Dear colleague,

The Diversity Committee of the Rare Books and Manuscript section of ACRL (the Association of College and Research Libraries) is pleased to announce a project to gather the stories of diverse professionals from the world of special collections, archives and rare books! We hope this project promotes the visibility and preserves the history of people of color working in the field (as special collections librarians, archivists or in some other capacity), as well as individuals from any background who have been working to promote social justice, diversity, and inclusion within the field. StoryCorps has developed a phone app and online community enabling participants to record and contribute stories from wherever they are. (These are audio recordings, not video).

To participate, Create a free account on StoryCorps.com. IMPORTANT: After you are logged in you must come back and use this link to join the RBMS Diversity Stories community by clicking “Join Community” once you are on the page for the community.

After you have joined, you should download the StoryCorps mobile phone app and record your interview on a mobile device, then share it with the RBMS Diversity Stories community. To do this, be sure to add the keyword “RBMS Diversity Stories” (with spaces) to your interview! This is probably the easiest way to add your story. See the attached tutorial about using your phone to record and upload your interview.

Your recorded story will join others on a StoryCorps page dedicated to the virtual community “RBMS Diversity Stories.” All interviews will be available to anyone visiting the StoryCorps community pages. For that reason, we encourage you to speak only about matters you feel comfortable sharing in a public virtual space. The stories will also be archived at the Library of Congress. (The interview you create is your intellectual property but is also licensed to StoryCorps. Note the permissions information that appears as you are creating your interview.)

Oral history is traditionally a dialog between two people. We highly encourage you to record your story with a partner who can be in the same room with you, someone who will use the questions to start a conversation. A list of suggested questions is attached. We ask that you focus your discussion on your experiences working in the field of rare books and/or archives.

During this phase of the project we are inviting people to upload their stories by Monday, June 19, 2017! Interviews are still completely welcome after that date, however.
Also, join us at the RBMS Conference in Iowa City on Tuesday June 20th for a session devoted to this project!

If you have trouble finding a partner for your interview, please contact us at rbmsdiversity@gmail.com and we will try to help locate someone who might be able to join you. Also contact us if you have problems creating and uploading your story.

Have questions? More information on joining the community.

Please also view the guidelines for recording your interview. They contain useful information about things like recording a practice interview (which is advised) and adding keywords, which is required.

All sorts of questions are answered on the main StoryCorps help page.

Best,

ATTACHMENT : Suggested Questions

These questions are meant as suggestions to help you conduct your interview. During your interview, you might find that the conversation takes you away from covering each of the questions one by one. That’s fine, you are not required to address each question in the list. The most important thing is that you share your story the way that feels right for you.

- How did you come to work in the special collections, rare books, or archives profession?

- Why did you choose to enter this profession? Did you have a mentor or a defining experience which impacted this decision? Please describe.

- Do you have advice for people from racially/ethnically underrepresented groups who are considering going into the profession?

- Within your job, community, and/or within our profession, how can we promote diversity, social justice, and inclusion?
• What does the concept of diversity mean in the context of Archives, Manuscripts and Rare books work?

• Why does diversity matter within the profession, within the collections, and user base? Do you have any advice for the profession on promoting diversity?