



SUMMER 2023



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PRESIDENT'S LETTER



Widening the community of OHA service

By Tomás Summers Sandoval

This month we'll begin our election cycle as members elect a new OHA first vice president, who advances to president, and new representatives to the OHA Council, our

leadership body. The ballot also includes slates of candidates for new representatives to two of our many OHA committees—the Nominating Committee and Committee on Committees. But what are these two committees, and why do we elect members to them?

The OHA is an all-volunteer organization. From the scores of members who do the work of our 14 standing committees to the president, the OHA does what it does by drawing from the vision, talents and generosity of our members. And the work of making those connections is made better when we do all we can to widen the community of members (and potential members!) to fill our evolving service needs.

That's why we elect members to the Committee on Committees (CoC). Currently in its first year, the CoC is one of the big changes we made in our bylaws revisions in 2021. Before the CoC, the president and council appointed members to the OHA's committees for three-year terms of service. That worked well for us in the past, but with more than one thousand members stretched across the nation and globe, we have a growing pool of talented oral historians to draw from and a growing challenge to make sure we're nurturing leadership that reflects the OHA's deep diversity.

By electing the members of the CoC, we now have a dedicated committee to spend a greater amount of time nurturing the leadership pipeline by recruiting members to serve and connecting their skills and interests with the right committee. The CoC helps us do this work better and more efficiently, while ensuring we're doing more to bring up the next generation of leaders in the organization.

Letting members elect the people who do this work necessarily widens our reach because it multiplies the networks we use to identify potential committee members. That's also the reason we elect members to our Nominating Committee. This committee's only charge is to identify and recruit members to run for leadership positions in the OHA, that is, as representatives on council or on the ladder to president. It's been a long tradition in the OHA to put this important work in the hands of our members, so that they not only can vote for the next generation of OHA leaders but also for the people who help to pick them.

All in all, this year's election cycle is about *you*—the members of the Oral History Association. We hope you'll take the time to read about the members standing for election this year, and we hope you'll be one of them—or one of the many who serve on our committees—in the years to come.



DIRECTORS' COLUMN



OHA and emerging crises oral history

By Stephen Sloan

In the over 20 years since the September 11th tragedy, oral history work in the United States has witnessed a dramatic expansion in the number of projects dealing with crisis or disaster settings. Our annual Emerging Crises Oral History Research Award has been central in fostering and supporting such responsive and important efforts for most of that period. In 2005, the Oral History Association, acknowledging the increasing desire for new projects,

recognized the need for quick funding for researchers working in a disaster or crisis context. It was the first and remains the only OHA initiative that regularly funds oral history work.

At its creation, the OHA Council noted that the rise in oral historians' interest in crises projects had been met by an attendant and stifling challenge of lag time in grant funding. For crisis fieldwork, the interval between award decision and financing could make a valuable oral history project unfeasible. In her statement to the OHA Executive Council, then President Kim Rogers proposed the Emerging Crises Oral History Research Award as an "action scholarship fund that would support oral historians doing research in currently developing crisis areas." After a discussion of criteria, expectations and feasibility, the association established the initiative for an initial period up to three years, finances permitting.

The timing of the award's creation proved providential. The landfall and associated devastation of Hurricane Katrina just six months later sparked widespread interest in using oral history to document the human experience of the disaster. Out of a pool of eight proposals for the inaugural Emerging Crises Oral History Award in 2006, the top three projects identified by the selection committee dealt with some aspect of Hurricane Katrina's aftermath.

Folklorist Teresa Parker received the funds for her project, Floodwall, which incorporated oral histories into an ongoing art installation of objects found in the wake of the storm in New Orleans. Since 2006, subsequent awards have enabled oral history fieldwork around the world, including China, Columbia, Nicaragua, Mexico, Egypt, Cameroon, Thailand, Malaysia, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands and Italy. Along with varied settings, awards went to investigators in a wide variety of disciplines. You can see that full list [here](#).

What is also remarkable about this body of projects is the creativity and innovation with which researchers have framed their efforts, providing their own responses to the challenging question, "what are crises?" In designing the original funding initiative, the selection committee defined crises as situations that "include but are not limited to wars, natural disasters, political and/or economic/ethnic repression, or other currently emerging events of crisis proportions." One would expect proposals to cluster around events that garnered wide international attention through the past few decades. While proposals dealing with high profile topics are well represented, what is most prominent is the zeal of scholars to better understand the less generally known catastrophes or emergencies around the globe.

Our latest recipients of the Emerging Crises Oral History Research Fund, Ani Schug and Anoush Baghdassarian of Rerooted Archive, embody the continued need for this sort of support from our membership. Out of a competitive pool of 30 applications doing groundbreaking work on crises, this timely funding will help establish the first archive preserving stories of Armenian survivors of violence in Nagorno-Karabakh and Azerbaijan. These funds are already in the hands of researchers as they interview narrators who are at immediate risk amid increased calls for military action.

The Emerging Crises Oral History Fund is an initiative that we should be proud of as an association for the record of successful partners over its history and the readiness with which the effort is poised to empower responses to the crises to come.

Special thanks to members Xiaoyan Li, Erin Jessee, Christella Maldonado, and Chair Daisy Herrera for their service to the OHA and to their field by serving on the selection committee.

Three things you should do today:



- Register for the 2023 OHA annual meeting, set for Oct. 18-21 in historic Baltimore, Maryland. The conference hotel is the Hyatt Regency Baltimore Inner Harbor. Early-bird fees are available if you register by Aug. 15. All the information you need to plan your fall conference trip is available [here](#).
- Read the following information about candidates for OHA offices and committees. Candidates are listed in alphabetical order by last name.
- VOTE online by **August 24** for the candidates of your choice at this link: <https://oha.memberclicks.net/2023-election>

Introducing candidates for
FIRST VICE PRESIDENT
VOTE FOR ONE



Steve Estes, Sonoma State University

BIOGRAPHY Steve Estes, a native of North Carolina, grew up in Charleston, South Carolina. He received a B.A. in history and economics from Rice University in Houston, Texas, an M.A. in history at the University of Georgia and a Ph.D. in history at the University of North Carolina. Along the way, he was an interviewer for the Southern Oral History Program, a teacher in the Sunflower County Freedom Project, a researcher at the American Youth Policy Forum and guest curator at the GLBT Historical Society. Estes has conducted oral history interviews with approximately 500 individuals and has coordinated a variety of projects on topics including queer military service, the civil rights movement and southern surfing. He is the author and

of four scholarly books based on oral history research. A professor of history at Sonoma State University, Estes lives in San Francisco, California.

PERSONAL STATEMENT I am submitting my name as a candidate for first vice president of the Oral History Association because I am committed to maintaining and supporting the organization's important work of oral history advocacy, community engagement and education. I have been a member of the OHA since 1996 and have served in several capacities: conference award committees, meeting program committees and annual meeting co-chair. My work in the field has centered on using interviews to expand rights for various groups of marginalized people. At the risk of sounding idealistic, I believe life histories and oral history

analysis can make positive changes in society. The OHA has always guided the discipline as a force for good, and I will continue to support this mission if elected. Thank you for your consideration.

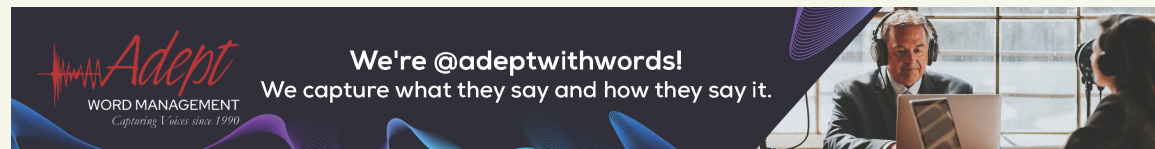


Sarah Milligan, Oklahoma State University

BIOGRAPHY Sarah Milligan heads the Oklahoma Oral History Research Program (OOHRP) at the Oklahoma State University Library, overseeing the production, access and preservation of the 2,000+ interviews in the collection. Since joining the field in 2005, she has worked extensively in oral history outreach, including training for new interview production as well as technical assistance to oral history collection holders nationally.

Before joining the OOHRP, Milligan was administrator of the Kentucky Oral History Commission, managing an archive of 10,000+ oral history recordings, a statewide oral history granting program and an extensive outreach network. She also was a folklife specialist for the Kentucky Folklife Program, producing and mentoring ethnographic fieldwork, and was on the administrative team for the Kentucky Folklife Festival. Milligan has expertise in archival preservation and access, serving as inaugural president for the Oklahoma Archivists Association among other roles. Milligan has served on numerous OHA committees, including co-chairing the 2018 task force to revise the longstanding OHA Principles and Best Practices and serving on the OHA Council (2018-2022).

PERSONAL STATEMENT During my career in oral history, I have been fortunate to not only benefit from the resources and community shared through the Oral History Association, but also gratified to help contribute to the growth and expanding inclusion of the organization. I love being part of a field where I am continuously challenged to grow outside of my own lived experience and worldview. My leadership roles within OHA in recent years provide me with insight into the current challenges and opportunities for this organization and the field more broadly. I look forward to listening to member priorities and needs and continuing to build collaborative and supportive spaces for advancing our collective field.



Introducing candidates for
OHA COUNCIL
VOTE FOR ONE





Benji de la Piedra, Independent Oral Historian

BIOGRAPHY Benji de la Piedra works on oral history projects and teaches oral history methods in a variety of settings, including the University of the District of Columbia, the University of Arkansas at Little Rock, the DC Oral History Collaborative and Marin (California) Academy. He is writing a biography of *Washington Post* journalist Herbert Denton Jr. and directs the Herbert Denton Biography Project at UDC. He is a visiting fellow at the Library of Congress John W. Kluge Center for Scholars, conducting independent scholarship on the worlds and work of Denton, Albert Murray and Ralph Ellison. He serves on the OHA

Diversity Committee, Equity Audit Task Force, Indigenous Caucus and co-chairs the 2023 OHA conference. He holds a Columbia University M.A. in oral history.

PERSONAL STATEMENT As an interdependent scholar, I consider the OHA my professional, intellectual and civic home. I believe deeply in the humanistic values that guide our work: curiosity, empathy, self-awareness, responsibility. As a council member I would advocate for wider public appreciation of these values' centrality to good oral history work. I am especially eager to continue reimagining the spaces that OHA provides for members to exchange and nourish each other's praxis. I would also draw on my experience as an Equity Audit Task Force member to listen to the experiences of our members and work with fellow council and committee members to catalyze more meaningful integration of our big and diverse tent. With professional networks in American literature, history, culture and education, I hope to inject some fresh and innovative energy into the direction of our organization and field.



Jajuan Johnson, College of William and Mary

BIOGRAPHY Jajuan Johnson, a scholar of Africana Studies, is the Mellon Foundation Postdoctoral Fellow with the Lemon Project: A Journey of Reconciliation at William and Mary. He is an interdisciplinary scholar whose research focuses on Black church history, racial violence, gender/sexuality and late 19th- and 20th-century African American history. Johnson's career in public history spans more than a decade at several institutions, including: the Starr Center for the Study of the American Experience at Washington College in Chestertown, Maryland; the Mosaic Templars Cultural Center in Little Rock, Arkansas; and the Butler Center for Arkansas Studies, a department of the Central

Arkansas Library System, also in Little Rock. He has made significant contributions to the field of oral history as a researcher and educator.

PERSONAL STATEMENT As a council member, I plan to extend our organization's commitment to equity. Collaborating and engaging with thinkers of diverse backgrounds is critical in our current social and political crises. As an academician and citizen-historian, I've demonstrated a commitment to amplifying the voices in marginalized communities.



Carlos Lopez, Arizona State Archives

BIOGRAPHY Carlos Lopez is the deputy state archivist and assistant administrator for records management at the Arizona State Archives in Phoenix. Lopez received his B.A. and M.A. at Baylor University, where he worked at the Baylor Institute for Oral History. He moved to Arizona in 2009 for the public history program at Arizona State University and began working at the state archives as an oral history intern in 2011. He was hired full time in 2016. Lopez has been the project leader of Capturing Arizona's Stories, partnering with libraries statewide to help them create community oral history projects. He also directs the Arizona

Legislative Oral History Project, coordinating interviews with past state lawmakers.

PERSONAL STATEMENT I am honored and humbled to be nominated for council and wish to serve to give back and improve the organization that has been key to my career development and to who I am as a person. My experience in OHA began in 2006 at the Little Rock conference, where I felt welcomed and encouraged. I have attended every conference from 2008-2019, have served on the Diversity, Program and Nominating committees and was co-chair of the 2019 Salt Lake City conference. OHA has allowed me to grow as an oral historian and as a person. I want to give back to OHA to the best of my abilities. I can offer the board my ability to work with a diverse group of people and to direct people towards the best way forward. OHA is moving in the right direction, especially regarding DEI. But we can always improve. I feel that I can help OHA continue to evolve and progress.



Francine D. Spang-Willis, Independent Oral Historian

BIOGRAPHY Francine D. Spang-Willis is of Cheyenne, Pawnee and settler descent. She is an oral historian, educator, strategist, researcher and content curator based in Bozeman, Montana. As the owner of Appearing Flying Woman Consulting, she collaborates with diverse organizations, communities and individuals to create and implement community-centered and multispecies oral history projects. Spang-Willis earned an M.A. in oral history from Columbia University. Her award-winning thesis, [Becoming Wild Again in America: The Restoration and Resurgence of the Pablo-Allard Bison Herd](#), is a website and three-part podcast. She also has an M.A.

in Native American Studies from Montana State University and a business management degree from Rocky Mountain College. She was an Obama Presidency Oral History project fellow from 2019 to 2020 and a supervisor of the editorial team from 2021 to 2022. She co-authored a multi-million-dollar proposal to establish the American Indian Tribal Histories Project (AITHP) at the Western Heritage Center museum in Billings, Montana, as a board member and was project director from 2003 to 2009. She has also served in diverse leadership roles in the nonprofit sector, higher education and the U.S. federal government.

PERSONAL STATEMENT I currently serve as the OHA's Diversity Committee co-chair, an elected member of the Nominating Committee and one of the founding members of the Indigenous Caucus. If elected to the council, I will continue to create and foster a diverse, inclusive and equitable OHA community. As a scholar and leader, I remain committed to centering and amplifying marginalized voices, including and extending beyond humans.

Introducing candidates for
NOMINATING COMMITTEE
VOTE FOR UP TO THREE





Tanya Finchum, Oklahoma State University

Tanya Finchum is a professor with the Oklahoma Oral History Research Program at Oklahoma State University. She joined the library faculty in 1999 and since 2006 has been part of the oral history initiative. She has been the leader on various projects and has conducted over 500 interviews. She also contributes to the production workflow and discoverability efforts. Her collaborative work has been recognized by

the Oral History Association, in 2017 with the Elizabeth B. Mason Large Project Award and in 2013 with the Elizabeth B. Mason Small Project Award. She is a 2017 Columbia Center for Oral History Summer Institute Fellow and holds a doctorate in family relations and child development with an emphasis in gerontology and a M.S. in library science.



Anna F. Kaplan, American University and Independent Oral Historian

Anna F. Kaplan is a lecturer at American University and a freelance oral historian in Washington, D.C. Her scholarship focuses on memory and community narrative-creation when negotiating race. A 2023-2024 Faculty Innovations in Pedagogy and Teaching Fellow with The HistoryMakers, Kaplan received a 2022-2023 OHA/NEH mini-grant supporting research on Black women fostering oral history in higher education in the early- and mid-1900s. She leads workshops for the D.C. Oral History Collaborative and has conducted interviews for the U.S. State Department, D.C. Public Library and the

Smithsonian Institution. She is co-chair of OHA's Diversity Committee and Equity Audit Task Force and Oral History in the Mid-Atlantic Region. Kaplan holds a Ph.D. in history from American University and M.A.s in oral history and anthropology from Columbia University.



Amanda Tewes, University of California, Berkeley

Amanda Tewes (she/her) is an interviewer with the Oral History Center at the University of California, Berkeley. She previously worked as an oral historian at the San Diego History Center and the Center for Oral and Public History at California State University, Fullerton. Her OHA work includes: the 2023 Program Committee; the committee for the 2022 "Assessing the Role of Race and Power in Oral History Theory and Practice" symposium; and the committee, and later chair, for the Elizabeth Mason Award. In addition to interviewing, she also appreciates teaching oral history methodology and practice to interviewers in a variety of disciplines.



Cynthia Tobar, Independent Oral Historian

Cynthia Tobar (she/her) is an artist, activist-scholar, filmmaker and oral historian who is passionate about creating interactive, participatory stories documenting social change. She has lectured and published on student

activism in higher education, housing justice and counter-narratives of historical exclusion in monument culture. Her work has been exhibited/screened at several venues throughout New York City. Tobar served as a member of OHA's Council from 2020-2023. She is associate professor/head of archives at Bronx Community College, where she creates socially engaged art programming and leads community-based archiving/storytelling projects, and visiting associate professor at Queens College, where she teaches oral history. She holds an M.A. in politics from the New School, an M.L.S. from Pratt Institute and an Ed.D. in higher and postsecondary education from Teachers College, Columbia University.



Christa P. Whitney, Yiddish Book Center

Christa P. Whitney is an oral historian and documentary filmmaker whose work focuses on language, culture and identity. Since 2010, she has directed the Yiddish Book Center's Wexler Oral History Project, which includes more than 1,200 video interviews relating to the Yiddish language and culture. Whitney has been involved in organizing Oral History Association pre-conference workshops and has served on the award and international committees. She also has presented at OHA conferences for more than a decade. OHA is an integral part of Whitney's professional network. She is eager to continue to give back and be involved in the organization.

Introducing candidates for
COMMITTEE ON COMMITTEES
VOTE FOR UP TO THREE



Bradford Bailey, Harvard University

Brad Bailey graduated from Yale University with a major in political science and received a master's in public policy from Princeton University. He also holds master's degrees in journalism and oral history from the University of California, Berkeley and Columbia University, respectively. He has chronicled the life of a disability rights pioneer and has worked extensively on interviewing projects in Madagascar and Canada. He also interviewed Syrian refugees at the world's largest refugee camp in Jordan. In the U.S., he has examined the impact of violence with African American mothers. Recently Bailey produced stories in Georgia about Covid-19 and African Americans in the state. He is currently a researcher and educator at Harvard University.



Bridget Bartolini, Independent Oral Historian

Bridget Bartolini is an oral historian, educator and socially engaged artist. Fascinated by the intersection of place and identity, she specializes in New York City history, place-based storytelling and cultural organizing. She runs the Five Boro Story Project, an initiative she launched in 2013 to produce free community programs that bring New Yorkers together through sharing personal stories and art inspired by our neighborhoods. Bartolini received her M.A. in oral history from Columbia University. She also earned an M.A. in community education from Teachers College and a B.A. in East Asian studies from Oberlin College. Bartolini has conducted oral history interviews for several New York-based projects and family clients.



Eric Hung, Music of Asian America Research Center

Eric Hung is executive director of the Music of Asian America Research Center and adjunct lecturer at the University of Maryland's College of Information Studies. Current projects include curating the Asian American + Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander Learning Pathway for Smithsonian Folkways and serving as writer for an exhibit on Asian American music at Wing Luke Museum in Seattle. Before he joined the nonprofit world full time, Hung was a tenure-track and tenured professor of musicology at Westminster Choir College of Rider University and the University of Montana. He is an active pianist who has performed in Germany, Austria, Australia, Thailand and throughout North America.



Dao X. Tran, Voice of Witness

Dao X. Tran was born in Mỹ Tho, Vietnam, and made in the USA. She's passionate about social justice and democratizing the kinds of stories being heard and finds a curiosity about our world essential. She is the editorial director at the nonprofit Voice of Witness, uplifting and amplifying the voices of people impacted by—and fighting against—injustice. Tran is also an acquiring editor for Haymarket Books and sits on its editorial board. When not scouting projects and partnerships—or collaborating on and marking up transcripts and manuscripts—she's raising a spirited teenager and a feisty poodle-terrier-shih tzu mix on the land of the Carnarsie and Munsee Lenape peoples in Brooklyn.



Cameron Vanderscoff, Independent Oral Historian

Cameron Vanderscoff is based in New York City, where he is founder/principal of Vanderscoff Oral History. He is co-editor of 2020's *Seeds of Something Different: An Oral History of UC Santa Cruz*. His interviews also can be found in 2019's *Robert Rauschenberg: An Oral History*. Today, Vanderscoff is co-authoring two books, one an oral history memoir of a homeless civil rights icon in New York City and the other a voices-in-conversation oral history of a flagship science university in the indigenous community of Okinawa (Uchinaa), Japan. Education and vocal justice are key in his motivations for this work.



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