DIRECTOR’S MESSAGE

Tending to the Past

i am accused of tending to the past
as if i made it,
as if i sculpted it
with my own hands. i did not.
this past was waiting for me
when i came

The opening of Lucille Clifton’s poem vividly captures the spirit of those who dare to imagine that black women’s past can be turned into History. The poem goes on to caution skeptics to beware the day when the past—“a monstrous unnamed baby”—is fully transformed into a young woman named History who is “strong enough to travel her own.” In Clifton’s telling, it is a “mother’s itch” that moves the speaker to nurture the foundling History, enabling her to acquire multiple voices and to recall “faces, names, and dates.” Clifton’s artistry reminds us that although historians cannot remake the past, it is only through our conscious efforts that History speaks clearly and in her own words. Written barely a decade after the founding of ABWH, Clifton’s poem prophesied the development of black women’s history into a field able to speak for herself.

The Association of Black Women Historians (ABWH) promotes rigorous and path-breaking scholarship in black women’s history and supports the professional development of black women historians. Its membership is made up of men and women of all races and includes students, professional historians, curators, archivists, librarians, and friends of black women’s studies. ABWH founders Rosalyn Terborg-Penn, Eleanor Smith, and Elizabeth Parker
The ABWH’s four organizational goals are: to establish a network among the membership; to promote black women in the profession; to disseminate information about opportunities in the field; and to make suggestions concerning research topics and repositories.

Director’s Message

Tending to the Past
continued from page 1

initiated two years of efforts that culminated in an October 1979 meeting attended by about 50 women at the Association for the Study of African-American Life and History’s (ASALH) conference in New York. ABWH continues to hold its business meeting and annual luncheon alongside ASALH’s yearly academic conference.

ASALH celebrates its centennial this year, and ABWH hosts its 35th annual luncheon during ASALH on Saturday, September 26, 2015. We hope you will join us in Atlanta. Our luncheon will host a stimulating discussion of black women’s activism and present our signature awards for undergraduate, graduate, junior faculty, and distinguished faculty and scholars. Those awards are the Brown Memorial Book and Article Awards, Hornsby Memorial Award, Houston Memorial Scholarship Award, Williams Leadership Award, and Terborg-Penn Junior Faculty Award.

Why join ABWH? When you join ABWH you will join an organization whose leaders and members have laid the foundations of the most exciting and generative field in American history in the past four decades. Join us so your own work extends, expands, and complicates our ongoing explorations into the lives, labors, and loves of black women into a fifth, sixth, and seventh decade. Join us to get involved in an exciting and rewarding mission. Join us because you support black women’s history. We want you to write your name into the centennial history of ABWH. Our membership is affordable and available at every level, from student to lifetime.

ABWH uses its newsletter TRUTH and social media via our website, listserv, Facebook, and Twitter to give you up-to-date and useful information on our profession. We are self-governing, with no regularly paid staff, which means that you can get involved quickly in

continued on page 4

ABWH Awards and Prizes

Find further details, such as requirements and submission instructions, on the abwh.org website. All winners will be honored on September 26, 2015, at the annual ABWH luncheon during ASALH 100 in Atlanta.

Letitia Woods Brown Memorial Book & Article Awards are awarded annually for the best book or anthology and article about black women’s history written by members and non-members of ABWH. The deadline for nomination and application materials is June 10, 2015.

Lillian Hornsby Memorial Award honors an undergraduate Africana woman student pursuing a degree in History or related field. The deadline for application materials is August 1, 2015.

Drusilla Dunjee Houston Memorial Scholarship Award honors the best, unpublished original essay from either a graduate course or a chapter from a thesis or dissertation. The deadline for application materials is July 1, 2015.

Lorraine A. Williams Leadership Award honors outstanding black woman scholars, administrators, or teachers in education or related areas such as archives, libraries, historical societies, museums, etc. The deadline for application materials is June 30, 2015.

Rosalyn Terborg-Penn Junior Faculty Award is a professional, merit-based recognition by peers in the field of history. It is open to black women scholars who are members of the ABWH, have 5 to 10 years teaching experience at the collegiate level, and other requirements. Additional details, including application deadlines, will follow online and on the listserv.

National Director, Francille Rusan Wilson

“this past”—our past—is still waiting for you to write it into her story and our story

National Director, Francille Rusan Wilson
ABWH celebrates ASALH Centennial in Atlanta, September 23-27, 2015

As ASALH celebrates its 100th Anniversary, ABWH celebrates its 35th Annual Awards Luncheon and Meeting

| BLACK WOMEN’S HISTORY AT ASALH 100 | ABWH is excited about being a part of ASALH’s centennial celebration! Scores of ABWH members are presenting papers, panels, plenaries, roundtables, and more in Atlanta. We will offer additional information about ABWH members’ at ASALH as well as panels that focus on Africana history and topics.

| ABWH BUSINESS MEETING AND LUNCHEON | Check the listserv, website, and Facebook for upcoming details.

| FELIX ARMFIELD EMERGING SCHOLAR SERIES | Dr. Felix Armfield (1962-2014) had been a dedicated and active member of ASALH for more than 30 years. He was a former ASALH’s Executive Council member, life member of ASALH, and lifelong member of ABWH. Lovingly referred to as the “elder statesman” of the Comparative Black History program at Michigan State University, Dr. Armfield is warmly remembered by many ABWH members.

It is with that heartfelt legacy in mind that Natanya Duncan, Assistant Professor at Lehigh University and ABWH Parliamentarian, created a living tribute in honor of Dr. Armfield’s memory as a brother, colleague, friend, and mentor. Dr. Duncan organized the Dr. Felix Armfield Emerging Scholar Series (FAESS), which will premier at ASALH 100. FAESS provides professional development workshops and roundtables for advanced doctoral students and early career faculty. The goal is to help emerging scholars advance in their careers and scholarship in positive, enriching ways.

FAESS extends the decades-long work of Drs. Darlene Clark Hine and John H. Bracey Jr.’s Brown Bag Roundtable for graduate students and junior faculty. FAESS will include the brown bag as well as two additional roundtable sessions on mentoring and life-work balance that feature other scholars and faculty. For those who knew Dr. Armfield, the session titles reflect “Felix-isms,” his common way of greeting and reaching out to those around him. Session I “And Who Are You? What Do You Do?” will feature Drs. Hine, Bracey, and James Stewart taking questions from and offering real-world advice for emerging scholars. This is the traditional brown bag that has been popular at ASALH for many years. Session II “How Can I Help You?” focuses on professionalism and mentoring. Session III “Our Health is Our Wealth: Sometimes You Just Need to Do You!” engages early and mid-career faculty and ABDs on issues of survival inside and outside of academia and the value of self-love and self-care. The sessions prominently feature ABWH members.

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ABWH Officers
Meet the new 2015-2017 officers

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Page | 3
**Member News**

We want to celebrate you! Please send any news you would like us to share in the newsletter to abwhtruth@gmail.com. Please include “Member News” in the subject line, and indicate if you are an ABWH Life Member. You may also share your achievements with the listserv at abwh1979@ googlegroups.com

**Daina Ramey Berry**, Associate Professor at University of Texas, received fellowships from the Library Company of Philadelphia and the Massachusetts Historical Society. She also signed a contract with Beacon Press for her book titled *The Price for their Pound of Flesh*, which will be published in 2016.

**Keisha N. Blain** won several awards and fellowships during 2014–2015 including the University of California President’s Postdoctoral Fellowship at UC Berkeley and the Chancellor’s Postdoctoral Fellowship in African American Studies at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. In April 2015, her dissertation “‘For the Freedom of the Race’: Black Women and the Practices of Nationalism, 1929-1945” received honorable mention for the Organization of American Historians’ 2015 Lerner-Scott Prize. Her article, "[F]or the Rights of Dark People in Every Part of the World’: Pearl Sherrod, Black Internationalist Feminism, and Afro-Asian Politics during the 1930s,” was recently published in SOULS. In the fall 2015, she will begin a tenure-track position in the Department of History at the University of Iowa.


**Melanye White Dixon**, Associate Professor at Ohio State University, received the 2015 International Association of Blacks in Dance Educator/Scholar Award and delivered the keynote lecture for the 21st Annual Black Women’s Conference, African American and Africana Studies Program at the University of Kentucky.

**Stephanie Evans**, Professor at Clark-Atlanta University, has been promoted to full Professor of African American Studies in the Department of African American Studies, Africana Women’s Studies, and History at Clark Atlanta University.

**Talitha LeFlouria**, Associate Professor at Florida Atlantic University, was promoted to the rank of Associate Professor in 2015. She was also awarded a postdoctoral fellowship to the Carter G. Woodson Institute at the University of Virginia. Her book, *Chained in Silence: Black Women and Convict Labor in the New South*, was published in April 2015 by the University of North Carolina Press.

**Karen Cotton McDaniel**, Professor Emeritus at Kentucky State University, co-edited *Kentucky African American Encyclopedia* (University Press of Kentucky, 2015), which won the 2015 Thomas D. Clark Medallion for best work on Kentucky history and culture.

**Jessica Millward**, Assistant Professor at University of California, Irvine, will publish *Finding Charity’s Folk: Enslaved and Free Black Women in Maryland* with University of Georgia Press.

**Jennifer L. Morgan**, ABWH Life Member and Professor at New York University, has recently completed a fellowship year as a member of the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton where she worked on her manuscript *Accounting for the Women in Slavery: Race and Numeracy in the 17th-Century Black Atlantic*. After returning from her leave, she will be the Chair of the Department of Social and Cultural Analysis at New York University. She also serves as the Vice President of the Berkshire Conference of Women Historians (the “Little Berks”). She encourages ABWH members to submit panel or paper proposals for the 2017 “Big Berks” meeting at Hofstra University in Hempstead, Long Island.

**LaKisha Simmons**, Assistant Professor of Global Gender Studies at SUNY Buffalo, will publish her first book with University of North Carolina Press, *Crescent City Girls: The Lives of Young Black Women in Segregated New Orleans*. Dr. Simmons also received a Countway Library Fellowship from Harvard University to conduct research for her next book project on black women and reproductive health.

**Brenda Stevenson**, ABWH Life Member and Professor at University of California at Los Angeles, won four fellowships in 2015: Guggenheim Memorial, National Humanities Center, John Hope Franklin, American Academy in Berlin, and Center for Advanced Studies and Behavioral Sciences at Stanford University.

**Charissa Threat**, Assistant Professor at Spelman College, will publish *Nursing Civil Rights: Gender and Race in the Army Nurse Corps* with University of Illinois Press.

**Director’s Message**

continued from page 2

shaping our programs and activities on the national and regional levels. We welcome your participation, time, and talents.

ABWH is especially fortunate to have so many of the pioneering generation of black women historians still active and vibrant, including our early national directors Rosalyn Terborg-Penn, Nell Irvin Painton, Janice Sumber-Edmond, Johnetta G. Richards, and Jacqueline A. Rouse. Most of theoretical and methodological innovations in black women’s history have been made by them and other longtime ABWH members, including Darlene Clark Hine, Deborah Gray White, Stephanie Shaw, Sharon Harley, Evelyn Higginbotham, and Elsa Barkley Brown—just a few of our illustrious members whose monographs, articles, anthologies, and reference works still serve as the basic building blocks of our field. ABWH members have also led the way in developing the tools to explore and reexamine existing depositories with new eyes; Betty Collier-Thomas and Bettye Gardner are among those who established new archives.

ABWH members are not content merely to teach and write but are active in higher education, founding and redesigning majors, departments, and doctoral programs. We chair departments of history, black studies, and women’s studies from coast to coast. We bring gender and race into public history and into the archives. We organize important conferences and research seminars. We hold endowed chairs. Collectively, we have won virtually every national academic honor and been presidents of national professional organizations. Our lively second- and third-generation members—too many to name individually—are transforming histories of black women with their brilliant insights, painstaking research, technical skills, and forceful arguments.

ABWH members have transformed the study of the past, present, and future, plain and simple. We invite you to join us. Become a member and, if you are already a member, get more involved: “this past”—our past—is still waiting for you to write it into her story and our story.

Francille Rusyn Wilson, ABWH National Director
Associate Professor of American Studies & Ethnicity and History, University of Southern California

1 Lucille Clifton (1936-2010) was a poet of surpassing wisdom and clarity. See a full version of the poem at http://www.poemhunter.com/poem/i-am-accused-of-tending-to-the-past/
Selected Books by ABWH Members and about Black Women

In future newsletters, TRUTH would like to highlight ABWH members' publications (articles and books). When sending announcements to abwhtruth@gmail.com, please indicate your membership status.

2014 LETITIA WOODS BROWN BOOK AWARD WINNERS

Wanda Hendricks, Fannie Barrier Williams: Crossing the Borders of Region and Race (U of Illinois Press, 2014)

Cherisse Jones-Branch, Crossing the Line: Women's Interracial Activism in South Carolina during and after World War II (UP of Florida, 2014). Also a Finalist, 2014 George C. Rogers Jr. Award


Darcy Grimaldo Grigsby, Enduring Truths: Sojourner's Shadows and Substance (University of Chicago Press, 2015)

Jocelyn Moody, ed., Memoirs of Eleanor Eldridge by Frances H Green with Eleanor Eldridge (West Virginia UP, 2014)


Karsonya Wise Whitehead, ed., Notes from a Colored Girl: The Civil War Pocket Diaries of Emile Frances Davis (U of South Carolina Press, 2014)

Rhonda Y. Williams, Concrete Demands: The Search for Black Power in the 20th Century (Routledge, 2015)

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Dear Fellow Sister Scholars,

Welcome to the relaunch of the TRUTH newsletter! It is an honor to be part of an organization that has championed female scholars of color and our scholarship for over thirty years. ABWH has accomplished great things in the past, and rest assured the organization is moving forward in the present into a bright future!

When I decided to pursue a graduate degree in history, I asked one of my undergraduate mentors (an African-American English professor) her opinion about my choice. In her usual succinct way, she said to me: “Yes. They need to see you.” I must admit, I was hoping for something a little more profound. But six years later, as I finish my second year in the doctoral program at the University of Texas at Austin, I realize what gems are contained in those five words. Choosing to be a female scholar of color in academia is a courageous endeavor. We must constantly prove and affirm why we belong in an institution of higher learning, why the study of the lives of people of color is relevant, and, indeed, why we, as individuals, are relevant. We are a spectacle, and yet still invisible.

And that’s why ABWH is so important. Belonging to this organization means having access to a vast, supportive network of people who are facing or have faced the same challenges and who are willing to provide advice, mentorship, or just a listening ear. To that end, in future issues of TRUTH, this column will offer practical tips on dealing with issues that we as graduate students encounter, such as how to maintain a healthy school/life balance, develop good working relationships with cohort and professors, navigate blatant racist behavior and more subtle micro aggressions, and develop professionally.

But this column is not just a place to share our concerns; it is also a space to share our joys. Please send any achievements, such as theses written, dissertations defended, and/or awards, fellowships, and prizes won, to abwhtruth@gmail.com so we can celebrate. We see you, sister scholars.

Now let’s make sure they see us.
A History of the ABWH

| CONCEPTION |

ABWH was conceived in 1977 when three black women historians, Rosalyn Terborg-Penn, Eleanor Smith, and Eleanor Parker, recognized the need for a specially focused organization within their profession. They set about recruiting other black women nationwide to discuss launching such a venture.

Following a series of meetings in Massachusetts and California, a steering committee convened in Cincinnati, Ohio in February 1979 to chart the group’s future course. Darlene Clark Hine, Gloria Dickinson, Juanita Moore and Janice Sumer-Lewis (later Sumer-Edmond) met with the founders to create a structural framework for the new organization. That framework called for an executive committee, consisting of a full complement of elected officers with a national director and four regional directors. The work of the steering committee also resulted in naming the organization and in deciding to publish a newsletter titled TRUTH after Sojourner Truth, the nineteenth-century black abolitionist and women’s rights advocate. The noted artist Gilbert Young created a logo for the organization.

Building upon the recommendations made by the steering committee, ABWH was officially launched in New York City in October 1979 at a meeting attended by some fifty black women. The group authorized by Marquita L. James to draft a constitution, which was approved at a subsequent organizational meeting held in Chicago during the spring of 1980. Later that same year, ABWH was incorporated in the District of Columbia as a nonprofit association. A nominations committee, chaired by Janet Sims-Woods, was chosen at the earlier 1979 meeting. The elected officers who formed the initial ABWH executive committee began their two-year terms in 1980. The first set of executive committee members were Rosalyn Terborg-Penn, national director; Darlene Clark Hine, director-elect; Janice Sumer-Lewis, secretary; Bettye J. Gardner, treasurer; Sharon Harley, director of publications; Cheryl Johnson (later Johnson-Odom), membership director; Juanita Moore, midwestern regional director; Sylvia M. Jacobs, southern regional director; Maria A. Brown, western regional director; and Cynthia Neverdon-Morton, parliamentarian.

| ACHIEVEMENTS |

In its position as the first and only professional organization to provide a network and recognition for women of African descent who were historians or students of history, ABWH formed significant organizational alliances and carried out pioneering projects. In 1980, ABWH collaborated with the Organization of American Historians and the Fund to Improve Post-Secondary Education for a black history project. The next year, a joint project between ABWH and the American Historical Association culminated in the publication of a Directory of Women Historians. In 1983, ABWH members organized a research conference titled “Women in the African Diaspora: An Interdisciplinary Perspective.” With funding from the National Endowment for the Humanities and under the leadership of Rosalyn Terborg-Penn, the conference, held at Howard University, attracted a group of international participants for discussions on the emerging field of African Diaspora Women’s Studies.

Through the various activities and awards, emphasizing excellence in scholarship and leadership qualities, the ABWH membership remained committed to sustaining its organizational goals and to strengthening networks among historians. First initiated in 1981, the ABWH annual luncheon featured keynote speakers while serving as an organizational fund-raiser and opportunity to meet and make new contacts. Luncheon speakers came from a variety of fields, including the academy, government, the performing arts, and the judiciary. A partial list of luncheon speakers includes Mary Frances Berry, Augusta Clarke, Darlene Clark Hine, Elizabeth Clark-Lewis, Nell Irvin Painter, Rosalyn Terborg-Penn and Francille Rusan Wilson. In 1992, then-presidential candidate Bill Clinton gave brief remarks at the ABWH luncheon in Detroit.

During the annual luncheon event, the ABWH membership awarded several prizes and scholarships. The publication prizes, created in 1983 to honor the late black historian Letitia Woods Brown, recognized the most noteworthy book and journal article nominated during the previous twelve-month period. Established in 1987, the Lorraine Anderson Williams Leadership Award named for the noted educator, was given to the distinguished black women leader and mentor. Two additional awards celebrate student achievement. In 1989, a collaborative effort between W. Paul Coates of the Black Classic Press (Baltimore, Maryland) and the ABWH created the Drusilla Dunjee Houston Award for a black woman graduate student in history. Houston was a teacher, journalist and lay historian. Beginning in 1995, Alton Hornsby, a professor of history at Morehouse College, created the Lillie M. Newton Hornsby Award to honor his late mother. The Hornsby Award recognized the academic accomplishments of a black woman undergraduate.

Through these various activities, in the 2000s the ABWH furthered its goal of advancing the study of black women’s history and of maintaining networks among the membership of women and men from various ethnic groups.

Bibliography


From the ABWH website
Join the ABWH

The Association of Black Women Historians (ABWH), founded in 1979, is a dynamic network of scholars representing every region of the United States and beyond. Membership in the ABWH is open to anyone interested in the research and teaching of African American Women’s Studies. Our organization is comprised of professors (college and university), students (undergraduate and graduate), archivists, public historians, and others who value the study of African American women.

ABWH Membership Categories

Life Membership
Life membership dues may be paid in three ways: (1) One payment of $300.00, (2) Three payments of $100.00 within three calendar years, or (3) Six payments of $50.00 within three calendar years.

Regular Membership
Regular Dues are paid annually and are for one calendar year October 1 of current year to September 30 of the following year, $40.00.

Student Membership
Student Dues are paid annually and are for one calendar year October 1 of current year to September 30 of the following year, $20.00.

Retiree Membership
Retiree Dues are paid annually and are for one calendar year October 1 of current year to September 30 of the following year, $10.00.

Institutional Membership
Institutional Dues are paid annually and are for one calendar year October 1 of current year to September 30 of the following year, $100.00.

To join the ABWH, visit www.abwh.org and click the Membership tab. Payment available online through PayPal.

ABWH and Social Media

Review some highlights of the new ABWH Social Media policies

The goals of the ABWH include supporting black women in the historical profession and disseminating information and promoting scholarship by, for, and about black women. To keep the Google Group, Facebook, and Twitter (collectively, ABWH social media) professional, valuable, and useful for all subscribers, ABWH has established a Social Media Moderation Policy (Moderation Policy).

We want to ensure that our online community is an open space where everyone can share and promote events, activities, and other information of interest to the members of ABWH and those who support its mission. Your participation as part of ABWH social media is much appreciated and our expectations are that it constitutes a place to foster interesting and entertaining conversations. We hope this policy is helpful to promote those ends.

Please review a complete copy of the policy online at http://tinyurl.com/ABWHSocialMedia

Moderating the List

The Moderator and Co-Moderator (collectively, Moderator) will review all messages to ABWH Google Groups, with the exceptions noted. The Moderator will try to be as fair as possible, but, in a large community of users with many different viewpoints, some people will not be happy with our moderation policies. While we regret that this happens, we cannot suit everyone all of the time and have to make decisions based on what is best for the forum overall. The Moderator reserves the right to remove or disable access to any content that we deem, in our sole discretion, violates the policies herein.

Exceptions

Members whose messages are not moderated are the current Executive Officers, ABWH founding members, and some prominent ABWH members.

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Members whose messages are not moderated are the current Executive Officers, ABWH founding members, and some prominent ABWH members.

Timeliness

Though we will endeavor to post and respond to materials in a timely manner, we cannot make any guarantees regarding when we will moderate any post or topic.

How to Post Information

Email any information you would like posted to the listserv to abwh1979@googlegroups.com.

Content

Please respect other subscribers of the listserv. Please use this listserv to communicate event information, news, and items of interest to ABWH members and associates.

- Subscribers are expected to exercise both common sense and courtesy in the messages they transmit over the listserv.
- Be polite and respectful of other users’ opinions. Since opinions might differ, bear in mind that you are always entitled to post your own views. We encourage debate but engage in a constructive, thoughtful one.
- Defamatory, hateful, harassing, sexist, homophobic, racist, xenophobic, obscene, and other offensive or objectionable communications are not acceptable. If you notice inappropriate postings or violations of the listserv policy, please report it. Provide as much of the following information as you can: (a) identification of the infringing material and its location and (b) your name, address, telephone number, and email address so that we might request further information from you to process your complaint. This information will remain confidential.

Contact the Social Media Moderator at webmaster@abwh.org