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REPORT TO THE MAYOR  
ARCHIVES, REFERENCE, AND  
RESEARCH ADVISORY BOARD  
2018

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Department of Records & Information Services

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## LETTER FROM HONORABLE JOAN MILLMAN, CHAIR, ARRAB

On behalf of the members of the Archives, Reference, and Research Advisory Board, I am proud to present our annual report. We want to thank our Commissioner Pauline Toole and her staff who have worked so hard to restructure, revitalize, and transform our board while continuing to do the day to day work of the Municipal Archives. We would also like to acknowledge Assistant Commissioner Kenneth Cobb and Sylvia Kollar, Director, Municipal Archives, who have shared with our board their special expertise.

Mandated by the New York City Charter, Section 309, our board consists of 15 members who are appointed by Mayor Bill de Blasio. Our mandate is to advise the Commissioner in matters at her request and report annually to the Mayor regarding the development of the Municipal Archives, reference, and research services in the government and administration of the city.

Our board meets quarterly to discuss a wide range of topics ranging from outreach and programming activities, including a few I have highlighted. Our successful *Feeding The City* exhibit included a live jazz concert in our Reading Room at 31 Chambers Street. A Living Archive of Bedford-Stuyvesant, an African-American history and storytelling initiative, is an example of another successful outreach program. Currently we are in the process of selling vintage bonds and stock certificates which were issued from the 1920s to the 1980s. Their original purpose was to raise funds to pay for improvements to city projects, including rapid transit. Each document is elaborately illustrated and signed by New York City Mayors from Jimmy Walker to Abe Beame. Monies raised will be used to digitize the records of Mayor Fiorello La Guardia.

As we move forward, we will concentrate the majority of our efforts and resources on continuing to preserve our great collections and sharing them with the public.

Sincerely,



Joan L. Millman

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# ANNUAL REPORT

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May 2017 — December 2018

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## **Department of Records and Information Services**

City of New York

Bill de Blasio, Mayor

Pauline Toole, Commissioner

Kenneth R. Cobb, Assistant Commissioner

Sylvia Kollar, Director, Municipal Archives

## **Archives, Reference, and Research Advisory Board (ARRAB) Members**

Appointed by Mayor Bill de Blasio:

The Honorable Joan Millman – Chair: Former NY State Assemblymember

Pamela Cruz: Archives Strategist and Advocate

Dr. Johanna Fernandez: Assistant Professor, History Department, Baruch College of the City University of New York

Glenda Grace: General Counsel & Chief of Staff, Queens College

Idilio Gracia Peña : Chief Archivist, CUNY Dominican Studies Institute

Kayhan Irani : Writer/Performer/Cultural Activist

Lillian Jean-Baptiste : Community Engager, Family Advocate & Cultural Ambassador

Gregory Jost : Community Researcher, Organizer and Historian

Richard Moylan : President, Green-Wood Cemetery and Historic Fund

Tom Shcherbenko: Community and political activist

Dr. Robert Snyder: Professor of Journalism and American Studies, Rutgers University-Newark

Dr. Jack Tchen: Professor, Rutgers-Newark and New York University

Peter Williams : Principal, PW Consulting Group

Mark Winston Griffith: Executive Director, Brooklyn Movement Center

Mary Yearwood: Director of Collections and Information Services, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture



WPA Federal Writers Project, City Hall Park, New York City  
James Suydam, 1935-1941  
NYC Municipal Archives

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## MISSION STATEMENT OF THE ARRAB

Archives, Reference, and Research Advisory Board (ARRAB)

The mission of the NYC Archives, Reference, and Research Advisory Board (ARRAB) is to advise and consult with the Commissioner of the Department of Records & Information Services (DORIS), regarding:

- ♦ public awareness of historically significant assets;
- ♦ public access to archives and library resources and encouraging use of same;
- ♦ DORIS preservation efforts of cultural and historic records;
- ♦ strategic partnerships to support DORIS initiatives and potentially generate funding; and
- ♦ operations for a sustainable future.

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## ABOUT THE MUNICIPAL ARCHIVES

The Municipal Archives (MA) at the Department of Records and Information Services (DORIS) acquires, preserves, and provides access to City government's historical records. Established in 1977, the Archives oversees more than 221,000 cubic feet of historical materials and responds to approximately 59,000 reference requests annually.

The Archival collections begin with the New Amsterdam and Old Town records (circa 1645) and include subsequent Mayoral, City Council/Aldermanic and City agency records. Noteworthy collections include the Almshouse collection dating from 1759, more than 2 million photographs, and the World Trade Center September 11th collection. The Archives serves world-wide researchers in academic, non-profit, corporate, and government sectors, as well as individuals documenting family history.

Students, academics, filmmakers, biographers, archaeologists, family historians and the general public find pertinent and unique documentation in the Archives' world-class collections for a variety of uses including books, articles, dissertations, documentaries and set construction.

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City Hall Subway Station, Local Train Loop, 1904

Municipal Archives Collection

NYC Municipal Archives

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# BOARD INITIATIVES

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New York City has played an important historical role — local, national and international — in business, immigration, labor, transportation, architecture, the environment, the arts and more. The cultural and historic records at the New York City Department of Records and Information Services (DORIS) are not just those of mayors and the city government, they are stories of corporations, almshouses, charities, buildings, theatres and restaurants; they are the stories of a diverse city with a robust cultural heritage; they include the history of the people of our great city. The information under the stewardship of DORIS is of interest and historical significance beyond NYC limits; information is sought by people and organizations from around the world. It is crucial that preservation and accessibility of New York City’s cultural and historical record is maintained in a sustainable manner for the future. Continued development of the Municipal Archives, and connecting the collections with the community are critical to sustainability.

The New York City Archives, Reference, and Research Board (ARRAB) had been inactive for a number of years prior to the initiative to re-instate the board under the current administration. In 2017 Mayor de Blasio announced the appointment of 15 members to the Archives, Reference, and Research Advisory Board . The board consults with Commissioner Pauline Toole of the Department of Records and Information Services. The first meeting was held in May, 2017. The Archives, Reference, and Research Advisory Board supports the Commissioner in developing and shaping revitalization efforts taking place at DORIS by offering guidance, and is available at the request of the Commissioner to advise on setting strategic goals, identifying funding sources, and connecting communities.

## I. DEFINING A MISSION STATEMENT

ARRAB was inactive for more than a decade. A decision was made to write a mission statement to guide the board to frame initiatives.

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# BOARD INITIATIVES

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## II. GOAL SETTING

The ARRAB met quarterly at DORIS to discuss curatorial, public programming and outreach initiatives, and discussed ways to support and extend the work of the Department. The Board outlined the following goals:

- ◆ Public awareness of the collections and research and reference services and suggestions for marketing, communications, promotion and accessibility and engagement;
- ◆ Support for fundraising initiatives already in place and advice for other potential revenue streams and partnerships;
- ◆ Recommendations for collaboration with other institutions;
- ◆ Proposal to Charter Revision Commission to combine the Archival Review Board (ARB) and the Archives, Reference, and Research Advisory Board (ARRAB);
- ◆ Ongoing discussion of possible board activities in the future. These may include the development of social media strategies to increase public engagement and providing advice and support for reference and research services at the new archival storage facility at Industry City.



*Staff of the New York City Unit of the WPA Federal Writer's Project. WPA photographs exhibited at PHOTOVILLE, Brooklyn Bridge Park, September 2018.*





# UNLIKELY HISTORIANS

Materials collected by NYPD  
surveillance teams  
1960-1975



*Unlikely Historians* exhibit opening  
September 2017  
NYC Municipal Archives

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# OUTREACH & COMMUNICATIONS

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SEPTEMBER 2017 — JUNE 2018

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Public Program	Date
Unlikely Historians: Materials collected by NYPD surveillance teams, 1960-1975	Sep 2017–March 2018
Bloomberg: A Billionaire's Ambition , by Chris McNickle. Book talk and signing.	Sep 26, 2017
A Screening of <i>The Black Panthers: Vanguard of The Revolution</i>	Oct 5, 2017
A Guided Tour of the Unlikely Historians Exhibition	Nov 2, 2017
100 Years! Stay Tuned	Nov 6, 2017
Screening of Pacific Street Film's <i>Red Squad</i> and Panel Discussion with Filmmakers	Dec 7, 2017
Documenting Activism	Jan 11, 2018
CB 3 Arts and Culture Town Hall Meeting	Jan 29, 2018
Panel Discussion: Democracy, Civil Liberties, and Activism	Feb 1, 2018
Greater Gotham: A Talk and Book Signing with Historian Mike Wallace	Feb 1, 2018
Screening of <i>She's Beautiful When She's Angry</i>	Mar 1, 2018
Young Lords - History and Impact	Apr 26, 2018
The Young Lords: Crowdsourcing with the Municipal Archives Multiple Events	June 16, 2018

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# OUTREACH & COMMUNICATIONS

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JULY 2018 – DECEMBER 2018

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Public Program	Date
Seniors Veterans Barbeque, Art Fair and Community Event	Aug 29, 2018
Feeding the City: Exhibition Opening	Sep 2018 - March 2019
The Serious Side of Food Reading Series w/ Jane Ziegelman and Andrew Coe	September 20 <sup>th</sup> 2018 to March 28 <sup>th</sup> , 2019 ( 6 sessions)
Jazz Tunes & Culinary Delights from the Depression Era	Oct 11, 2018
Book Talk <i>The Donut: History, Recipes, and Lore from Boston to Berlin</i> & Fundraiser for NY Archival Society.	Nov 1, 2018
Panel Discussion: How Has Social Media Changed the Food Industry?	Dec 6, 2018
Pop-Up Exhibit: Historical Architectural Blueprints of Lower Manhattan	Dec 18, 2018

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## SOCIAL MEDIA

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MAY 2017 – DECEMBER 2018

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SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORM	ENGAGEMENT
INSTAGRAM	DORIS researched and developed 41 posts. Our followers grew from 7,540 to 10,898, an increase of 44%.
FACEBOOK	DORIS researched and developed 118 posts. Our followers grew by 1,392 new followers.
TWITTER	DORIS researched and developed 862 posts. Our followers grew from 3,917 to 5,032, an increase of 28%.



Celebrating Idilio Gracia-Pena, Former Commissioner of the Department of Records and Information Services, April, 2018

L-R: Kevin Foley, President, New York Archival Society; Former Mayor David N. Dinkins; Ann Phillips, Former Commissioner Idilio Gracia-Pena; Assistant Commissioner Kenneth R. Cobb; Commissioner Pauline Toole.