

RECORD

October 2009

The newsletter of the Virginia Association of Government Archives & Records Administrators

Note from the Editor

In this issue I would like to take a moment and remind everyone that not only is our annual conference coming up, but that Veteran's day is Nov.11. President Nancy Tyler sat down with member/vendor Mike Faber of Paxton to talk about his tireless efforts to have Captain Rocky Versace, a POW who fought in the Vietnam War, formerly recognized for making the ultimate sacrifice for his country. Also in this issue we congratulate and say goodbye to Conley Edwards. After 35 years, Conley is retiring. Some of Conley's colleagues have taken a moment to revisit Conley's amazing career. Conley - you will be missed.

Cameron Waite
Newsletter Editor



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Mike Faber/Rocky Versace Story

Contributed by Nancy Tyler

Mike Faber, a CRM and a Vice President of Paxton Records Retention, has worked for Paxton more than 21 years providing Records Center services in the Washington D.C. Metro area. When asked how he became the VP, he replies, "I was there!" Of course, there's more to it than that, Mike was instrumental in starting the Records Retention Division of Paxton and has made it the success it is today. Mike's sense of humor and overall love of working with his customers strikes you immediately when talking with him and his dedication to the Records Management field is evident in the many organizations that Mike is involved with, in addition to editing the newsletter for Paxton's Records Retention division.

Mike received his CRM in 1995 and says his first memory of VAGARA was the 1986 Conference in Charlottesville. Mike was working for RMI back in those days, but as a member of the Paxton team, Mike was awarded the Outstanding Vendor Award in 1991.

Mike has many interests, among them, growing several varieties of peppers, including the famed habaneras and the hottest pepper of them all, the bhut jolokia! He also has a love of military history that spans from the Civil War to the Vietnam War and he has become somewhat a local expert on POW issues. Mike has taught 10 sessions on those issues for the University of Maryland and contributed a chapter in the book, *Leadership – Combat Leaders and Lessons on Ulysses S. Grant*, a book of essays compiled by the graduates of the class of 1959 from West Point. Mike served in the Air Force from 1965 to 1969 – he says he went in to the military on the buddy system, but he ended up in Africa and his buddy ended up in Alaska. Mike said he didn't know the military meant pen pals! When asked what his favorite quote is, he says, "Everywhere I go, there I am again!" Definitely as original as Mike is!

Rocky Versace

Twenty five years ago Mike's love of reading and history led him to the book *Five Years to Freedom*, by Nick Rowe. This book chronicled the remarkable story of Rocky Versace, a 1959 Military Academy graduate and Captain in the Army. Rocky was

captured by the Viet Cong in October of 1963 and held captive for 2 years before being brutally executed in September 1965. Mike was struck by the account of Rocky's captivity and how Rocky never compromised information or turned his back on America, where his stubborn resistance infuriated his captors. Mike says it is one of the most powerful POW accounts he has ever read – even now, more than 25 years later.

While they never actually met, through mutual friends, Mike became involved with a group called The Friends of Rocky Versace, a group trying to get a new school at Cameron Station named in his honor. When efforts to name the school after Versace failed, the group decided to honor him in another way. The group joined forces with Duane Frederic, a researcher from Ohio who was organizing a second submission for the Medal of Honor after the first submission by the author Rowe was downgraded to a Silver Star. Mike and all the members of the group felt that Versace, a true hero, deserved so much more. Mike worked tirelessly on weekends, nights, and sometimes during the week, where his employer, Paxton Records Retention, gave Mike their full support. Mike says the effort to honor this American hero has been one of the most rewarding experiences of his life.

On July 6th, 2002, the Rocky Versace Plaza and Vietnam Veterans Memorial, was dedicated in Alexandria, and that same afternoon, Mike and Duane Frederic were honored by Rocky's West Point classmates and were inducted as honorary members of the class of 1959. However, this wasn't the end of their accomplishment. On July 8th, 2002, Mike, along with The Friends of Rocky Versace group, attended a ceremony at the White House where President George W. Bush presented Rocky's brother Steve, the Congressional Medal of Honor, the highest award that can be received by military personnel. Since that July day in 2002 when Mike received his pin, he has worn the pin with honor and pride and in remembrance of Rocky Versace, Captain, United States Army, an American Hero.

(Thanks to Mike for sharing this wonderful story with us and for permission to use excerpts from *Outside the Box*, a newsletter from the Paxton Companies.)





A special thank you to all those who have served, & are serving, in the American Armed Forces. Veteran's day is Wednesday, November 11.

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To Conley L. Edwards, III - State Archivist Extraordinaire

Courtesy of Glenn Smith, Dick Harrington, John Breeden, & Preston Huff



Friday, October 30th marks the end of a 35-year Library of Virginia career for Conley L. Edwards, III. Since 1996, he has been the State Archivist. To see Conley off, it seemed appropriate to gather some thoughts of former colleagues who have already moved on from the halls of the LVA.

From John Breeden, former Records Analysis Manager, now at VDOT, and VAGARA Board Member Nominee: "My first recollection of Conley Edwards was when I visited the Virginia State Library as an undergraduate in the late 1970s; Conley helped find the records I needed for a research paper. I enjoyed working with him then and have ever since. His knowledge of and devotion to Virginia's documentary heritage is only matched by his droll sense of humor. Everyone knows of his contributions to the management and preservation of archival records, both here in Virginia and at the national level.

"What a lot of folks probably don't know is that sandwiched into his long and illustrious archival career was a stint as a records management analyst. What Connis Brown and Dick Harrington didn't teach me about records management, Conley Edwards and Willie Ray did. I'll never forget the lessons I learned or the fun I had working with these colleagues in the smoke-filled rooms of the old Virginia State Library (smoking was still allowed in state office buildings at that time and their office always had a blue haze!). Conley will be missed, and the profession will be losing a true 'southern gentleman'."

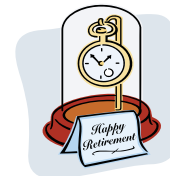
From Dick Harrington, another co-worker from the "post-Wonder Years" era, former Assistant State Archivist and Director for Imaging Services, and now the archivist for Fairfax County: "Throughout my career at the Library of Virginia, it was a pleasure to interact with Conley on various issues, plans, and ideas concerning the professions of archives and records management. He has always been willing to assist anyone in the pursuit of knowledge within these areas, and to further the preservation and protec-

tion of the historical records of the Commonwealth. Upon many occasions, he was asked by me to speak at various events, and he always accepted -- giving an excellent presentation that usually involved sufficient humor to leave the audience chuckling. As both a gentleman and a scholar, he has represented the archives at the Library of Virginia for more than three decades in the best tradition of the profession and will be sorely missed."

From Preston Huff, Conley's comrade in various sorts of late night raids, the former Virginia State Records Administrator, and now a person of no small stature at the National Archives: "I have been asked to provide any recollection I might have in regards to working with Conley Edwards during the time we shared at the Library of Virginia. Many 'stories' come to mind, but are too politically sensitive to say aloud (much less commit to the written word) -- or involve much-exaggerated accounts of a late-night beer run to Alabama during a regional conference in Georgia. Others come to mind as well and cause me to smile as I write, but alas those stories, too, shall remain unwritten.

"What I can say is that the time that Conley and I worked together at the LVA was magical. A lot of good work led to a lot of good results. The success of our mutual, interconnected, programs was in no small way due to his keen intellect, calm temperament, and finely honed sense of humor. I wish Conley and I could have worked together for an even longer time. I always welcomed Conley's company. His presence will be missed at the ole LVA - and I will sorely miss seeing my colleague at professional meetings."

On behalf of many others with untold memories and stories, VAGARA wishes Conley the very best in his retirement and extends our gratitude for his support of and contributions to our association throughout his years of service.





VAGARA
 Virginia Association
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25th Annual Conference
 Our Silver Anniversary

The 25th Annual conference will be held at the Holiday Inn Select Kroger Conference Center in Richmond, VA. The conference will kickoff November 12 with the President’s Reception, which will be free this year. The actual conference will be held November 13. The cost to attend is \$100. This includes the conference, the breakfast buffet, the awards luncheon, and all breaks. Additional meals can be purchased if you bring a guest. This year’s conference will include a workshop about how to use the “LEAN” business analysis process to improve customer service while keeping costs down, a program about strategies to engage departments in records management procedures, and an overview of Enterprise Content Management. Registration forms and more information can be found at www.vagara.org.

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