

## ***Friends of the DC Archives***

For release:  
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### **New Group to Support DC Archives**

At a recent meeting in historic Ben's Chili Bowl on U Street, NW, a group came together to form the Friends of the District of Columbia Archives (FDCA). The attendees shared their concerns that the longstanding neglect of the D.C. Archives endangers the documentary record of the nation's capital. The FDCA includes archivists, historians, D.C. government employees, and anyone interested in recovering the stories of the past. Participants at the founding meeting had current and former affiliations with the Historical Society of Washington, DC, the Society of American Archivists, the Mid-Atlantic Regional Archives Conference, the National Archives, The George Washington University, and the D.C. Archives.

The history community has long been aware that years of underfunding have led to the poor physical conditions of the D.C. Archives and general inattention to record-keeping by the District. Fortunately, the Mayor and the Council last year recognized the problem and committed \$44 million for a new facility. The Friends will advocate for a D.C. Archives that manages the recordkeeping of the District government, preserves its permanently valuable records, and meets the demands of researchers in the digital age.

The FDCA members agreed to three immediate goals:

- Bring public attention and support for the DC Archives through advocacy in the District government and with the general public.
- Press to keep the \$44 million currently allocated and support more funding if needed to create a world-class archives worthy of the District.
- Spotlight the Archives' treasures, the dangers posed by current conditions, and the importance of saving the digital records of the city government.

“The District desperately needs a new, modern archives and I am delighted that the FDCA will work to achieve that end,” said Trudy Peterson, group co-chair and a former head of the National Archives. “Our city cannot be great if it does not take care of its past, especially one with as rich and varied history as ours.”

“The FDCA will represent the diverse groups of researchers interested in D.C. history,” said Mary Beth Corrigan, FDCA co-chair and former trustee of the Historical Society. “Their views are essential to the planning of a new state-of-the-art facility that will meet their needs.”

The FDCA plans to solicit membership from all who want to support the Archives. One of its first actions will be to testify before the Council’s Committee on Government Operations on May 1<sup>st</sup>. If interested in joining the organization in its effort, please email [friendsofdcarchives@gmail.com](mailto:friendsofdcarchives@gmail.com).