



Chicago Area Archivists Statement in Solidarity with Black Lives Matter

Adopted by the Chicago Area Archivists Steering Committee on July 31, 2020

CAA stands in solidarity with Black Lives Matter and condemns the police brutality that ended the lives of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Tony McDade, Laquan McDonald, Jemel Roberson, Bettie Jones, Quintonio LeGrier, and many other named and unnamed Black lives.

Racism and its deadly consequences are rooted in the history of the United States and these incidents are the direct result of the legacy of slavery, oppression, violence, and death that structural racism has imposed on Black people, Indigenous people, and People of Color (BIPOC) and their communities. Structural racism and a culture of white supremacy permeate our society and systems. It is evident in Chicago in a number of ways, including extreme segregation, housing, education inequality, environmental injustices, overpoliced communities, and corruption within the police department.

Archives in Chicago are no exception. We acknowledge the ways that archives and the archival profession have supported and continue to support racist systems and practices. Archives support a culture of white supremacy when they maintain a historical record that is primarily white and male and when they exclude or distort voices of communities of color. We, as archivists, need to center and amplify voices of BIPOC individuals and organizations within the historical record. We must identify and dismantle harmful and racist practices in all aspects of archival work, including collecting, descriptive practices, programming, and exhibits.

As members of a profession, archivists are overwhelmingly white and female. Archival institutions and workers exclude and alienate BIPOC archivists and reinforce white supremacy. They do that through microaggressions at work, racist actions toward colleagues, and racially-coded hiring practices, and workplace culture.

We acknowledge that CAA needs to change. By not actively working to address the structural racism inherent in the archives in the Chicago area and within the organization itself, CAA has largely ignored and contributed to the inequalities in our profession. CAA has done harm to BIPOC archivists by perpetuating a white supremacist culture that has discouraged some persons from joining our organization. As part of this work, the CAA Steering Committee and Subcommittees will strive to more actively engage [CAA's Statement on Diversity and Inclusion](#), to support and empower BIPOC archivists and students, and to continue to work to identify and dismantle racism within the CAA organization.

We implore our membership to join us. We will strive to provide our membership with the resources and tools to do this kind of anti-racist work within their institutions. We all have a role to play in the fight for justice and equality. Whether you are a student or the director of an archive, a librarian or a records manager, or anywhere in between, archives play a role in our professional and personal lives. We joined CAA because we care about archives and the archival profession as a whole. We all have work to do, and we urge our white and non-Black membership, in particular, to prioritize anti-racist work and professional engagement.

To that end, CAA has compiled a [list of readings and resources](#) to educate and support all of us as we work to combat racism in our organization and institutions and cultivate a more inclusive archival profession, a truly representative historical record, and equal access to our collections. We encourage our members to share resources and participate in an ongoing discussion about these concerns.

We all can and must do better.