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## Review of Archival Values: Essays in Honor of Mark A. Greene

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## Review of *Archival Values: Essays in Honor of Mark A. Greene*

Edited by Christine Weideman and Mary A. Caldera. Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2019. 300 pp. Softcover. \$55.00. ISBN: 978-1-945246-04-3

In *Archival Values: Essays in Honor of Mark A. Greene*, editors Christine Weideman and Mary A. Caldera take readers on a journey through the Society of American Archivist's (SAA's) Core Values, with a focus on how these eleven fundamentals "are being practiced and how they influence the day-to-day work of archivists" (p. xii). The first published work to offer a close examination of the Core Values as its focus, *Archival Values* stands as a fitting festschrift to the late Mark Greene, who passed unexpectedly in 2017 and whose professional work and writings are well recognized in the field today. Greene served as SAA president from 2007-2008, during which he first proposed a set of core values for archivists at his 2008 Presidential Address. He also mentored countless students and young professionals, and published over thirty articles, including "More Product, Less Process" (MPLP) with Dennis Meissner. Throughout Weideman and Caldera's contemplation of the eleven core values, readers find themselves in good hands. Caldera, head of Arrangement and Description in Manuscripts and Archives, and Weideman, director of Manuscripts and Archives, at Yale University Library, have compiled a well-curated selection of essays. They have also published widely in the field: Caldera having presented and written on LGBT documentation issues and inclusion in the archives profession, and Weideman, an SAA Fellow, having presented and written extensively on core archival functions. The editors, together with their contributing authors, present an accessible and relevant discussion of the place of Greene's core values in archival institutions today. It is no surprise the volume was selected by the SAA Publication Board as the 2019-20 "One Book, One Profession" reading. In its organization and content, *Archival Values* engages readers from all backgrounds and subsets of the profession, promising to promote discussion, reflection, and perhaps even revision of the Core Values of Archivists—a feat its honoree would most certainly appreciate.

The book is comprised of twenty-three essays, plus an introduction from the editors and afterword by long-term Greene friend and collaborator, Dennis Meissner. Each of the eleven Core Values are reprinted, followed by two essays in response to the value (the exception being the final value, "Professionalism," which has three supporting pieces). According to the authors, the arrangement of the essays is informed by three themes prevalent in Greene's writings: "why we are here; what we do; and how we do it" (p. xii). Unfortunately, these themes are cited in the introduction only and become lost in the choice to reprint and highlight each value on its own page. As such, it is useful to think of the book in eleven distinct chapters:

1) On history and memory; 2) On Social Responsibility; 3) On diversity; 4) On accountability; 5) On responsible custody; 6) On selection; 7) On access and use; 8) On preservation; 9) On advocacy; 10) On service; and 11) On professionalism. Following the afterword, an appendix reprints the Core Values in their entirety, while the “One Book, One Profession” Study Guide Questions offer points of discussions for readers and reading groups, which will surely be useful in graduate seminars. The standout organization feature here is the length of each article. At no more than ten pages each, essays are careful and concise in how they engage with their respective value. What follows is twenty-three short, accessible pieces that can be read on-the-go, piecemeal, or in a single sitting.

The content of each essay varies by individual author. Many offer personal reflections of what the value has meant to them over the course of their careers, while others offer an analysis of the value in today’s twenty-first century institutions. Hillel Arnold, for example, offers a heuristic using feminist care ethics as a “scaffolding framework” for engaging with social responsibility, while Suzanne Noruschat calls for active selection that seeks to correct gaps in the archival record. The most interesting essays are those that tackle a Core Value head-on, offering a reframing of the value, making it more relevant to modern readers, or a revision of its wording altogether. For instance, Michelle Light’s rethinking of “responsible custody” as “responsible stewardship” is fitting in today’s digital age, while Trevor Owens’ revision of service through the archivist as both “facilitator” and “enabler” to the creation and use of archives speaks to recent calls for community participation, inclusivity, and embracing digital scholarship in the field. Other highlights include Elena Danielson’s discussion of new (and old) problems regarding access in the digital age as well as Ben Goldman’s overview of issues surrounding digital preservation and “green” archives in the age of climate change. From preservation to appraisal, processing to reference, photographs to digital records, one would be hard-pressed to find an essay or idea that did not speak to a subject practitioners engage with on a regular basis.

Moreover, the editors do a solid job of incorporating several different voices from the field. Authors range from early/mid-career professionals, such as Noruschat and Matt Gorzalski, to SAA Fellows, including Frank Boles and Randall Jimerson. The book, however, would benefit from perspectives from lone arrangers and more discussion from those working directly with diverse materials, including Native American and immigrant archives. The essays on diversity from Joel Wurl and Steven D. Booth stand well on their own, as does Dominique Luster’s essay highlighting the incredible work of The Teenie Harris Archive. Nonetheless, more from those working at community-based archives or institutions with diverse collections would have strengthened the book’s emphasis on inclusivity and active archival practices. Perhaps *Archival Values*’ strongest section is its last—“On Professionalism.” Luster and Scott Cline both question the necessity and inclusivity of the eleventh core value discussed in the book, with Cline calling for its removal altogether, arguing that professionalism is encompassed by the rest of the ten values and is more a virtue than a value. We could not help but wonder what value might take professionalism’s place if Cline’s call was heeded (and if it were decided an eleventh value were needed).

Interestingly enough, both of us turned our thoughts to recent discussions on the place and understanding of labor in the field. Where do project-based employment, constant relocation, and lack of permanent funding and professional support—significant issues facing recent graduates, early career professionals, and others in the field—fit within these values? Indeed, an underlying theme throughout the book is what the editors describe as the “centrality of people” in the essays (p. xii). Perhaps, as both Arnold and Owens suggest, we need to create opportunities to support, or reframe, approaches to archival labor. Their collective wisdom may be onto something, and we will see a revision of these and other ideas in the near future.

But perhaps that is the greatest legacy of the Core Values. According to Meissner, Greene would appreciate our continued engagement with these archival values and the ever-changing nature of the field to which they belong. As such, *Archival Values* is a great starting point for this discussion on the meaning of archives and the role of archivists in today’s society. We recommend this book to all our colleagues in the field and look forward to continuing the discussion, and perhaps even a second edition in the new decade to come.

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