



**Society of California Archivists
Candidate's Statement for 2021 Election**

Candidate for: Vice President/President-elect

Years: 2021-2024 (3-year term)

Name: Liza Posas

Institution: Autry Museum of the American West / L.A. as Subject

Professional Background (begin with current position and areas of responsibility, and briefly summarize relevant experience):

Liza Posas joined the Autry Museum of the American West in 2005 where she currently serves as the Head of Research Services and Archives. In this capacity, she oversees the long-range planning and implementation of the Autry's archival program that includes the acquisition, processing, collection management, and curatorial activities of the Autry's institutional archive and manuscript collections as well as supervise archive and reference staff. Her recent projects at the Autry include the development of interdepartmental procedures and practices related to proper and ethical stewardship for archive collections that contain culturally sensitive information or restricted tribal knowledge. Ms. Posas has shared the ongoing development of this work through presentations at the Association of Tribal Archives, Libraries, and Museum (2017), Society of California Archivist (2018), and Society of American Archivist (2018) conferences and in the publication "New Discoveries and New Directions for the Archaeological Archives at the Autry Museum of the American West," in *Advances in Archaeological Practice* (August 2017).

In 2020, she also spearheaded the [*Revealing Women in the Archives*](#) initiative at the Autry that includes leading archival workshops for entry level college students; developing public

programs; launching the #ArchivingWomen social media campaign; and curating an online and physical exhibit titled, *What's Her Story: Women in the Archives*.

Ms. Posas is also the Coordinator for LA as Subject (LAAS), a collaborative network hosted by the USC Libraries that works to promote and preserve the rich history of Los Angeles and Southern California. She has held this appointed faculty position with the USC Libraries since 2009. To this end, Liza facilitates collaborative projects with different organizations and individuals within the LAAS membership. These projects include the LA as Subject Resident Archivist program, grant-funded by IMLS, the Monomania LA video series funded by CalHumanties, and the annual Los Angeles Archives Bazaar co-hosted with the USC Libraries. The California Historical Records Advisory Board awarded Ms. Posas in 2018 with the Archival Award of Excellence for her work with LA as Subject.

Before working at the Autry and L.A. as Subject/USC Libraries she worked at the University of California, Santa Barbara. UCSB Libraries awarded her a Library Residency in 2003 that was designed to increase the diversity of the library profession and to encourage the participation of underrepresented groups in academic libraries.

Educational Background (degrees and other applicable training): MLIS from University of California, Los Angeles, 2002

Professional Affiliations (list organizations, dates and extent of your involvement, e.g., SCA activities, memberships, committee work):

Society of American Archivist (SAA), Native American Archives Section- Steering Committee member, 2018-2020

SCA- Board Member, Member-At-Large, 2012-2014

SAA – Native American Archives Round Table

2008 – 2010 SCA -Publicity and Outreach Committee, Co-chair, 2004-2009

In what direction do you see the Society moving in the next five years? What role should the Society play on a state, regional, and national basis?

In the next five years, I feel the Society will be affected by the events of the last five years-- from a new era of marches and protests; the rise of “fake news” ideology; pandemic lockdowns; Black Lives Matter movement; 1/6/2021 insurrection; and to the swearing in of U.S. Vice-President Kamala Harris and all she represents. Already professional and avocational archivists are being charged with creating collections that document this concentration of historic events.

Like no other time in the 21st century (and maybe the latter part of the 20th Century), archivists

are in a position to advocate for what they do and why they do it in relevant terms, pulling from recently lived experiences (literally) relatable to all.

In the same vein, there is a new level of societal conscientiousness that questions representation and colonial constructs. While advocating for our profession, archivists may also be put to task to examine the traditional institutional cultures of our profession. This may prompt us to look at the legacy of collection development and management policies as well as how we have worked with (or not worked with) the communities represented in these collections.

Looming above all of this would be the struggle for sustainability, such as how to keep the lights on, fund more positions for permanent staff, and make the most of budget cuts all the while keeping up with the practicalities of the day to day.

Keeping in mind the mission of the Society “to support and develop the education of those who collect, care for, and provide access to the documentary heritage of California and adjoining areas and to encourage public interest in and public support for archival facilities in public and private institutions.”

Members will no doubt need a variety of support in response to these unprecedented times. The Society should brace themselves to provide educational and networking opportunities that give members the tools to be proactive, innovative, and creative about the 21st Century role of archivists and how to fund an expanded archivists work force, from the local to statewide levels.

The Society can also provide a safe space to constructively discuss the colonial frameworks associated with traditional archive management practices as well as delve into the practical implications when trying to endorse the ideas “radical empathy,” “decolonization,” and “cultural humility.”

Please detail your efforts to integrate equity and inclusion practices into your work and any plans you may have for this as Vice President/President-elect.

As Vice President/President- elect, I look forward to advancing the conversations related to labor and precarity while bringing in a possible wider perspective based on my experiences working with archive collections held in personal archives, volunteer-run grassroots organizations, and small nonprofits. My goal would be to dissect labor issues that do not only address appropriate monetary compensation, but also bring into account where archivists *should* comparably sit within an org chart or community sector to illustrate how these positions benefit the health of that organization or community.

I would also like to work with the SCA committees and members to explore the ideas of archiving for the public good. This would involve those individuals and entities that have the wherewithal to provide services, expertise, and guidance to the communities they are in and

those represented in their collections.