



## Executive Summary

The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Round Table (GLBTRT) will celebrate its 50th anniversary in 2020. Founded in 1970 as the Task Force on Gay Liberation, it was the first gay and lesbian professional organization in the United States.

As part of the celebration for the upcoming anniversary, the GLBTRT has embarked on a three-year project to collect, digitize, and make accessible documents and materials pertaining to the history of the Round Table as a digital archive. The 2017 cohort of Emerging Leaders chosen for this project gathered information, created and bolstered community connections, and laid the foundation for a robust archive that this groundbreaking organization deserves.

## Project Context

The GLBTRT seeks to achieve several goals from the archival project:

- ▼ **Prepare** an exhibit for the GLBTRT's 50th Anniversary in 2020.
- ▼ **Document** the organization's founding and subsequent history.
- ▼ **Preserve** documents, visual media, newsletters, and ephemera.
- ▼ **Collect** formal oral history interviews with individuals who have strong connections to the GLBTRT throughout its history.

## Methodology

- 1 **Contact archivists at the ALA archives** housed within the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.
- 2 **Determine if the ALA Archives can accept new GLBTRT materials** and act as the material's physical and digital repository.
- 3 **They agreed to support the project.** We focused on community outreach through a call for interest in supporting the archives.
- 4 **Create a survey with two sections:** one seeking archival donations, the other looking for oral history project participants.
- 5 **Distribute the survey:** we sent calls through the GLBTRT listserv, through other email, and using social media.
- 6 **Compile documentation,** including survey results and reports, for ongoing work on the project.

## Project Results\*



Total Responses  
Collected: **22 responses**



**10 respondents** have materials to donate



Respondents' overall range  
of involvement: **1973-2017**



**17 respondents** want to be part of the oral history project

\* As of June 2017

## Digital Objects

Our team focused on establishing a connection with the ALA Archives at the University of Illinois, which has the infrastructure and staff needed to preserve the GLBTRT's materials and digitize them for use in the upcoming anniversary exhibit.



ALA's Gay and Lesbian Task Force marching in the San Francisco Pride Parade, 1992.



The Task Force on Gay Liberation's "Hug a Homosexual" booth at ALA Annual in Dallas, 1971.



Speakers at the Gay, Lesbian, and Bisexual Book Awards Breakfast in Washington, D.C., 1996.

Images courtesy of the ALA Archives at the University of Illinois atampaign-Urbana.

## Limitations

Partnering with the ALA Archives was an important but dramatic change from the project's initial plan. The ALA Archives offer valuable storage infrastructure and staff expertise to ensure the longevity of the project. Our team was fortunate to have one member residing in close geographical proximity to the ALA Archives.

Entrusting the technical aspects of this project to the ALA Archives limits how GLBTRT volunteers can be involved. It will take continued relationship-building with ALA Archives staff to ensure that a sufficient amount of digitized material is ready to exhibit by the GLBTRT's 50th anniversary celebration in 2020.

## Next Steps

- 1 If possible, seek at least one project team member with archival experience and another with A/V digital production experience.
- 2 Seek individuals with oral history interview experience and anticipate the time needed to make the necessary transcriptions.
- 3 Work with the GLBTRT Communications Committee to re-publish the interest form our team created.
- 4 Continue encouraging ALA and GLBTRT community members to take the surveys our team created.
- 5 Maintain open communication with the ALA Archives to ensure digitization priorities and efforts align.

## Conclusion

- ▼ **Our partnership with the ALA Archives** made our work possible as we laid the groundwork for the GLBTRT's future digital archive.
- ▼ **Professional archival staff assistance** with accessioning, processing, and digitizing materials will ensure that the materials are preserved and accessible to a far-reaching audience.
- ▼ **Assembling an archive is more difficult when done retroactively.** In the future, we recommend collecting documentation consistently after it is created.
- ▼ **Archiving materials on an ongoing basis** will prevent large gaps in coverage from appearing throughout the group's history.
- ▼ **Working with staff at the ALA Archives** will allow volunteers to better understand what materials are valuable and eligible for inclusion in the physical and digital archival collections.

## Acknowledgments

The 2017 ALA Emerging Leaders Team I would like to thank these people and organizations for their support:

- **The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Round Table**
- **Ana Elisa De Campos Salles**, Project Team Leader
- **Cara Setsu Bertram**, Visiting Archival Operations and Reference Specialist at the ALA Archives
- **Participants like you:** <http://tinyurl.com/glbtrt50>