacies.

“As a member of the OHA Council, I would enjoy offering some of those experiences in the council's and the association's ongoing and future discussions.”

## **Jeff Corrigan**

Jeff D. Corrigan served as the oral historian for The State Historical Society of Missouri at the University of Missouri from 2008-2017. He oversaw all aspects of the oral history program, from research, interviewing, archival processing, digitization, and providing reference work within the collection. His primary collecting/research area was on the environment. In 2017, he became the science librarian at California State University Monterey Bay. He holds degrees from the University of Illinois, Eastern Illinois University, and the University of Missouri.

## **Personal Statement**

“This is my 10<sup>th</sup> year of being involved in OHA, and it would be my honor to serve as one of your council members. Throughout my time in OHA, I have served as the workshop chair for the annual meeting, taught several introductory workshops at the annual meetings, served on the Publications Committee, published several reviews in the *Oral History Review*, and most recently I just co-presented OHA's first webinar.

“Being involved in OHA was invaluable to me when I first started and was a one-person department within my organization. I never felt that I was alone and that I could reach out to a lot of different people within the

organization to bounce ideas off of, ask questions and collaborate with. OHA has always been welcoming to me, and as one of your council members I would like to help the organization continue to be welcoming to a wide constituency and help grow the OHA membership. Additionally, I would like to continue to help OHA develop additional webinars that would support a variety of individuals and institutions from different backgrounds and skillsets. Thank you for your consideration.”



## Council, Position 3

### Debbie Ardemendo

Debbie Ardemendo is the associate director of education at the Apollo Theater in New York City. She oversees the development of programming and resources for the classroom in a variety of ways, including school tours of the Apollo, performing arts workshops, school partnerships, oral history residencies and workshops for educators. The programs focus on the historic significance of the Apollo Theater in relation to Harlem, New York City and African-American history and connect classroom curricula with the arts. She is a member of New York City Arts in Education Roundtable and has been a part of the OHA Education Committee since 2012 and serving as chair from 2012-2014.

Her career in NYC cultural institutions included work at The Intrepid Sea, Air, and Space Museum and the Museum of the City of New York. At the Apollo, she has combined her two passions, New York City history and the performing arts.

Ardemendo received her Bachelor of Arts from Goddard College in Plainfield, Vermont, and her Master of Science in Education from Bank Street College for Education in New York City.

### **Personal Statement**

“As the associate director of education at the Apollo Theater, I work with students in grades 4th - 12th, providing them with strategies to collect oral histories and use the interviews to create art projects. I believe that oral history interviewing strategies are what make them well-rounded learners. We teach 4th graders, for example, how to ask open-ended questions and to listen which I know will provide them with important learning strategies to use throughout their education. If elected, my voice on the council will help attract different constituents, particularly when it comes to extending the work I do at the Apollo Theater and as part of the Education Committee.”

### **Gwendolyn Etter-Lewis**

Gwendolyn Etter-Lewis is professor of English, Black World Studies, Women's, Gender and Sexuality Studies at Miami University in Oxford, Ohio. She directs the linguistics program and teaches a variety of interdisciplinary courses. Etter-Lewis founded a college readiness program (Project REACH, now known as Dream Keepers) for underrepresented high school students in the greater Cincinnati area.

Etter-Lewis has conducted oral history research projects nationally and in Zambia, Zimbabwe, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Lesotho, Ghana, South Africa and Kenya. Her research resulted in numerous books and articles. Her current projects focus on African American centenarians and long-term care of African American, Hispanic and Russian elders in southern Ohio.

### **Personal Statement**

“As a long-time member of OHA, I have witnessed the extraordinary growth of the organization, and I am confident that this growth will continue on many levels. Of all the professional conferences that I attend, the OHA annual conference is the most exciting and productive. I think that the combination of academics, community organizers, activists, educators, practitioners and others make this a dynamic organization that has relevance

beyond the academy.

“My service to OHA has included working on the Diversity Committee to cultivate a more diverse membership, being a reviewer for the *Oral History Review* and serving as a mentor for new members.

“I wish to serve on the OHA Council because I bring a unique perspective shaped by my knowledge of the organization’s struggles and successes over the years, by my experience in international, national and community organizations and by the interdisciplinary nature of my teaching and research. One the most important things that I have learned is that the growth process is best achieved through consensus building and collaboration. I would like to see OHA work toward *sustainable* diversity in both membership and administration, expand its role in facilitating documentation of the histories of marginalized communities and further utilize technology such as digital media to open new and accessible spaces to practice and disseminate



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## Nominating Committee candidates

The slate of candidates for the Nominating Committee and their affiliations are:

### Position 1:

Anne Chao of Rice University  
Virginia Espino of UCLA

### Position 2:



Kate Scott of the U.S. Senate Historical Office  
Rachel Seidman of the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill

### Position 3:

Kelly Navies of the Smithsonian Institution  
Juan Coronado of Michigan State University

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## OHA committee updates



**Education Committee** Chair Erin Conlin reports that her committee is reviewing the Educator's Resource pages of the OHA website to make sure everything is in good working order. In the coming months, we are also hoping to post sample lesson plans to the Educator's Resources pages for educators to use or adapt in their own classroom and community projects.

If you have ideas or suggestions to contribute, reach Conlin at:  
[elconlin@iup.edu](mailto:elconlin@iup.edu)



**Membership Committee** Chair Sharon Utakis reports that her committee is examining the results of the 2017 OHA membership survey to suggest policies and procedures to OHA Council that may enable members to derive more value from their membership. The committee also has been asked by the OHA executive co-directors to consider restructuring membership dues, based on comparisons with other organizations. The co-directors suggested that the OHA has made some decisions that cost the organization more but that have not been reflected in dues. The members of the committee will do our best to work through these potentially contradictory requests.

You can reach Utakis at: [sharon.utakis@bcc.cuny.edu](mailto:sharon.utakis@bcc.cuny.edu)

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## Visit the OHA Member Site



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Mary Kay Quinlan, Editor*

**Our mailing address is:**

Box 193  
Middle Tennessee State University  
Murfreesboro, TN 37132

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# President's Letter

## **#MeToo and the OHA** **By Todd Moye**

OHA Council has been busy over the past few months addressing the issue of sexual harassment in the organization. I wish I could report that we began these discussions proactively, but in reality we were forced into this conversation.

In January a new member alleged that another OHA member whom she had specifically sought out as a mentor sexually harassed her at our annual meeting in Minneapolis by making repeated and unwanted sexual advances and followed this up with unwanted email contact. At that time, the OHA did not have sufficient policies and procedures in place that would have provided guidance for Council or the executive office in dealing with such allegations.

As a result of multiple conversations among the members of Council and the executive directors, we have now put in place policies and procedures to make it less likely that this kind of behavior occurs at our annual meetings in the future. The policies and procedures are grounded in the OHA's Statement on Diversity and Inclusivity (<http://www.oralhistory.org/about/oha-statement-on-diversity-and-inclusivity/>). They are fair to all parties involved, they express our core values, and they will enforce what I'm sure is our membership's shared zero tolerance for sexual harassment and other forms of disrespectful behavior.

When you register for the 2018 annual meeting and subsequent ones you will have to affirm that you support the statement and that you agree to a basic code of conduct. Moving forward, all representatives of the organization—officers, executive directors and staff, committee members, *OHR* editorial board members, etc.—will have to affirm the same.

It would be inappropriate for me to comment on the allegation that precipitated these discussions while we are still working to resolve it, so I will not, but I do want to make a few general points:

Members of the OHA, of all people, should be well aware of power imbalances, how those imbalances manifest themselves in human relationships and how power can be misused. They should behave accordingly, and for the overwhelming part, they have. But if you have any kind of power in the organization, whether through seniority, a place on a committee, a distinguished publication record or anything else, you have a responsibility to use that power in constructive ways. You have an added duty to the organization to treat those who are younger than you, who have less experience in the OHA, with respect and as much grace as you can muster.

If you think the code of behavior I've outlined above seems unreasonable or unattainable, we will be happy to refund your membership fee.

I am exceedingly grateful to the graduate student who reported her mistreatment. She showed great courage in doing so, and I hope the actions Council is taking are worthy of her bravery.

I also hope that if we have not completely eliminated the possibility of these kinds of mistreatment occurring again in the future, we have at least made it much easier for those who do experience or witness harassment or other forms of disrespectful behavior to report it to OHA and for OHA to deal with it decisively.

I also want members to know that if they have experienced similar instances of misbehavior at annual meetings or in other OHA-sanctioned settings in the past, we want to know about them so that we can address them head-on. We're listening.

We who serve on OHA Council, the Program Committee and the executive office want to provide a conference atmosphere that's intellectually stimulating and fun, but on a much more basic level, one in which every attendee feels safe and feels valued. That's exactly what we will do for our Montreal conference and beyond, and we will be stronger as an organization for having begun these discussions.

# Executive Co-Directors Report

By Kris McCusker and Louis Kyriakouides

The executive office's transition from Georgia State University to Middle Tennessee State University (MTSU), in practical terms, is almost complete. We've finished the transfer of monies, changed the addresses of the various accounts, have purchased much-needed insurance and have even found the coffee pot.

But the transition in terms of understanding how the executive office works throughout the year will continue as we learn how to handle our new responsibilities. Thanks to all for your patience with us as we do so.

Some highlights from the past two months include the Mid-Winter Council meeting held at MTSU. We spent March 1-3 meeting and planning in the Albert Gore Research Center with the Executive Council. We also did a "progressive dinner" around campus so the council could meet our partners, including the Center for Popular Music, the Center for Historic Preservation and the Department of History and Public History.

The meetings ended with a visit to the Country Music Hall of Fame to see Michael Gray, former journalist and currently CMHoF curator, conduct an oral interview with singer/songwriter Lori McKenna, best known for her song "Humble and Kind," a hit for country musician Tim McGraw.

The entire executive office, including Faith Bagley, program associate, Jordan Alexander, our doctoral student and Bethany Bork, our undergraduate intern, also judged the Tennessee State History Day competition in early April. We had a terrific, albeit very cold, day judging at the State Capital some of the fine work by budding historians. We will continue to judge History Day every year, both regionally and statewide and hope to develop some oral history awards for budding scholars nationally.

The office is busy once again, making sure the various scholarships are sent to the appropriate committee, that the award committees receive their charges and that the emerging crises grants committee can do its job. We're also working on getting election materials together and hope to have that complete by early summer.

In the meantime, send us your news, your job postings and more importantly, PHOTOS! As we create new OHA marketing materials, we want to use our members' own work (rightfully acknowledged, of course) in this promotional material.

As always, if you have any questions, please reach out to us at [oha@oralhistory.org](mailto:oha@oralhistory.org). We really like hearing from you.