

**Event Title:** [Artists & Archivists: Two-Year College Students Transform a Philadelphia Archive](#)

**Event Description:** The Presbyterian Historical Society (PHS) opened 500 years of archival materials to creative writing students from Community College of Philadelphia (CCP). As a result, the archive experienced an influx of energy, and student work took surprising, subversive, and moving directions.

During the panel discussion, two instructors, an archivist, a student, and a communications director will share how classroom activities and a student-led exhibit helped demystify archival materials and connected a 170-year-old cultural institution to today's movements for social justice. During the ending Q&A, the audience and panelists will discuss ideas for other history-based creative writing projects.

Student fiction writing, curated photos and primary source documents used by students, and exhibit poetry will be shared on-screen and through the Breaking Barriers and Building Knowledge website: [BKBBphilly.org](http://BKBBphilly.org). Print samples of student writing will be available in the conference room.

Want to visit the exhibit? Stop by 425 Lombard Street later in the day for refreshments in the front yard (weather and pandemic conditions permitting).

**Event Category: Pedagogy**

**Event Moderator and Panelists**

Fred Tangeman is the former director of communications at the Presbyterian Historical Society and project leader of Building Knowledge and Breaking Barriers, an archives-based learning project with Community College of Philadelphia. He has an MFA in creative writing from the University of Iowa.

Kate Sanchez is an assistant professor of English at Community College of Philadelphia where she teaches courses in composition, literature, creative writing, and First-Year Experience. She partners with the Presbyterian Historical Society to engage her creative writing students with their archive materials.

Jennifer Barr is an outreach and reference archivist at the Presbyterian Historical Society. She works with arts and history instructors to select and contextualize

primary sources and supports students as they work with those sources. Jennifer has an MSI from the University of Michigan.

Lumen Lugo-Roman is a student at Community College of Philadelphia whose exhibited poetry at the Presbyterian Historical Society relates to archival materials about women's empowerment and LGBTQIA+ rights.

Simone Zelitch teaches at Community College of Philadelphia, where she established their creative writing program English degree and participated in their partnership with the Presbyterian Historical Society archives. She has published five novels, most recently *Judenstaat*.

**Welcome to Artists & Archivists: Two-Year College Students Transform a Philadelphia Archive.** A few reminders before we begin:

- For those needing or wishing to follow along to a written text, please let Fred know and a printed copy will be delivered to you.
- Please make sure that spaces marked for wheelchairs remain clear of chairs or other barriers.
- Treat service animals as working animals and do not attempt to distract or pet them.
- Be aware of those with chemical sensitivities and refrain from wearing scented products.
- Please be aware that your fellow attendees may have invisible disabilities. Do not question anyone's use of an accommodation while at the conference, including for chairs reserved for those with disabilities.

**Panel discussion overview:**

The hour-plus discussion begins with panelist introductions and an overview from Fred about the Building Knowledge & Breaking Barriers project, where grant support from The Pew Center for Arts & Heritage paid for printing, student travel reimbursements, instructor and student exhibitor stipends, and exhibit installation.

From there, Fred asks the panelists questions about the archives and artists collaboration:

--Simone and Jenny explain teaming up as professor and archivist to curate the first items for a poetry class and a fiction class—items students used in a CCP

classroom or inside the PHS archive. Simone and Jenny discuss welcoming students into unfamiliar archival spaces; encouraging students to respond to historical materials creatively; and hosting an end-of-semester publication party where a student-edited fiction anthology was shared with students, family, and friends.

--Lumen talks about working in the archives as a fiction writing student, and how that experience encouraged him to join the student-led exhibit project and later become a PHS archive intern. (Lumen's recent poetry chapbook will be available for purchase at the conference.)

--Kate shares a second professor's insights, focusing on her work with PHS during the pandemic and overcoming initial hesitation about the PHS collections being a good fit for her poetry classes.

--Lumen joined the student-led exhibit effort in 2020, which culminated in the on-site and on-line exhibit currently on display at PHS. He'll discuss the poetry he composed for the exhibit and the history and social justice protests that informed his writing process.

The discussion ends with audience questions and comments, including panelist thoughts on starting new collaborations between schools, archives, and special collection libraries. Panelist contact information is shared for those who want to find out more after the conference, along with the print and digital resources listed below.

Fred closes with updated information about visiting the exhibit at 425 Lombard St. or experiencing it online.

**Print publications also available online:**

Student-edited Fiction Anthology, [A Picture's Worth](#)

Xander Fox's "BKBB Exhibit Guide" (newspaper): [Page 1](#) | [Page 2](#)

**Links:**

Building Knowledge and Breaking Barriers project: [www.bkbbphilly.org](http://www.bkbbphilly.org)

Lumen's exhibit, "Power in Voices (of Sophia)": [www.bkbbphilly.org/Lumen](http://www.bkbbphilly.org/Lumen)

Presbyterian Historical Society: [www.history.pcusa.org](http://www.history.pcusa.org)

Community College of Philadelphia: <https://www.ccp.edu/academic-offerings/all-offerings/creative-writing-academic-certificate>