

Oral History Association Recognizes Samuel Proctor Oral History Program and George A. Smathers Libraries Freedom Summer Oral History and Library Curation Project with Elizabeth B. Mason Small Project Award

Gainesville, FL—The Oral History Association (OHA), the national professional organization for oral history practitioners, will honor the Samuel Proctor Oral History Program and George A. Smathers Libraries Mississippi Freedom Summer Oral History and Library Curation Project this October with the Elizabeth B. Mason Small Project Award at its annual meeting in Tampa, Florida. The conference will be held October 14-18 at the Tampa Marriott Waterside Hotel.

The OHA's Elizabeth B. Mason Small Project Award recognizes an outstanding oral history project of noteworthy scholarly and social value, and is offered biennially in memory of one of the association's original founders. The theme of this year's OHA meeting, "Stories for Social Change and Social Justice," focuses special attention on the power of oral history to uncover links between political and cultural change and to inspire civic engagement.

Organized jointly between SPOHP and the University of Florida George A. Smathers Libraries, the Mississippi Freedom Summer Oral History and Library Curation Project processed 100+ interviews from SPOHP's Mississippi Freedom Project between 2013-2014. The Mississippi Freedom Project, an archive of oral histories with civil rights veterans and notable residents of the Mississippi Delta, has been conducted since 2008 with the Sunflower County Civil Rights Organization, and brings undergraduate students, graduate students, and staff to the Delta on annual field research trips to conduct interviews.

Oral histories from the Freedom Summer Oral History and Library Curation Project are now available online through the University of Florida Digital Collections (<http://ufdc.ufl.edu/freedom>). "I Never Will Forget," an edited volume of collection's interviews, was published in 2014 for the 50th anniversary of Freedom Summer, and is also available for public download (<http://oral.history.ufl.edu/files/I-Never-Will-Forget.pdf>). A guide to Mississippi Freedom Project goals and topics is updated regularly for researchers on Wikipedia, (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mississippi_Freedom_Project), and workshops from the research trips are broadcast on SPOHP's YouTube account (<http://youtube.com/spohp111>).

At the OHA meeting this fall, SPOHP will present Mississippi Freedom Project work at the awards showcase on Saturday, October 17, along with other association award recipients. Jana Ronan with George A. Smathers Libraries will speak about the collection on the "Documenting the Black Freedom Struggle, Then and Now" panel on Thursday, October 15, and project coordinator Sarah Blanc will present research findings at the roundtable, "Standing with Elders: Fieldwork in the South," on Sunday, October 18.

In 2015, SPOHP brought eighteen students and staff to the Equal Justice Initiative and Southern Poverty Law Center in Montgomery, Alabama, Museum of African American History in Natchez, and various towns in the Delta to conduct interviews for the project. Interviews will be available online throughout the year as they are processed.

For more details about this and other collections, please visit <http://oral.history.ufl.edu> or call the Samuel Proctor Oral History Program at 352-392-7168. Learn more about the Oral History Association at <http://www.oralhistory.org/>.

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