A large, ornate hall with a stage and audience, overlaid with a large yellow circle. The hall features grand architecture with multiple levels of stairs and a central stage area. A large screen on the stage displays a map of the state of Michigan. The audience is seated in rows of red chairs, and several people are standing on the stage. The yellow circle is centered over the stage and audience area.

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

# **ANNUAL REPORT**

2019 & 2020

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Department of Records & Information Services

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**LETTER FROM HONORABLE JOAN MILLMAN,  
CHAIR, ARRAB**

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On behalf of the members of the Archives, Reference and Research Advisory Board, I am pleased to present this annual report which spans a two-year period. We want to thank our Commissioner Pauline Toole and her dedicated staff who have worked so hard during this pandemic.

Mandated by the New York City Charter, Section 309, our board consists of 15 members who are appointed by the Mayor. Our mandate is to advise the Commissioner on matters at her request and report annually to the government and administration of the city.

Our Board has continued to meet remotely on a quarterly basis. We have participated in and supported online events and are pleased that all of the related social media platforms saw an increase in followers. While in-person events have been cancelled or postponed, we are eager to reopen our doors to the public, with extended hours. We are planning to rebuild our outreach programs and expand the successful book talks and panel discussions. We especially want to continue to bring exhibits to underserved neighborhoods of our 5 boroughs.

I invite you to use the information and ideas included in this report to inform and educate. I believe together we can move forward ensuring our mission of preservation of our city's cultural and historic records.

Sincerely,  
Joan L. Millman

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# BOARD MEMBERS

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## BoardMembers

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Jason Bauman\*

Brian Carlin\*

Pamela Cruz

Johanna Fernandez\*\*

Sarah Gonzalez\*

Glenda Grace

Idilio Gracia-Pena

Mark Winston Griffith\*\*

Kayhan Irani\*\*

Lillian Jean Baptiste

Joan Millman

Richard Moylan

Rebecca Pou\*

Flavia Rando\*

Tom Shcherbanko

Robert Snyder

Jack Tchen\*\*

Eric Washington\*

Peter Williams

Mary Yearwood\*\*

Gregory Yost\*\*

\*Appointed October 2020

\*\*Left Board in 2019

Department of Records and Information Services  
City of New York

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Bill de Blasio, Mayor

Pauline Toole, Commissioner

Kenneth R. Cobb, Assistant Commissioner

Sylvia Kollar, Director, Municipal Archives

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# Mission Statement

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The mission of the 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.

## 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, scholars, 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.

# Board Planning

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At quarterly meetings of the ARRAB, DORIS staff provided updates on the library, archives and the public programming initiatives of the agency. The Board defined possible initiatives that support the DORIS mission and align with strategic goals to improve collections access and engage broader audiences.

## Outreach, Social Media and Public Programming

- Identify social media influencers at various research organizations.
- Create connections with City-wide community institutions.
- Review the metrics of DORIS social media outlets and build conversations with users.
- Sponsor events and commit to bringing in audiences.
- Coordinate with historians and historical societies.



# Board Planning

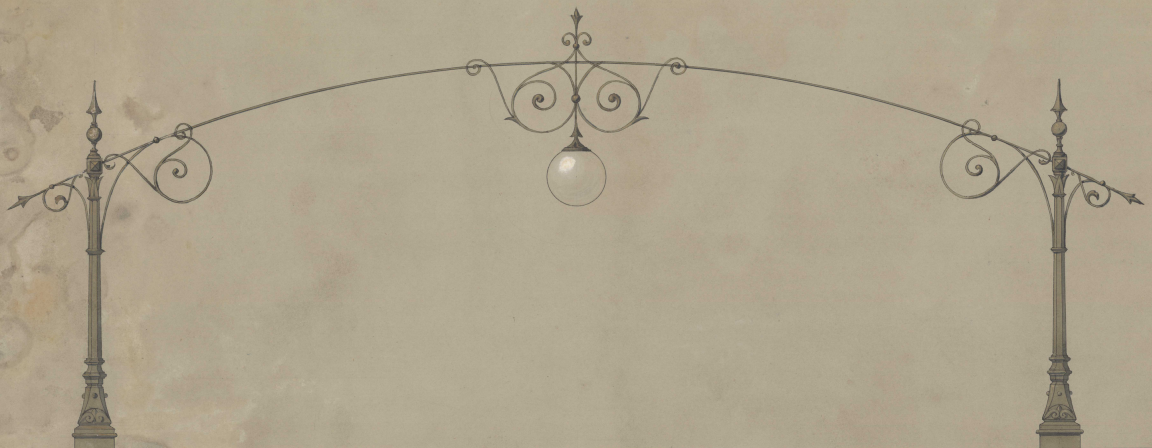
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## Education

- Develop classes on genealogical research, building histories, etc.
- Expand connections with local high schools and develop programs to train students with library/museum related science with goal of empowering students to be good researchers.
- Connect with CUNY colleges.

## Publicity Campaigns

- Describe Board member's own research and how they used the Municipal Library and/or Archives resources.
- Begin a campaign for coordinated outreach on who has used the archives/library and social media.
- Feature Board members promoting the use of archival and library collections.



# DORIS Public Programs

## 2019-2020

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### 2019 Programming and Exhibitions

DORIS programming for 2019 included panel discussions, book talks, movie screenings, workshops and building tours. There were over 2,200 attendees representing a successful year.

A series of events were structured around the Feeding the City exhibit that ran through March, 2019. A sampling of events include a panel discussion on food access in New York City, a presentation by Scott Weiner on "Uncovering NYC's Pizza Past," and a book talk by Annelise Orleck, "We Are All Fast-Food Workers Now."

The publication of *The Central Park: Original Designs for New York's Greatest Treasure*, written by DORIS staff Conservator, Cynthia Brenwall in 2019 was a major success. DORIS featured an author book talk and exclusive rare showing of some of the most visually intriguing original drawings.

DORIS collaborated with Kerri Culhane and Stefano Morello on *The Lung Block: A New York City Slum & Its Forgotten Italian Immigrant Community*. The exhibition explored the history of immigrant housing and reform efforts in NYC at the start of the 20th century through one community, and featured 5 public programming events with over 150 attendees.

Author Talks included "A Conversation about Migration to New York City" with David Reimers and Robert Snyder; *The Many Lives of Michael Bloomberg* by Eleanor Randolph; and a book talk with Eric K. Washington examining race, class and labor as reflected in his award-winning book, *Boss of the Grips: The Life of James H. Williams and the Red Caps of Grand Central Terminal*.

**THE LUNG BLOCK**



# DORIS Public Programs

## 2019-2020

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### 2020 Programming and Exhibitions

Fashion Mosaic: Immigrant voices in NYC's Fashion Industry was a program inspired by the exhibit, *The Language of the City: Immigrant Voices*, which featured the "We Are Brooklyn: Immigrant Voices," multimedia exhibition based on oral histories conducted by Brooklyn College students.

*Ebb & Flow, Tapping into the History of New York City's Water* is an exhibit collaboration between the NYC Municipal Archives and the Museum of American Finance. The opening featured a live recording of National Public Radio's *Person Place Thing* with Emmy Award winner Randy Cohen. Commissioner of the New York City Department of Environmental Protection, Vincent Sapienza lead a session of storytelling all about New York City and water.

The Municipal Archives opened *Incorrigibles*, featuring images and information about "incorrigible" girls confined in the New York State Training School for Girls (1904-1975) in Hudson, New York. Artist Alison Cornyn is the director of a transmedia project that tells the stories of the "incorrigible" girls. Kathleen Hulser is the public historian for the project. *Incorrigibles* focuses on juvenile justice and social services with and for girls using the past to shed light on the present through art, media, and storytelling. The agency hosted a screening of the documentary PUSHOUT: The Criminalization of Black Girls in Schools - the award-winning film that explores the lives of Black girls and the practices, cultural beliefs and policies that disrupt one of the most important factors in the lives of children – their education.

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, much of the planned programming for the year was canceled or postponed to 2021. The External Affairs team adapted creatively and hosted online events that engaged over 600 attendees.

*WomensActivism.NYC*, a program to catalog women activists from around the globe, featured various online programming as the Agency shifted to remote work, including a digital storytelling workshop, a writing contest, and a Women's Equality Day Write-in.





# DORIS Social Media

## 2019-2020

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### 2020 PROGRAMMING AND EXHIBITIONS, CONT'D.

In response to the Covid-19 pandemic, DORIS reflected on the challenges on healthcare workers, and documented the story of healthcare in the City through a visual gallery, [Healthcare Workers in History](#), and [blogs](#) about healthcare and PPE.

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### SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORM ENGAGEMENT - 2019

#### INSTAGRAM

- DORIS researched and developed 16 posts. Our followers grew from 10,898 to 14,000 an increase of 28%.

#### FACEBOOK

- DORIS researched and developed 84 posts that generated over 3,400 reactions, and 478 shares. Our followers grew by 628.

#### TWITTER

- DORIS researched and developed 508 posts that generated over 3,000 likes, and 1,000 retweets. Our followers grew from 5,032 to 5,632, an increase of 12%.

### SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORM ENGAGEMENT - 2020

#### INSTAGRAM

- DORIS researched and developed 13 posts. Our followers grew from 14,000 to 15,000, an increase of 7%.

#### FACEBOOK

- DORIS researched and developed 107 posts that generated over 2,700 reactions. Our followers grew by 137.

#### TWITTER

- DORIS researched and developed 984 posts that generated 3,153 likes, and 1,160 retweets. Our followers grew from 5,632 to 6,005, an increase of 7%.



## ARRAB in 2021

The Board continued its work to support DORIS notably during the COVID-19 pandemic when our on-premise operations were closed to the public. Several members left the Board in 2020. Six new members have been appointed and will forge ahead to increase awareness of the archival collections and support for its work.