



**Society of California Archivists  
Candidate's Statement for 2023 Election**

**Candidate for:** Secretary

**Years:** 2023-2025 (2-year term)

**Name:** Joanna Black

**Institution:** William E. Colby Memorial Library, Sierra Club

**Professional Background (begin with current position and areas of responsibility, and briefly summarize experience):**

I currently work at the Sierra Club (a social and environmental justice organization) as the Senior Archivist in the William E. Colby Memorial Library, located in Oakland, CA. Starting as the library's Digital Archivist in 2018, then Archivist in 2019 and, most recently, Senior Archivist starting in 2022, I oversee both analog and digital archival collections housed at the Colby Library, as well as assists with the implementation of the Sierra Club's Records Retention Policy and the transfer of the Sierra Club's records to its official archives at the Bancroft Library. Additionally, I perform duties related to collection management, collection development, digital management, and system administration of the library's core collections of historic photographs, films, audio and visual media, and other non-bibliographic materials. I also co-manage the "Documenting the Voices of Environmental Justice" (DVEJ) program within the Colby Library, which aims to archive the experiences and histories of the Sierra Club's environmental justice leaders, activists, and advocates.

Outside of the Colby Library, I serve non-managerial staff as a labor union steward for the Sierra Club's Sierra Employee Alliance (United Autoworkers Local 2103). In this role, I support the

needs of represented staff from across departments and provide leadership around enforcement of the union's labor contract.

Also in 2022, I worked to implement an oral history project called [\*Treasured Stories: Treasure Island Oral Histories from 1997-Present\*](#) sponsored by the Bay Area non-profit One Treasure Island. This project documented the histories and experiences of long-time residents and workers of San Francisco's Treasure Island through community-driven oral histories. I served as the Oral History Consultant and Transcript Editor, as well as Exhibit Consultant.

Prior to working at the Sierra Club, I served as the Director of the Dr. John P. De Cecco Archives and Special Collections of the GLBT Historical Society. While there, I worked as a Processing Archivist (2015), Managing Archivist (2016-2017), and Director of Archives and Special Collections. (2018). In addition to managing its extensive collections and overseeing a facilities relocation, I curated two exhibits for the GLBT Historical Society Museum: [\*Empowerment in Print: LGBTQ Activism, Pride & Lust\*](#) (2018) and [\*Performance, Protest & Politics: The Art of Gilbert Baker\*](#) (2019). For nearly six years, I was a member of the GLBT Historical Society Archives Working Group, serving as chair from 2018-2019. I continue to consult for the GLBT Historical Society, providing public presentations around queer history.

Other relevant positions I've held include Manuscripts Processing Assistant (2013-2015) at the Bancroft Library, UC Berkeley and Processing Projects Assistant (2009-2010) at the Center for Primary Research and Training, Department of Special Collections at UCLA.

**Educational Background (degrees and other applicable training):**

I received a master's degree in Library and Information Science from UCLA, with a specialization in Archival Studies, and hold a Bachelor of Arts degree in creative writing from San Francisco State University.

Over my career, I have participated in numerous trainings, workshops, and professional development courses to build upon my professional and interpersonal skills. These include: Bystander Intervention in Public Places; Trauma, Healing, and Resilience Workshop; 8 Strategies to Mitigate Bias; Wellness and Healing Training; Care and ID of Photographs; Successful Grant Writing for Archives; Archival Activism: Community-Centered Approaches to Archives; Collecting in a Crisis: Rapid Response Web and Social Media Archiving; and Appraisal, Accessioning, and Ingest of Digital Records.

**Professional Affiliations (list organizations, dates and extent of your involvement, e.g., SCA activities, memberships, committee work):**

I have been a member of the Society of California Archivists since 2012. During that time, I have served on the Publications Committee as the Newsletter Layout and Design Editor (2012-

2016) and Committee Chair (2016-2019) where I led the effort to update the *Directory of Archival and Manuscript Repositories in California*. I also served as a member of the Local Arrangements Committee from 2019-2020 and participated as a program speaker during the 2017 and 2018 Annual General Meetings.

As an active member of the Society of American Archivists (joining in 2008) I served in leadership positions in the Issues & Advocacy Section (Chair, 2019-2020 and Immediate Past Chair, 2020-2021). Additionally, I served as a peer reviewer from 2018-2020 for SAA's *American Archivist* and a program speaker at SAA's General Meeting in both 2016 and 2019. I also participated as a mentor to recent graduates/new professionals in SAA's Mentoring Program in 2019-2020.

For the past two years, I have been a member of the Association of Hawai'i Archivists. Although I do not reside in Hawai'i, resources provided by AHA have helped support my work with the Sierra Club Hawai'i Chapter's archives. Membership in AHA has also expanded my awareness of post-colonial archival issues, particularly around native histories and the impacts of colonialism on cultural heritage collections.

**[300 words or less]**

**What skills do you possess that are particularly applicable to this position?**

The role of SCA Secretary encompasses many diverse skills: an ability to listen to others and transcribe information accurately, follow established procedures and evaluate their ongoing effectiveness, and provide transparency of SCA's leadership decisions, actions, and activities for current and future membership. Throughout my career and education, I've cultivated many of these skills in the service of accuracy and truth, knowing how important it is to maintain factual records of human activities – after all, is this not what motivates many archivists professionally?

Like all humans, my experiences – both personally and professionally – are a unique record of my present skillsets and a complex conglomerate of lessons from my past. Relevant to the SCA Secretary position, I've served in committee leadership positions, transcribed audio recordings, meticulously reviewed and interpreted thousands of pages of historic meeting minutes, and created and maintained policy documents, workflows, and project proposals. I've also liaised with public stakeholders, corresponded with researchers and collection donors, and represented workers in a labor union setting. I am motivated by a natural drive to always keep learning, be kind, and encourage equity, inclusion, and justice in all facets of humanity.

Being an SCA member for over a decade, I have seen how the organization continuously encourages diverse professional perspectives and supports its membership's needs. As someone who has gained so much from my involvement in SCA, it would be an honor to work alongside

my esteemed colleagues and help continue the organization's legacy to build equitable power in the archival profession.

**Please detail your efforts to integrate equity and inclusion practices into your work and any plans you may have for this as Secretary and Board Member.**

**SIERRA CLUB**

Over the last year, I have served as a union steward for the Sierra Employee Alliance, which encompasses non-managerial staff at the Sierra Club headquarters in Oakland, California. To help ensure that the Sierra Club maintains an equitable, inclusive, and safe work environment for all, my steward role includes:

- supporting represented staff in disciplinary settings;
- enforcing the union's collective bargaining agreement and equal opportunity policy;
- informing union members about key and timely aspects of the labor contract;
- and representing the concerns of all non-managerial staff to the Sierra Club leadership through the Sierra Club Employee Relations Committee.

In my role as the Colby Library Senior Archivist, I strive to preserve and make accessible the countless contributions of Sierra Club's staff, volunteers, and members from the Club's 130-year history. This work includes:

- prioritizing the histories of the Sierra Club's non-white and LGBTQI+ volunteers and staff and ensuring these histories are documented and available to the public;
- creating ethical guidelines and supplemental resources to aid in the creation of description around personal identities;
- conducting presentations to staff on the historical contributions of BIPOC, women, and LGBTQI+ Sierra Club staff/volunteers;
- researching and compiling resources that document historic accounts of Black, Indigenous, Latine/Latinx, Asian & Pacific Islander, women, and LGBTQI+ Sierra Club work for use in organization-wide communications, as part of the History & Heritage Month Working Group.

In addition to efforts mentioned above, I co-created and co-manage the Colby Library's "Documenting the Voices of Environmental Justice" program, which aims to preserve the work of the Sierra Club's environmental justice (EJ) leaders, activists, and advocates, prioritizing the stories of marginalized individuals and communities. This work includes the creation of in-house oral histories as well as facilitating the transfer of EJ-related primary and secondary sources to established collecting institutions. This program is one of the first in the country to focus exclusively on documenting the history of the EJ movement and will help ensure that this significant history, comprised primarily of the experiences of Black, Latine/Latinx, and Indigenous communities, is a permanent part of the public record.

## GAY, LESBIAN, BISEXTUAL, TRANSGENDER HISTORICAL SOCIETY

As the former lead archivist at the GLBT Historical Society -- a community-driven cultural heritage organization founded on the principle of preserving and providing public access to records that document queer history -- efforts to integrate equity, inclusion, and justice initiatives included:

- prioritizing new collections that focused on LGBTQI+ people of color, transgender and intersex histories, underserved and underrepresented LGBTQI+ communities, lesbians, and bisexual/pansexual women and men;
- providing tours, presentations, and publications that focused on a range of queer histories and aimed at diverse audiences;
- maintaining inclusive physical spaces to accommodate people with different physical and mental abilities;
- supporting staff and volunteers from varied cultural, gender, and sexual backgrounds.

## SCA SECRETARY & BOARD OF DIRECTORS

As SCA Secretary and Board Member, I would continue to support and uplift the perspectives of marginalized individuals and communities while promoting non-traditional structures of power-sharing that include more inclusive and equitable voices within SCA. Although the SCA Secretary is traditionally a leadership position, I hope to be a vehicle for SCA membership to carry their voices forward when concerns or suggestions arise. I would continue to reflect on past harms caused by aspects of the archival profession and support efforts to address these, with the priorities of SCA members at the forefront of change. Furthermore, I would continue to check my own biases, listen to others with compassion and focus, and work in service of diverse opinions and perspectives. I believe that the individual uniqueness of each SCA member serves to make the organization stronger.