



## Reflections from the National Director



This special issue of TRUTH seeks to examine our collective past as Black women and as an organization. The serendipity of our select theme for this issue ABWH's yesterday and tomorrow coincides with the larger 2012 national Black History theme - **Black Women in American Culture and History**. I encourage our membership to keep our recent yesterdays well documented and accessible while the ancient past comes alive through the research we conduct as scholars. The national theme Black Women in American History and Culture seeks to acknowledge the contributions of Black women to their community.

To initiate our special issue discussion I offer an exploration of examining the **Black woman as an artifact, agent of activism and installed as an archive**.

We know one cannot examine Black history or world history without the contributions of Black women. We have the artifacts from the Fertile Crescent in the remains of Lucy the first bipedal hominid formally dubbed *Australopithecus afarensis* to the nearly century old activism of the League of Women for Community Service & Maria L. Baldwin to the Association of Black Women Historians archives.

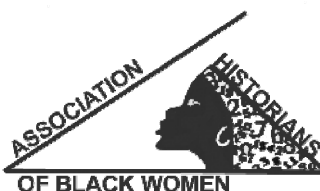
These three areas artifact, activism and archives are intermingled as scholarship seeks to authenticate the Black women's voice and view. From below the ground the bones of Lucy speak to the presence of the feminine and proto-Africoid people. In seeking to meet the needs of family and country, Black women in early twentieth century Boston pulled together in support of Black men fighting to ensure democracy abroad while being denied at home.

Still, these men and women answered the call to leadership through service. Finally, the ABWH a community of lay, professional, retired and student historians contribute their voices in the great concert of Africana womanhood through the installation of their archive. Thus, the artifact, activism and archives blend together in sonorous harmony proclaiming our right to belong, our innate worthiness and our perfecting competence.

### Lucy as artifact:

The remains of Lucy found in 1972 by French geologist Maurice Taieb were discovered in the Hadar Formation in the Afar Triangle of Ethiopia. The remains are approximately 3.2 million years old and believed to be the mother of human-kind.

*Australopithecus afarensis* is one of the best known early human species. *Australopithecus afarensis* is defined as gracile hominid of southern Africa. Paleontologist credit *Australopithecus afarensis* with being the longest living and developmentally progressive hominid. The out of Africa school of evolution indicate that Africa particularly the eastern region, Ethiopia and Kenya incubated homo sapien/modern man. Thus, early Africana woman speaks from beneath the ground.



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## African American Women: Artifact, Activism and Archives

*Ida E. Jones*

Assistant Curator,  
Moorland-Spingarn Research Center  
Howard University, Washington, DC

**The League of Women for Community Service & Maria L. Baldwin as activism:** The League of Women for Community Service opened in 1918 when a group of Black women organized themselves as the Soldiers' Comfort Unit, to render needed services to Black soldiers stationed in the Boston area after World War I. The women realized that the Black community had greater need during and after the war. The League expanded their effort and incorporated the larger Black community as a target area thus becoming the League of Women for Community Service. In 1920, they purchased a brownstone in the South End neighborhood of Boston at 558 Massachusetts Avenue, to serve as their permanent headquarters which they still own and occupy.

Throughout the years the League has morphed to meet the needs of the Black community in Boston. They have hosted intellectual and artistic activities as well as art exhibitions, concerts, literary study groups, and lectures. As a non-partisan group they have welcomed men, women, Black and white speakers to their headquarters. Currently, the League is involved in a campaign to restore its home at 558 Massachusetts Avenue. Restoration of the building will enable the League to preserve its rich history.



The League's first president was Maria L. Baldwin. Baldwin was born in 1856 in Cambridge, Massachusetts to Peter L and Mary E. Baldwin. Formally educated Baldwin dedicated her life to a career in education that would span over 40 years. She attended a variety of schools in Cambridge. She attended the

Sargent Primary School, the Allston Grammar School, and Cambridge Latin High School. She graduated from high school in 1874. She attended a teaching institute where she chose the career – educator. As an educator she initially taught in Chestertown, Maryland eventually returning to Cambridge, Massachusetts at the Agassiz School starting in 1882. In 1889 she became the headmaster of the Agassiz School making history as the first African American and woman to hold such a position in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. During her tenure as headmaster, she organized the first Parent-Teacher group in the city. Her instruction in mathematics and art provided innovation in the field of teaching. Concurrently, she introduced the forerunner to museum science/studies. Of note is the fact that Baldwin's 12 teachers and nearly 400+ students were all white.

A lifelong learner Baldwin took classes at Harvard University to further her education. While at Harvard she befriended another student W.E.B. DuBois. Their friendship turned mutual admiration. So moved by her innovations in public school education, in 1917 DuBois wrote "The school [Agassiz] composed of kindergartners and eighth grades, is one of the best in the city and is attended by children of Harvard professors and many of the old

Cambridge families. The teachers under Miss Baldwin, numbering twelve, and the 410 children are all white. Miss Baldwin thus, without a doubt, occupies the most distinguished position achieved by a person of Negro descent in the teaching world of America, outside cities where there are segregated schools." Maria L. Baldwin died in January 1922. The original Agassiz school structure was razed in 1993 and replaced in 1995. In 2004 the Agassiz School was renamed the Maria L. Baldwin School. Similarly the League of Women for Community Service offers the Maria L. Baldwin Scholarship to a deserving female high school senior of African descent slated to graduate each year.

### **ABWH as an archive:**

Finally in 2012 in celebration of Black Women in history and culture the 30+ year old ABWH installed their archive at the Moorland-Spingarn Research Center of Howard University. The ABWH archives initiative is long overdue. The committee of members whose expertise in archives surveyed leading institutions to locate a repository whose overall mission reflected the intentions of ABWH. They completed their work over 6 years ago. After much committee discussion and voting Moorland was selected.

# THE FIRST ABWH MEETING

On September 12, 2012 ABWH leadership and membership participated in a program held in the Founders Library on the campus of Howard University.

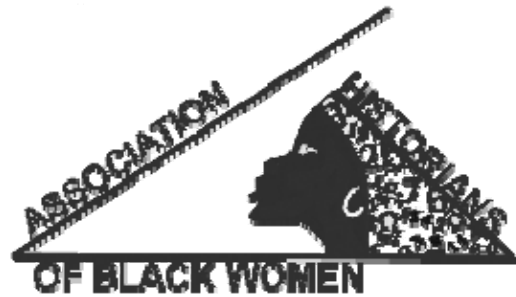


Dr. Rosalyn Terborg-Penn presented an informed and rousing chronology of Black women's history and the atmosphere that spawned the creation of ABWH. Dr. Terborg-Penn stated that sexism demonstrated by select African American male scholars compounded by overt racism from many white women scholars resulted in a need to create a place of solace, networking and affirmation. The event ended with a number of Howard University students and administrators reviewing a series of archival materials. I encourage ABWH members to consider donating their historical ABWH documents to the collection items such as photographs, luncheon programs, and early issues of TRUTH.

In essence, the path of progress has moved the Black women from museum artifact to community activism to university archives. It is my hope that contemporary and rising historians will strive to throw up paths in the wilderness of academia and society in the spirit of our foremothers and on behalf of those women yet born.

**Enjoy!**

**Ida E. Jones**



## THE FIRST ABWH MEETING

Letter from Eleanor Smith and Roslyn Penn to  
Darlene Hine dated January 3, 1979.

Dear Ms. Hine:

Greetings and best wishes for the New Year! You are invited to be a member of the Steering Committee of Black Female Historians United. The first meeting will be held Saturday, February 10, 1979 in Cincinnati, Ohio. More information will follow if you accept the invitation.

The responsibility of the Steering Committee at the February meeting will be to work on the organizational structure and planning for the conference which will be at the national meeting of the Association for the Study of Afro-American Life and History in New York.

Members of the Steering Committee are being asked to serve a two year term which will mean meeting four times (twice each year)\_\_\_1<sup>st</sup> meeting Steering Committee in February, October National Conference of the ASALH in New York, 1980 Steering Committee meeting (probably in the West) and the 1980 October National Conference of ASALH in New Orleans.

Please correspond with either of us Eleanor Smith or Rosalyn Penn as soon as possible so we can plan for the February meeting.

Sincerely,  
Eleanor Smith  
Rosalyn Penn

# THE WOMEN BEHIND THE SCENES

## The Women Behind the Scenes

### Eleanor J. Smith



Dr. Eleanor J. Smith played a very important role in organizing the first official meeting/luncheon of ABWH featuring Dr. Gwendolyn Baker as speaker. "Eleanor Smith majored in music education with an emphasis on piano and voice, and her Ph.D. is in African American studies with an emphasis on history. She has published widely on the African American experience, particularly on African American women and education. She has served as chancellor at the University of Wisconsin, Parkside, as provost and vice president for academic affairs at William Paterson University in New Jersey and as dean at Smith College in addition to various faculty and administrative positions at the University of Cincinnati. Smith also served on many national higher education committees and boards and provided similar services for several community organizations." She received her doctorate in African-American History from the Union Institute in Cincinnati in 1972 and completed her master's degree in education at Ohio State University.

Smith and Rosalyn Terborg-Penn organized the first meeting of a new organization called Black Female Historians United which we presently know as the Association of Black Women Historians (ABWH).

On February 26, 1979, she wrote, to Darlene Clark Hine, "they are doing a lovely write-up in the faculty newspaper about our new organization, I wanted to let you know that Gwendolyn Baker will be our speaker for our meeting in October." On March 30, 1979, Smith presented her paper "Historical Relationships and Contemporary Implications for Black Women in the Liberation Movement" at Purdue University's conference on black women. In her paper, she concluded, "it is important for black women to historically view their relationship with white women and put that relationship in context when examining their present situation surrounding their roles in the women's liberation movement."

### Gwendolyn C. Baker



Dr. Gwendolyn C. Baker received her Bachelor of Science, Master of Arts degree and Ph.D. in Education from the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor (U of M). She taught in the public school system in Ann Arbor, Michigan prior to becoming assistant professor, associate professor then Director of Affirmative Action programs at UM from 1976 to 1978. In 1979, she served as chief of minorities and women's programs at the National Institute of Education in Washington D.C. Baker is best known as a pioneer in the field of multicultural education.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Letter from Eleanor Smith to Darlene Clark Hine, February 26, 1979. Purdue University Conference Program, "Conference on the Black Woman: Her Past, Present and Future," p.5. "Eleanor J. Smith" by JournalTimes.com, April 4, 1994. Whittier College News Release, "Black History and Heritage Celebrated at Whittier College," February 18, 2000.

## REMEMBERING.....

### "The Black Woman: Her Past, Present and Future" (1979)

In 1979, Dr. Darlene Clark Hine, Interim Director of the Africana Studies and Research Center at Purdue University organized the Conference On The Black Woman: Her Past, Present And Future, March 30-31, 1979. This interdisciplinary conference included the collaborative efforts of a conference steering committee, co-sponsors and student assistants who brought together dozens of scholars to discuss major issues in the field. The Keynote Theme was "Double Jeopardy: Being Black and Female" presented by Dr. Nan Elizabeth McGehee, Associate Chancellor of the University of Illinois in 1979, and Dr. Dorothy Brown, M.D. Hine declared, "what we do during these two days has significance not only for the black women in attendance but hopefully will help to ease the burden of double jeopardy for those black women who will follow our lead."

Many of the themes from the 1979 conference continue to shape the course of women's studies, black women's history and culture. The following were some of the panels, the participants and brief summaries of some papers presented in 1979 at Purdue University.

## MARCH 30, 1979

**Eleanor Smith-** "Historical Relationships and Contemporary Implications for Black Women In the Liberation Movement."- This paper examined the relationships of black and white women during slavery, suffrage, employment and integration.

**Jeannette C. Taylor-** "Contemporary Implications of the Women's Liberation Movement for Black Women" It is important for Black Women to understand inequities in 1) the distribution of goods and services for women and men 2) the imbalance in sex-role socialization of women and men 3) the physical and psychological abuse of women by men and male-owned institutions.

# THE BLACK WOMAN: HER PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE



Dr. Jeannette C. Taylor being honored in 2001 as the first African American female dean at the University of Cincinnati. She was appointed dean of the Division of Continuing Education in 1979 and became dean of the College of Evening and Continuing Education (CECE) in 1989.

**“New Horizons Ahead for Dean Jeannette Taylor” by Dawn Fuller, Photo by Colleen Kelley, May 7, 2001.**

Dr. Shorter is a native of Chicago Heights, Illinois. She received her BA in Elementary Education from the University of Illinois, Champaign/Urbana; her Masters degree in Administration from Roosevelt University, Chicago; and she received her Ph.D. in In-service and Pre-service Training of Teachers from the University of Illinois, Urbana. Dr. Shorter is the Pastor of New Beginnings Full Gospel Baptist Church of Ford Heights, Illinois.

**“Arise & Walk Women’s Conference” at St. James Christian Methodist Episcopal Church, Chicago Heights, IL**



**In Memory of Dr. Nan Elizabeth McGehee  
(March 9, 1928 - Jan. 25, 2012)**

Dr. McGehee was passionate about mentoring and inspiring youth both in Chicago and on Vashon Island in Washington, where she moved after retiring from a life long career in education. She attended DuSable High School and attained a BA from the University of Chicago and BA, MA and Ph.D. degrees from Northwestern University retiring as the Associate Chancellor and Associate Professor of Psychology at the University of Illinois at Chicago Circle. She was pivotal in the development of Vashon Youth and Family Services for numerous years. For many years she was an active member of the Chicago Chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority and was a lightning rod for women's issues in and out of the workplace.

**Chicago Tribune “Obituary” February 5, 2012**



**Constance Shorter-** “The Education of Black Women.” The black woman unlike her white counterpart usually receives ‘duel’ treatment after becoming “educated” even as they supposedly receive special consideration as members of two minorities under our civil and human rights laws.

**Joyce Jones and Olga Welch-** The Black Woman In Academia: Pressures and Problems.” Examination of the black female professional exposes the exclusion of both women and minorities in academic communities. Despite recent affirmative action efforts, the pressures and problems inherent in academia remain largely unchanged for black women.

**Keynote Address- Dr Nan Elizabeth McGehee and Dr Dorothy Brown- “Double Jeopardy: Being Black and Female.”** The facts are that all women have a higher unemployment rate than men and that black women have a higher unemployment rate than majority women; all women have a lower average weekly earning than men and black women have a lower average than majority women. Other social scientists and data suggest that black and white men prefer white women to black women both as professional colleagues and as social/sexual partners.

**Grace Holt-** “Historical and Current Efforts of the National Council of Negro Women.” This paper briefly discussed the philosophy, issues and activities of the National Council of Negro Women as a function of organized power. The black woman’s efforts to fight her own oppression and that of her people are an area which deserves scholarly attention.

**Nora Williams Rice-** “Role of the National Association of Colored Women’s Clubs in the Formation of the Afro-American Community.” This association’s activities over time indicate how the needs of a people created organizational responses enhancing and enlarging the community’s capacity for survival.

# THE BLACK WOMAN: HER PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE

**Panel** – Images of Black Women in American Literature- **Panel Chair- Deborah McDowell.** Panelists, Vashti Lewis, Maria Mootry, Keith Byerman, Mary Emma Graham.

**Shirley Herd**, Vice President of the National Council of Negro Women, Indianapolis and Betty Thomas, Director of Historical Development, National Council of Negro Women- Both presenters discussed the contributions of black women's organizations in Indiana.

**Kalamu ya Salaam**, Editor, The Black Collegian. "We Black Men Must Stop Raping Black Women." The purpose of this presentation is to offer an analysis and theory on the phenomenon of rape which is one of the most blatant and violent forms of sexual oppression. Salaam's paper was renamed and presented as "Women's Rights Are Human Rights."

**Carolyn Morris.** "The Problems of Black Women in Employment." This paper discussed the problems of 'under-utilization' and misconceptions of women workers which adversely affects employment.

**Panel Chair- Alton Hornsby.** Presenter- Donna Polk. "The Laboring Black Woman."

**John C. Gaston-** A Black Male's Interpretation of the Black Professional Woman's Perception of her Communication with the Black Male." Interviews were conducted with fifty professional black women in Denver, Colorado during the summer of 1978. This paper provided an overview of personalities, communication problems and predictions for the future of dynamic relationships.

**Panel Chair- Sharon Pinner.** Panelist- Elneita Devor- "Black Man/Black Woman Relationships: A Structured Group Model- This panel provided group approaches for working with black students and included critiques.

**March 31, 1979**

Black Women In Medicine **Panel Chair, Kathy Bracey Bettina Aptheker-** "Quest For Professionalism: Black Women In Medicine." Ethel Brown Stone, "Patients, Nurses, Midwives and Doctors: Black Women In Medicine."

Black Women And Liberation Panel **Brenda Daniel Etheridge, Gayle Porter, Betty Ellerson-** The panelists represented the National Alliance of Black Feminists, Chicago, Illinois- They discussed a broad range of organizational activities including, task forces to address contemporary issues affecting black women in local communities, publications to increase public awareness, economic and social resources and services available to black women.

Focus on the Black Woman-Sterilization Abuse Alert- **Panel Chair Patricia Hill Collins Dianne Mommon, Mary Keefe, Kathy Mallin-** All three panelists represented the legal profession from the prosecutor's office to the legal assistance foundation and the health task force. History rarely deals with the malicious abuse of the black woman from living in this society as black and female to a patriarchal society dominated by males. The black woman has had to be strong, yet are a persecuted for having survived.

Psychological Dynamics of Black Womanhood- **Panel Chair, Juanita Williams Andrea Perry, Jack E. Thomas-** This presentation emphasized the challenges of a federally funded program designed to meet the needs of young, black unwed mothers in Indianapolis. Thomas discussed the psychology of the incarcerated black woman.

**Marion Blalock-** "Stereotypes of Black Professional Women: A Panel." There can be empowerment associated with stereotypes which may be used positively and effectively by examining the dynamics of interactions between black women, white women and white males.

Dr. Alton Hornsby  
Fuller E. Callaway  
Professor of  
History Emeritus,  
Morehouse  
College



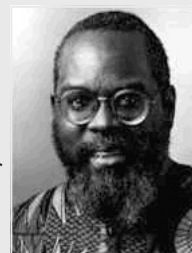
Dr. Bettina Aptheker  
Professor  
Feminist Studies,  
University of  
California, Santa  
Cruz

Dr. Patricia Hill  
Collins  
Distinguished  
University Professor  
of Sociology  
University of  
Maryland, College  
Park



Ms. Marion Blalock  
Retired Director,  
Minority Engineering  
Program  
Purdue University

Kalamu ya  
Salaam  
Poet, Professional  
Editor/Writer,  
Filmmaker, Producer  
and Arts  
Administrator



# "WOMEN'S RIGHTS ARE HUMAN RIGHTS"

## EXCERPTS

from the paper

**"Women's Rights Are Human Rights"**

by Kalamu ya Salaam  
at Purdue University (1979).

"Based on my study and analysis of my own experiences and environment, as well as study and analysis of the experiences and environments of other people in other places and other periods of time, I draw the conclusion that the issue of women's rights has and continues to be a central concern of every force in the world, as well as a critical concern of millions of women who daily suffer the degradations and deprivations of sexual chauvinism in its institutionalized and individual forms.

The suffering of women in general, third world women in particular, and especially the suffering of the Afrikan-american woman, hurts me in ways too numerous to delineate. Yet, beyond the personal pain, there is a social reality which must be recognized, namely, that sexism is a means, used by our enemies, to help maintain our subjugation as a people...

Why should an Afrikan-american man be concerned with an issue like women's rights?... I am concerned about the issue of women's rights because I understand that women's rights are a political issue and I am a political person. I understand that the oppression and exploitation of women is an integral aspect of every reactionary social system which ever existed and I am struggling to be a progressive. I understand that women, like land, are primary to life and I am a living being. I am concerned about the issue of women's rights because I am striving to be a revolutionary, and without the eradication of sexism, there will be no true and thorough going revolution....

Today women continue to get less pay for equal work, and lack equal access to both educational and employment opportunities...today women continue to be regarded as the sexual toys of powerful men...today rape continues to be one of the most common and underreported crimes in America...today child-care continues to be virtually non-existent

and/or exorbitantly priced....

One sure sign of sexism is the objectification of women's bodies, the turning of women into commodities to be bought, sold, bartered for or stolen. The gains in women's rights, just as the gains in civil rights for Afrikan-americans are seemingly becoming little more than paper formalities and highly touted token adjustments. Afrikan-american women are still the most exploited stratum of American society....

In conclusion, I urge that we open our eyes to the reality of sexism and fight it. I urge everyone, particularly men to speak out against sexism and support the struggles of women to defend and develop themselves. I urge greater attention to be paid to the social and material conditions which lead to and reinforce sexism, a deeper and more accurate analysis needs to be done and resolute and uncompromising action needs to be taken....Sexism will be eradicated only through organized resistance and struggle.



Women's rights will be won only when we consciously overturn all vestiges of patriarchy and "bourgeoisie" rights. No person has the right to own, oppress, enslave or exploit another person. Sexism is not a right, it is a wrong. We must stand for what is right and fight against what is wrong...It is so easy in America to forget that women are human beings, to forget that women have rights. Hopefully, this presentation will stir up opposition to sexism, will bring women and men out of their shells of self-denial and isolation, and into the light of truth and justice....Know that when you stand for women's rights you stand beside the most courageous and progressive people who have ever lived, and are not afraid of the future because they are willing to struggle in the present to correct historical wrongs.

**The entire article was published in *Black Scholar*, Vol. 10, Number 6, p. 7.**

## In Memoriam

**Edna B. Chapelle McKenzie, Ph.D.**



Excerpts from article "**McKenzie, Rice to receive Spirit of King Award**"

*New Pittsburgh Courier*

By Ashley N. Johnson

January 13, 2012

In the 1940s, McKenzie began her career at the Pittsburgh Courier as a writer for the society section, but later advanced to the city section, reporting on important issues such as the Double V campaign, which called for victory against U.S. racism and the axel powers aboard.

Edna McKenzie, who passed away June 2005 at the age of 81, was an activist, writer, professor and historian. She had a love of knowledge and thrived to be the very best. She was the first Black woman to earn a doctorate degree in history at the University of Pittsburgh. With a personality that has been described as tenacious, McKenzie used that same drive to not only find the story and report on it, but also to change the injustices that she reported on. She believed that there was no place for inequality and that everyone was entitled to be treated fairly.

"I consider her one of the strongest advocates of equality in Pittsburgh, that I have ever encountered," said Ralph Proctor, professor of ethnic and diversity studies at the Community College of Allegheny County. "She was a powerful advocate for African-American people and she was fearless and very articulate." McKenzie was a lifelong member of ABWH and ASALH.

## The R & R of Our Truth

**Rose C. Thevenin**  
Associate Professor  
Florida Memorial University  
Miami, Florida



**TRUTH** has always served as the organ of the ABWH from 1979 to the present. It is the voice of our organization but must always serve as the tool of our R & R, which stands for retention and recruitment. Retention is of the utmost importance. We need to keep our members active and vibrant in our organization. An organization with an inactive membership cannot function effectively or survive.

Vibrancy means more than an acknowledgement of individual presence; it denotes engagement with all facets of the organization. We must become ambassadors at

local, national and international events. As an organization of black women historians, we must always be within reach and available to educate and inspire others. For the ABWH, retention equals outreach within the membership to strengthen fundamental support networks necessary for individual and organizational success.

Outreach demands a vision or strategic planning rooted in the ABWH mission articulated in 1979. Our mission is “1) to establish a network among the membership 2) to promote black women in the historical profession 3) to disseminate information by, for and about black women via ABWH publications 4) to share information about opportunities in the field 5) to make suggestions concerning research topics and repositories.” Retention demands the development and refinement of a comprehensive strategic plan at all organizational levels to meet strategic objectives consistent with our mission statement in the new millennium. The main objective

of this strategic plan is to ensure our members remain active and engaged not only by renewing membership but by interconnecting with past, present and new members.

In 1979, the ABWH comprised of a small number of women historians who organized a support network for an emerging field. In 2012, the organizational mission remains the same, but the organization’s vision must expand to include concrete efforts to remain connected to the membership and simultaneously increase the organization’s visibility at the local, national and international level. Local events throughout our communities may require occasional access to our breadth of knowledge. As ambassadors of the ABWH, our members can inform local media of our expertise. That is not to say the ABWH will comment on every issue but our individual members can be consulted in her/his area of expertise whenever necessary. Retention as a strategic plan means we need you, our members to become the levers to support our organizational bridge. Our mission unites us but, our vision sustains the vibrancy of our organization.

Recruitment is the other fundamental element critical to organizational success. Our organization began in 1979 with the active recruitment of graduate students in various stages of completing their degrees. We also recruited young scholars in the early stages of their careers. Such people later became the senior scholars with distinguished accomplishments in their careers. It is important for our organization to continue the tradition of cultivating talent and generating scholarship. We must reach out and nurture the scholar in every stage of her/his career. We should include and also prioritize undergraduate, graduate, senior scholars and members of our local community. We must continue to provide anchors and safe harbors for those whose voices have yet to be heard in our discussions about men and women across the parallels of race, class, gender and sexuality. The small objection frequently heard is that we are not a big organization and we're not trying to be, or else the closeness and familiarity will be lost. My response is that our vision was never linear in 1979. If we expand our vision, we will and we shall succeed in our mission.

Organizational growth and expansion is consistent with broaden our horizons. Greater numbers will not necessarily translate into organizational success but, it will supply more representation at the local, state, national and international level. Recruitment must be prioritized as an outreach initiative for the visibility and vibrancy of the ABWH. The R & R of our TRUTH must always be retention and recruitment to assure our continuity through time and to keep members engaged in our organization.

Our retention and recruitment must always be inclusive of all people. We have always had male members in our organization's history, but we must make a concerted effort of R & R for them as well. As members of the ABWH, we generate scholarship but we also provide a solid cushion in the ever expanding fields of American history, African-American history and women's studies.

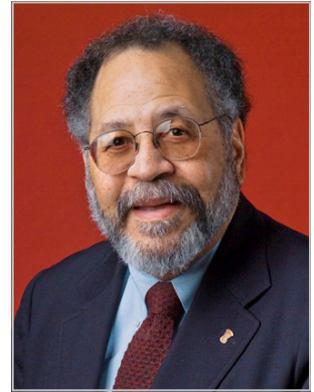
*By Rose C. Thevenin*



Ms. Juanita Moore  
ABWH Founding Member  
President and CEO of  
Charles H. Wright Museum of African  
American History  
Detroit, Michigan



Dr. Sylvia Jacobs  
ABWH Founding Member  
Professor of History  
North Carolina Central University



Dr. Robert L. Harris  
2012 ABWH LIFE MEMBER  
Director -Africana Studies and  
Research Center  
Cornell University



Dr. Stephanie J. Shaw  
ABWH Life Member  
TRUTH Editor, Emerita  
Associate Professor of History  
Ohio State University



Dr. Sharon Harley  
ABWH Founding Member  
Chair and Associate Professor  
of African American Studies  
University of Maryland, College Park

# IN MEMORIAM

## IN MEMORIAM

**RUTH SIMMS HAMILTON, Ph.D.**

By Rose C. Thevenin

"Surely, the impact of her work and service lives on in her publications, in her example and in the many students now located throughout the world she so profoundly impressed inside and outside the classroom."

**M. Peter McPherson,**  
**President Michigan State University,**  
**2003**



Dr. Ruth Simms Hamilton was born in 1937. She received her Bachelor of Arts degree from Talladega College, her M.A. and Ph.D. degrees from Northwestern University. She joined the faculty of Michigan State University in 1968 where she served for thirty-five years as an assistant professor of sociology, an associate professor and professor of sociology and urban affairs. Hamilton was nationally and internationally recognized for her pioneering work in African urbanization and diaspora studies. She established the African Diaspora Research Program (ADRP) at MSU and also taught core classes at the Center for Latin and Caribbean studies and the African studies Center at MSU. She taught courses in urban development, racial inequality and migration. She published dozens of articles and other works on the African diaspora. Dr. Hamilton received many local and national awards for outstanding scholarship, exceptional teaching and service. In 1995, MSU awarded her the Ralph H. Smuckler Award for Advancing International Studies and Programs.

## IN MEMORIAM

**GLORIA HARPER DICKINSON, Ph.D.**

**August 5, 1947 - January 18, 2009**



Dr. Gloria Dickinson was a founding member of ABWH and held national offices as Parliamentarian, Vice Director, Webmaster and Discussion List Moderator. Gloria received her B.A. in History from City College of New York and her M.A. and Ph. D. in African Studies from Howard University. For several years, she served as the Department Chair of Africana Studies at The College of New Jersey. She is a past International Secretary of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. (1998-2002) and served as the President of the Association of African American Life and History (2001-2003). Gloria was also a member of the African Studies Association and the Links, Inc.



## IN MEMORIAM

**WILLIAM MANNING MARABLE**

May 13, 1950 - April 1, 2011



At Columbia University, where he became a professor of public affairs, political science, history and African-American studies in 1993, he was the founding director of the Institute for Research in African-American Studies and the Center for the Study of Contemporary Black History. Marable was the editor of journal *Souls*.

Marable, wrote and edited nearly 20 books and scholarly anthologies. His columns on politics, racial issues and civil rights have been featured in African-American newspapers and other publications across the country. He also has championed women's, lesbian, gay, labor and social justice groups.

Some of his books and anthologies include: *The Great Wells of Democracy: The Meaning of Race and American Lit* and *Freedom on My Mind: The Columbia Documentary History of the African American Experience*. His biography *Malcolm X: A Life of Reinvention* was published a few days after his passing. He won the 2012 Pulitzer Prize in History.

"Manning Marable, Historian and Social Critic, Dies at 60" by William Grimes, April 1, 2011, New York Times, p. B8 and "Ethnic studies, African-American scholar Marable to speak at Purdue" by Clyde Hughes, February 6, 2009.

## IN MEMORIAM

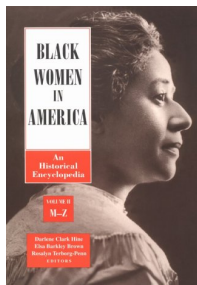
**RALPH L. CARLSON**

By Darlene Clark Hine

July 8, 1944 - May 24, 2011



Ralph was a champion of Black Women's scholarship. His inspiration that led to the production and publication of *Black Women in America: An Historical Encyclopedia* co-edited with ABWH leaders Rosalyn Terborg-Penn and Elsa Barkley Brown. The two volume set won the prestigious Dartmouth Medal in 1994 and laid a solid foundation for the robust evolution of a dynamic and transformative body of scholarship. Two generations of ABWH scholars and others have irrevocably centered the historical experiences of African American women into the narratives of the American civilization and African American History. Ralph was a dear friend who I will always remember for his compassion, generosity, and amazing energy. We owe him a debt of profound gratitude and honor his memory by keeping up our good work as African American women's history scholars. May his soul rest in peace.



## IN MEMORIAM

**SHIRLEY TURPIN-PARHAM, Ph.D.**

February 13, 2012

BY JOHN F. MORRISON,  
[morrisj@phillynews.com](mailto:morrisj@phillynews.com)  
 as reported by [philly.com](http://philly.com)

HERE IT is, Black History Month, and how many people are aware that blacks were living and working in Philadelphia before William Penn showed up in 1681?

Shirley Turpin-Parham knew. It was with some annoyance that Shirley saw the ignorance of many people, including members of her own race, about the history of blacks in this country, especially in Philadelphia. She would fire off a guest opinion for the editorial pages of the Daily News, or a letter to the editor, when she felt that the public needed to be enlightened on some aspects of local black history.

Shirley Turpin-Parham, a 30-year teacher in the Philadelphia School District, a teacher at the African-American History Museum and Cheyney University was 73 and lived in Mount Airy.

As is typical of many historians, Shirley had a passion for details that some people might think of as more than you really wanted to know about certain events and people. But Shirley had a storehouse of information on black history that she never hesitated to dispense in lectures and writing.

Did you, for instance, need to know that Dr. Rebecca J. Cole, mentioned in a story about Black History Month in the Daily News as a pioneering African-American physician in the 19th century, was one of three children, or that her salary was \$625 a year as a teacher at the Colored Public School at Centre Street and Germantown Avenue? Daily News readers were apprised of these details in a February 2008 letters-to-the-editor column. In a 1997 Daily News guest opinion, Shirley told about how Africans were brought to Philadelphia as slaves before Penn landed "to work in the making of the colony," as Penn himself wrote.

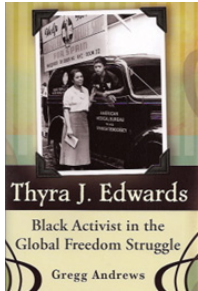
When Philadelphia was threatened by the British, who had occupied Washington in the War of 1812, the city called on Richard Allen, Absalom Jones and James Forten, iconic Philadelphia black leaders, to help build defenses. Shirley wrote that "2,500 colored men were assembled in the State House yard and marched to Grays Ferry. There they worked for two days." Shirley could go on and on with such information. It was her expressed desire to educate one and all on the history of blacks and their contributions to the city going back 300 years.

She was born in Brooklyn to Samuel Louis and Shirley Handy Turpin in 1938. After the family moved to this area, she graduated from Chester High School in 1956, and went on to Morgan State and Cheyney University, from which she received a bachelor's degree in education in 1962.

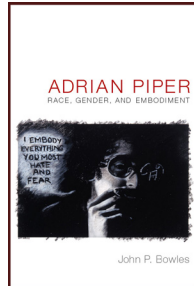
She later earned a master's in education and urban studies from Temple University, and a doctorate of education from Temple. She taught in public schools for 30 years, retiring from the Jay Cooke School. She then taught at the African-American Museum, and later taught black history at Cheyney, where she was inducted into its Hall of Fame. Shirley was an active member of Tindley Temple United Methodist Church, where she was a Sunday School teacher and involved in other church activities.

## Books in African American Women's History & Culture

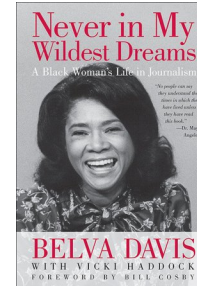
Compiled by Glenda Alvin, Darlene Clark Hine and Marshanda Smith



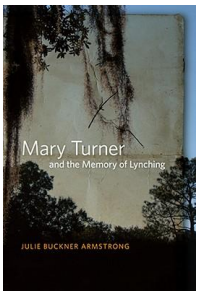
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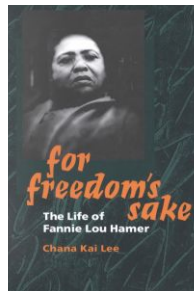
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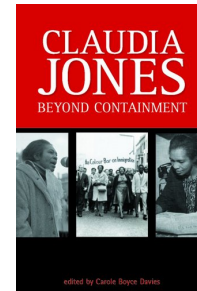
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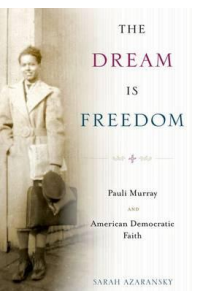
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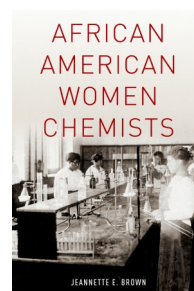
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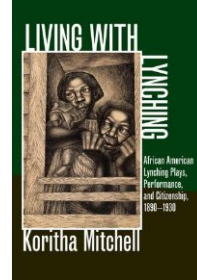
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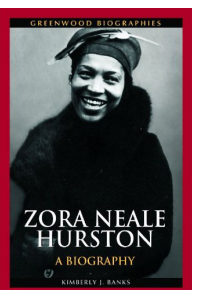
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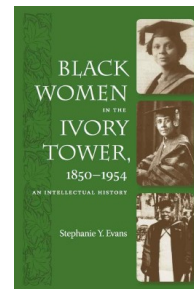
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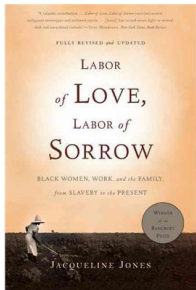


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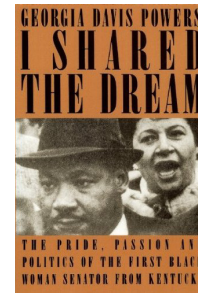
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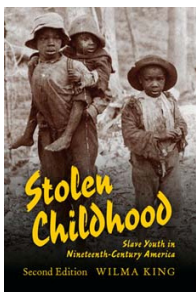
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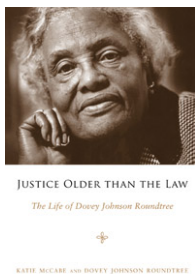
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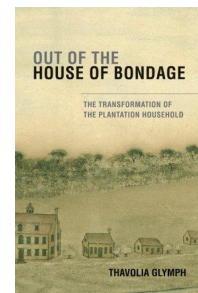
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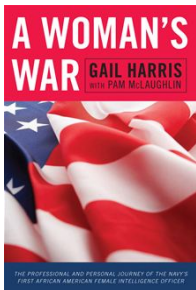
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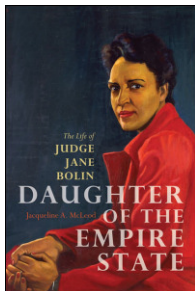
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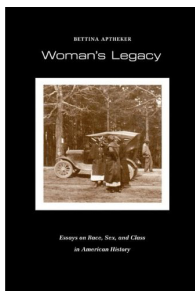
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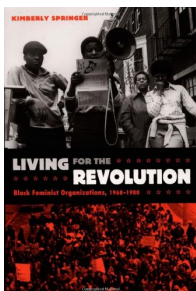
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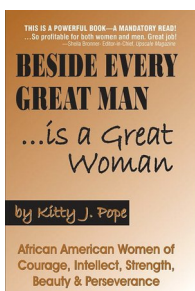
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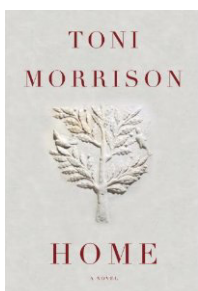
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## Anna Madah Hyers

**ABSTRACT:** Anna Madah Hyers, pioneer concert vocalist, soprano, and with her sister, Emma Louis, a contralto, performed as the Hyers Sisters in the late nineteenth century. They were the first black repertory company and theatrical organization to produce musical concerts. They were among the first black women to achieve distinction on the American concert stage. The Hyers Sisters were exceptional because they dared to deviate from the stereotypes of the post-emancipation era. Their repertoire was varied and ranged from plantation songs, popular ballads, drama, and musical comedy to operatic arias. Through the prudent supervision of their ambitious father, this talented operatic team emerged in the early 1870s and then toured nationally

and internationally for several seasons in a series of concerts.

Anna Madah Hyers, the eldest of four daughters of the amateur musicians Sam B. Hyers and Annie E. Hyers nee Cryer, was born in Sacramento, California. Anna's exact date of birth and death cannot be confirmed but most agree that she was born either in 1853 or 1855. At an early age she showed her prodigious talent. Her parents provided basic music training, and both of their daughters, Anna and Emma Louise Hyers, later studied piano and voice formally with the German professor Hugo Sank and the former Italian opera singer Madame Josephine D'Ormy. On 22 April 1867 the Hyers Sisters made their professional debut at the Metropolitan Theater in Sacramento, and for the next four years they toured the California circuit and were well received by the public at each stop. Anna was said "to possess a pure, sweet soprano voice, very true, even, and flexible, of remarkable compass

and smoothness" (Trotter, 162; Jackson, 550) when described by music critics and the press. Anna's "effortless high E-flat, and her birdlike trills" caused her to be likened to Jenny Lind, and recognized as one of America's first black prima donnas (Story, 33).

The Hyerses retired from the stage after their debut to continue study in preparation for making a cross-country tour. On 12 August 1871 the sisters returned to the concert stage and gave their first major recital at the Salt Lake Theater, accompanied by baritone Joseph LeCount, tenor Sam Hyers, and an accompanist. A succession of highly successful concerts in principal cities throughout the West--Saint Louis, Chicago, and Cleveland--gained them widespread recognition. After their triumphant tour in the West, Sam Hyers, manager of the group, expanded it to include the tenor Wallace King, baritone John Luca, and piano accompanist A.C. Taylor. Continuing the tour eastward, the troupe performed in New York City and in Brooklyn, drawing large, cultivated, and enthusiastic audiences, and were considered "a revelation" (Trotter, 172).



**P14** "ANNA MADAH HYERS"  
BY RICHLYN F. GODDARD

**P15** "A FORGOTTEN MAN OF  
REMARKABLE  
INTELLIGENCE: THE LIFE  
OF ERNEST JUST"  
BY SAMANTHA R. OBUOBI

**P20** "REAL HOUSEWIVES OF  
THE 1950S: BLACK CLUB  
WOMEN OF SOCIETY AND  
THE STYLISH APPROACH  
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HEARD AT A TIME LIKE  
THIS!"  
BY ASHLEY ROBERTSON

The Hyerses were celebrities following their concerts in Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and Connecticut, and in 1872 they were invited to sing at the World Peace Jubilee in Boston. By 1875 Sam Hyers had formed the Hyers Sisters Concert Company, which was supported by Napier Lothian, director of the Boston Theater Orchestra, and with whom they gave sacred music concerts.

During the 1870s several black artists attempted to deviate from the minstrel tradition and incorporate more accurate aspects of black American culture into the content of the performance. Sam Hyers, as business manager, enlarged the company in order to produce drama as early as 1876. The company's first production was written especially for the sisters to perform on stage and was entitled *Out of Bondage* (1877), a three-act musical drama adapted by Sam Hyers. This was followed by *Urine: or the African Princess* (1877; copyright notice filed in 1872 by E. J. Getchell); *Colored Aristocracy* (1877), in three acts; and *The Underground Railroad* (1879), in four acts. Black novelist Pauline Hopkins had written the latter two musical dramas. During this period the Hyerses toured nationally as the first and only black repertory company under the Redpath Lyceum Bureau. In 1883 they joined the Callendar Consolidated Spectacular Minstrel Festival at the Grand Opera House in New York and for a short period toured the nation with the minstrel troupe. This form of entertainment was popular then and was one of the few sources of consistent income for black musicians. The Hyers Sisters rejoined and expanded their own musical company with other notable talents such as Billy Kersands, Celestine O. Brown, Don S. King, and pianist-composer Jacob Sawyer, among others. The company produced two musicals. *The Blackville Twins* (1887) and *Plum Pudding* (1887). Beginning in 1894 the sisters appeared in separate ventures and Anna joined John W. Isham's minstrel production "*Octoroons*" to sing opera excerpts in the show. By the turn of the twentieth century, she had joined the M. B. Curtis

All-Star Afro-American Minstrels tour through the United States and Australia. After returning to the United States in the early 1900s, Anna appeared with Isham's Oriental American Company until 1902. Anna became the wife of a Dr. Fletcher of Sacramento and retired. She remained musically active in church and died in the 1930s.

By Richlyn F. Goddard, Ph.D.

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**Photo credit: Legacy: Treasures of Black History**, Edited by Thomas C Battle and Donna M Wells, **Moorland-Spingarn Research Center**. Image found on: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/22067139@N05/2221459277> by ~Kicha~.

#### A Forgotten Man of Remarkable Intelligence: The Life of Ernest Just By Samantha R. Obuobi

*"If I can give the boys and girls a scientific start, it will help them in whatever they do later. It will clarify life."*  
Dr. Ernest Everett Just

The contributions of the late Dr. Ernest Everett Just have been a major influence in my life as a rising scientist. Having graduated from Howard University as a double major in Biology and African American Studies his life is a harmony of such balance I seek to model. In brief, Dr. Ernest Everett Just (1883-1941) the renowned African American natural scientist was the principle founder of and intellectual figure in Howard University's Department of Zoology (now Biology). My senior thesis reimages Dr. Just through historical documents in the Moorland-Spingarn Research Center in attempts of introducing my generation to an unfortunately forgotten man of remarkable intelligence, dedication to scholarship and passion for education. Utilizing primary source and archival research, this research project fills the lacunae in scholarship on our understanding of Dr. Just's efforts, triumphs and frustrations, his Howard University experiences impacted and shaped him and his long career. Moreover, this work establishes an alternative method for undertaking the interdisciplinary study of intellectual figures in the natural sciences as a critically underexplored dimension of the field of Africana Studies.

To accomplish this goal the paper is sectioned into two areas: development of biological sciences at Howard and champion for the race. These two areas illuminate the span of Dr. Just's professional career and strife he encountered when seeking to fulfill his life's work.

#### Development of the Biological Sciences at Howard:

In 1907, the chances for a Black college graduate in the United States to enter

# A FORGOTTEN MAN OF REMARKABLE INTELLIGENCE

the white professional world was not welcomed. Although once emancipated Blacks were granted de facto citizenship, de jure norms restricted free movement in academic fields such as the sciences. Inevitably, the two options available for educated Blacks in the white professional world were to become teachers or ministers. Dr. Ernest Everett Just followed his early passion for science and thus the former.

Prior to World War II, Black scientists' careers were almost exclusively tied to Black learning centers from high schools to colleges. The early twentieth century opened with a cadre of highly trained and inspired Black instructors. Equipped with a desire to teach at a generally good Black post-secondary institution, in addition to being trained and leading a stellar undergraduate career at Dartmouth College, Just narrowed his options for employment to Morehouse College and Howard University. In the end, the South Carolina native, after careful consideration, selected Howard because of its location in an area less oppressive and subject to acts of racial terror compared to the Atlanta Georgia situated Morehouse. It was Howard's reputation for quality scholarship and offerings of both undergraduate and graduate level courses that sealed the deal for the selection of Howard. Christened "The Capstone of Negro Education," Howard housed the most elite of the segregated scholars who, while the majority were invariably trained at predominantly white institutions, understood that their chances of receiving any permanent appointment at one were effectively nil.

Howard University President Wilbur Patterson Thirkield is credited by many with "discovering" Dr. Just. According to the *Washington Afro American*, President Thirkield stated that Dr. Just was "one of the greatest discoveries I ever made."<sup>2</sup> However, further research reveals that Dean Kelly Miller, "brought [Dr.] Just to Howard in 1907." With Miller as the brains behind this particular operation, Thirkield was as "eager as Miller to employ Just" due to

employ Just" due to his hope to building a "greater Howard" by employing "men who believe in the Negro and who have the right spirit towards [our] work." Without regard to his area of primary training and interest, Dr. Just was employed by Howard University as a teacher of English and rhetoric in his first academic appointment.

Conversely, President Thirkield was looking to advance Howard by modernizing the traditional classical curriculum by adding technical subjects such as engineering and increasing emphasis on the natural sciences. In the spring of 1909, he had an "ambitious plan for the establishment of a genuine department of science at Howard." This plan included a new building with new faculty in order to "increase the number of black scholars in the school's science department and reduce the number of white liberal missionaries generally." He was "anxious to develop the applied sciences." As a result, he "fairly forced [Just] out of English into Biology", due to his belief that Just was the only "well-equipped man of the colored group" for the job, in view of his "exceptional record in biology" at Dartmouth, where he was the only one in his class to graduate magna cum laude.

Thirkield's plan for Dr. Just was to move him from the English Department and, with the assistance of what he described as a "high-class biological professor," Richard E. Schuh from Pennsylvania State College, to develop a Biology department that evoked his vision of a "greater Howard". A thorough examination of the archival record by this researcher did not yield evidence of a working relationship between Just and Schuh as it relates to the development of the Biology Department. Just does not appear in the Howard University Catalogue from 1907-1912 in the Biology department before he was recorded as Assistant Professor of Biology in 1910. At that time, Dr. Just was an instructor of both English and Biology. There is no available or existing information in the archival holdings consulted on Richard

E. Schuh. However, he is listed in the Howard University records as professor of Biology and Geology in 1908.<sup>3</sup>

Dr. Just developed the Biology Department, specifically the Department of Zoology, with an emphasis on research and a clear understanding of the requirements that make up a strong university as well as the challenges that could hinder the goal. He felt that a "well organized department depended on a rigid, previously approved outline of course material with the instructor checking with him about progress."

Writing years after the founding of the Department of Zoology, for which he would become famous, he would say that "the core of the University must be a strong college of the arts and sciences." He believed that in general, any college course should be "an end unto itself, its needs must be rigorous, full, complete." If a course was for university or professional work, however, "it still needs sharp definition...an intensive program for each particularistic unit of the curriculum, a unified and harmonious background that gives meaning and color to every course in every department of study." He added that "the stultification of college work may be easy in any one of three ways: every attempt to encroach on the College lessens its efficiency for realizing its goals; every attempt to dilute it leads to a cloudiness which obscures its boundaries; every festoon attached to it soon festers."

Guided by these principles, Just began work by not only teaching an introductory course in general zoology but by also teaching two advanced courses. The introductory course of general zoology was primarily for freshmen, a course that allowed him to teach the general principles of zoology, both as part of a liberal education and as preparation for the study of medicine. The two advanced courses, invertebrate and vertebrate, were designed for students who wanted to go on to study human anatomy, physiology, and psychology. These courses became

requirements for pre-medical students and others continuing in the allied fields. Dr. Just restructured the organization and development of medical education at Howard.

According to one of his friends, he spoke of research as the “breath of his life.” Therefore, in addition to the classes he taught, he proposed a research program built on a five-year period with a focus on the following subjects of investigation: fertilization, partenogenesis, cell-division, differentiation of development, ultra-violet radiation, hydration and dehydration in the living cell, gastrulation, sex-reversal, and regeneration.

His work in fertilization would include a “more complete study of the whole fertilization-process in animal eggs of every type in order to fill in the gap of our knowledge and to derive a complete explanation of the process.” His efforts in the field of partenogenesis would include “studies aimed to learn the nature of the developmental process by comparing development with fertilization and by means of experimental agents.” Cell-division studies would include the “continuation of work some already published on cell division and the underlying mechanism of the process. Differentiation of development work would include the “continuation of studies to answer the question, how does the egg become an embryo?” Ultra-violet radiation studies would be the “continuation of the work on the effects of ultra-violet light on eggs. Studies of the effects of hydration and dehydration in the living cell would cover “the extension of the work on water in cells.” Gastrulation studies would cover the “continuation of observations and experiments on the nature and cause of gastrulation in the egg.” Sex-reversal research would include studying the older observations referred to in print as well as analyzing the new ones that had been added at that time. Finally, research on regeneration would cover the extension of and participation in the investigation of other animals in refuting or proving

the unusual results that were obtained on the topic in previous years. This foundation in natural sciences in the early twentieth century contributed and complimented the careers of Dr. Dorothy B. Ferebee, medical school professor; Dr. Charles Drew professor and head of the Department of Surgery at Howard University and chief surgeon of Freedmen's Hospital and Dr. Montague Cobb physical anthropologist, anatomist and activist.

## Champion for the Race

Dr. Just's scientific genius was burnished by a deep sensitivity regarding race and struggles for racial equality. His actions and thinking were conditioned by the emphasis of race in society. According to Samuel Milton Nabrit, Dr. Just was “unusually sensitive about race not because he was a Negro, but because of the stigma that white Americans, scientists included, applied to Negroes.” The topic affected him so much that he was known to immediately retreat to his rooms or laboratories and remain “closeted there for several days” if a speaker unaware of his feelings told a ‘Negro joke’. “He wished to build a tower for his personality, where the ugly specter of prejudice could neither reach nor crush him.”

His hometown of Charleston, South Carolina was a city noted for its color complexion prejudice within the Negro race. Arguably, the inference can be made that the sensitivity he had regarding race was related or attributed to his childhood experiences in that city. This sensitivity he had also exerted a great impact on his ideas regarding the education of Negroes in the natural sciences and the part he felt compelled to play. According to Dr. Michael Winston in “Through the Back Door: Academic Racism and the Negro Scholar in Historical Perspective” *Daedulus* (1971), “Just believed in freedom of inquiry and racial equality, and his very existence was a challenge to racist contentions about the scientific ability of Negroes. His manner and mien did not conform to the prevailing

white idea of what a Negro scientist should be like.”

Dr. Just felt that he was called to teach and inspire the youth of his race; he was convinced that his “contribution to the development and the welfare of his group lies in rendering that particular service.” This is why he was the type of professor who personally suffered when a student whom he had sponsored did not progress as rapidly as he felt that student should, which later provided a basis for alienation of all interest in that student. As a result, he had very few students from 1907-1941 in pure biology. He said “I believe in mass-section, and I'm here to help raise the general level of race attainment. I feel as if I ought to do something for my race in the South.”

He was frustrated and embittered by the limitations imposed upon his career by accident of race. This unfortunate and unfair travesty of race imposed a distinct degree of limitations on Just that hindered the insurmountable limits he could have reached as a scientist, but, most of all, as a researcher of his caliber. In fact, it may be safe to state that the most critical drawback to his promising career was being a Negro in America.

Dr. Frank Lillie, his mentor at Woods Hole, the internationally-known Massachusetts research facility, made the following observation regarding Just:

“An element of tragedy ran through all [his] scientific career due to the limitations imposed by being a Negro in America, to which he could make no lasting psychological adjustment in spite of earnest efforts on his part. The numerous grants for research did not compensate for failure to receive an appointment in one of the large universities or research institutes. He felt this as a social stigma, and hence unjust to a scientist of his recognized standing...That a man of his ability, scientific devotion, and of such strong personal loyalties as he gave and received, should have been warped in the land of his birth must remain a

# A FORGOTTEN MAN OF REMARKABLE INTELLIGENCE

matter for regret." Dr. Frank Lillie "A Famous Negro Scientist." *Information Service* XXI.15 (1942)

During this period, there was a widespread perception of the Negro as "an undesirable—an undeveloped person constituting a problem in not being able to keep pace with others," according to Carter G. Woodson, in his 1936 book *The African Background Outlined*. When flipped on its head in regard to Dr. Just, that perception can be considered partially true—he was incapable of keeping pace with others, because he surpassed average scientists with his intimate knowledge of his material. Unfortunately, this incomparable degree of comprehension of his field gave him nothing but "a constant struggle for opportunity for research and he was condemned by race to remain attached to a Negro institution."

It can be inferred that Dr. Just understood better than most the role of the Negro institution and President Thirkield's goal to modernize Howard. He wrote the following:

"[Howard University] seeks to build up a group of Negro scholars... attempting over-night to gain the recognition of the University by the American educational world—necessitating the importation of whites of scholarly attainments. That is, we are not willing to take time for the former; and more, we desire the latter at once. This condition here with respect to the opposing theories of the development of scholarship is but one example to show the opacity of our minds with respect to the aims and purposes of Howard University. We therefore need, as never before, because of the amazing growth and prosperity of the University, that quality of leadership which inspires to sound thinking. That leadership we have but we need its fuller expression."<sup>4</sup>

Many people who knew Just believed that this was his goal at the university: To fully express the leadership that inspires sound thinking. This is why he emphasized research when developing

the Biology Department. Research entails a person to think outside the norms. It forces him or her to think and expand on a specific topic by taking heed to and considering all possibilities. This in itself is most likely why this discipline intrigued and captured Dr. Just's interest so vehemently. It is this form of intellectual work and deep thought that he thought would make his students better scholars as well as generally better people. This intellectual contribution by him is what he believed Howard University should provide, and he strived for it in his development of the Biology Department.

In 1938 under the administration of Mordecai Wyatt Johnson and after 31 years of service to the University he wished to retire. In a letter to Johnson he wrote the following:

"With each succeeding year my intestinal and nervous conditions become worse after my return here [Howard] for work. This year I seem to have reached the lowest ebb of my strength because I feel as I told you that I can no longer pull my weight I wish now in the 31<sup>st</sup> year of my service to retire as of February 8, 1938, the beginning of the second semester of the current academic year. You were kind enough to say to me that the University feels it's debt to me and the trustees like yourself appreciate this indebtedness for what I have accomplished. For the university has no place for broken down workers in the 55<sup>th</sup> year of my life. I am broken in body and spirit."<sup>5</sup>

Unfortunately, what seemed like a simple request from someone who had provided Howard with so much became anything but simple, and the request rapidly turned into a terse and debilitating situation.

President Johnson did not respond nor acknowledge Dr. Just's resignation until months after the fact; giving the impression that he was "sitting on it" for reasons that despite extensive research still seem unclear. In fact, Dr. Peter Marshall Murray, a good friend of Just's who he recruited to plead his case with the Board of Trustees, wrote to Just

during this period, saying that, "Had it not been for your letter to me, the Board of Trustees would have had no knowledge whatsoever of your resignation...or your feelings in the matter."<sup>6</sup>

After presenting his case to the Board, Charles Garvin, another friend Just recruited wrote to inform him that, after presenting his plea to the committee as his friends, it was of their opinion that it was better for him "to get a good rest and then return to the University..."<sup>7</sup>

Dr. Ernest Everett Just, a person who once wanted to so much for the University and the students who attended it, could no longer bear any association with the place. A dynamic force who took his duty and the calling of teaching and inspiring the youth of his race as his life's mission had been reduced to a person whose health and sanity was threatened at the thought of returning to the institution he had called home.

When President Johnson finally responded to his requests, he informed him that the Board "felt strongly that it would be an injustice both to you and to the University to make a decision upon your request for retirement while you were, as repeatedly stated by you in conversation and in writing, in such a poor state of health." The Board was willing to grant him a leave of absence with sabbatical pay in order for him to "take an extended rest." Furthermore, he was expected at Howard for regular work during the school year 1938-1939 as Professor of Zoology and Head of the Department of Zoology. He was told that if, after his return, he still felt poorly in "health of body and mind as to be obliged to request retirement, he should come see me [Johnson] to discuss further steps.

Just's response to Johnson's was strong, coherent and plain. Excerpts express his displeasure with Johnson's indifference.

"Extremely do I regret that such self-understood action, prescribed already by the rule of simplest business

-courtesy, was not adopted by you in the moment when you received my letter of March 29 and again immediately after the April-meeting of the Board of Trustees. By your silence you left me in the belief that my wishes and requests that had been repeatedly and *in extenso* explained to you...By neglecting this duty and by avoiding in any way to inform me, you have brought me into a more than embarrassing situation for you have, as I fear at once to the planned delaying and to the absolutely intolerable proposition.

Since my position, defined by the Trustees in 1920, as a full professor with half school-year of teaching to permit absolute freedom for research during the remainder of the year has never met with your approval--indeed, it found your active opposition--an therefore a position for me as research-professor *in absentia* as work demands, would be even less agreeable to you."<sup>8</sup>

Johnson's disregard of his requests implies an underlying disdain. This is ironic, since Just was one of the faculty who rallied for the appointment of Johnson as President of the University. At the time, he thought Johnson to be "just the man for the place." In fact, he had a strong admiration for Johnson's character and thought that he was "going to do for Negro education what Booker T. Washington did in his day." Rather than with professional and personal respect, or at least amicable or respectable posturing, Johnson's correspondence with Just hinted of resentment and possibly even jealousy.

It is this researcher's opinion that Johnson did not necessarily care about what happened to Just or to his career; what he was determined to abrogate was the image of power Just had acquired through his research and the attention given thereto by others.

In the end, penniless and needing to provide for his family, Ernest Everett Just had no choice but to return to Howard University to simply receive a paycheck. He predicted his demise to his friend, Dr. Murray in writing that this would be "the end of him." On October

27, 1941, just months after his return, his prediction came true. He passed away in the shadow of the university at his sister's house in Washington, D.C. His demise had arguably been accelerated by the place that allowed him to make a name for himself and perhaps even by some of the people who had benefitted as a consequence. The life of Dr. Ernest Everett Just is filled with many tragedies that make his triumphs all the more impressive.

*Excerpted from a larger work the senior thesis of Samantha R. Obuobi entitled "JUST" the Truth: Dr. Ernest Everett Just and Howard University College of Arts and Sciences Honors Program Biology and African American Studies Departments April 2012*

## Endnotes:

- <sup>1</sup> Mary C. Terrell, E. E. Just file in Mary C. Terrell papers, Moorland-Spingarn Research Center, Howard University
- <sup>2</sup> Wilbur P. Thirkield, "Doctor Just", Washington Afro-American, 16 June 193?, in the E. E. Just file, Moorland-Spingarn Research Center, Howard University
- <sup>3</sup> See *Howard University Catalogs 1900-1912* (published annually)
- <sup>4</sup> Ernest Just, Annual Report 1930-1931, Just papers Box 125-10 folder 185
- <sup>5</sup> Just to Johnson, January 17, 1938, Just papers Box 125-5 folder 94
- <sup>6</sup> Peter Marshall Murray to Just, August 22, 1938, Just papers Box 125-6, folder 113
- <sup>7</sup> Charles Garvin to Just, May 16, 1938, Just papers Box 125-4, folder 71
- <sup>8</sup> Just to Johnson September 28, 1938, Just papers Box 125-5, folder 94

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Jesse Moorland  
Ernest Everett Just  
Mary C. Terrell

## Special Collection and Archives

Fisk University  
Julius Rosenwald Fund



## REAL HOUSEWIVES OF THE 1950s:

### **Real Housewives of the 1950s: Black Club Women of Society and the Stylish Approach to Racial Uplift** By Kimberly D. Brown

Since the onset of the new millennium, reality television, specifically that which airs on cable stations such as Bravo and VH1 networks, has, according to many, promoted horrendously skewed and historically negative stereotypes about African-American women. Those who watch regularly witness the constant curse-filled bickering, physical fights, petty gossip, and questionably aristocratic social events that combine to spawn about forty-five minutes of general mayhem that the “characters” perpetuate season after season. Possibly the most recognizable of the bunch, *The Real Housewives of Atlanta*, described by Bravo TV, as the city’s “most famous southern belles,” currently boasts a mostly Black cast that includes a former stripper, an R&B songwriter and vocalist turned sex toy entrepreneur, a European designer fashion label lover who has been arrested on multiple occasions for felony charges, and a white woman who is best known for her longtime relationship with a married man whom she consistently referred to as “Big Papa.” Also, there is Bobby Brown’s former lawyer, arguably the least vulgar in presentation, who presented a friend with a male erotic dancer as a birthday gift on the show and is married to a felon.

To be clear, these women akin to all humans are multifaceted and complex and should not be gauged or valued exclusively according to their pasts or current reality -television crafted projections of themselves. Unfortunately, however, given the power of mass media compounded by a celebrity-driven culture, their weekly representations become perceived reality. According to TV by the Numbers, on April 19, 2012 *Real Housewives of Atlanta* was the third most watched show on cable television with a live viewership of over 1.3 million just for that particular night’s episode, not including those who consumed via subsequent airings, the

the Bravo website, or re-watched on DVR. The evidenced behavior of 5 to 10 women, then, becomes synonymous with the term “housewives,” although in Durham, North Carolina, Mrs. Fannie B. Peck instituted the National Housewives League of America with a starkly different foundational ideology from that which is propagated on today’s popular small screen.



Formed as an outgrowth of Booker T. Washington’s National Negro Business League in 1933, the National Housewives League of America advocated Black economic independence through housewives, many of whom already worked as the financial managers and book keepers in their households, engaging in “directed spending” methods. It began as the Housewives League of Detroit until Mrs. Peck convinced other women of the critical importance of strategically mobilizing their buying power and eventually formed a national committee after organizing sections in other cities possessing sizeable Black populations such as Cleveland, Cincinnati, Indianapolis, Pittsburgh, and Jacksonville. Its mission bore no resemblance to television’s current mischaracterization of Black women devoted to spending on luxury items made by non-Black people. Furthermore, for Mrs. Peck and the overwhelming majority of Black women, the term “housewife” merely suggested marital status and Victorian domestic values, not any particular freedom from the responsibility of paid labor necessary in the survival of African American households. In real life, African-American women’s organizations, most of which launched at the

turn of the century when educational opportunities for people of color increased and some statutes against Black organizing fell, championed fiscal consciousness with “Buy Black” styled campaigns and commonly carried economic thrusts in their undertakings. The Alpha Suffrage Club, The Colored Women’s League of Washington DC, National Association of Colored Women, Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, the National Council of Negro Women, The Links, the Montgomery Improvement Association (an outgrowth of the Women’s Political Council), which developed the tactical plan for the historic 1955 Bus Boycott, and many other sister groups maintained and continue longstanding initiatives concerning the financial stabilization, growth, and wellbeing of minority communities, institutions, families, and individuals.

Average Americans—both Black and white—who do not encounter the voluminous number Black women physicians, lawyers, pharmacists, judges, professors, coaches, and other professionals who fill the membership rosters of historically black institutions, clubs, and organizations often accept the images within the intentionally dysfunctional television productions as typical for African American women, particularly those associated with some level of aspiration to fame or desire for upward social mobility. In all likelihood, average people are unaware of the extensive history of real African-American aristocracy and its cultural manifestations and the enduring legacy of Black women’s club work. The two often intertwined to birth opulent affairs. Through cooperative institution-building with Black men and young people, Black women steered the mutual-aid societies, home-based businesses, political organizations, churches, and schools that sustained their community’s survival from the commencement of the Black Women’s Club Movement in the late nineteenth century through the age of Jim Crow and beyond.

# BLACK CLUB WOMEN AND THE STYLISH APPROACH TO RACIAL UPLIFT

Lavish nuptials, debutante balls, extravagant pageants, garden parties, and formal brunches exemplified the cultural extensions of these institutions. They also embodied the coexisting spirits of Black elite social expression and collective activism, as the events often doubled as festivities of merriment *and* fundraisers or uplift efforts concerning racial discrimination, ballot disenfranchisement, women's suffrage, youth education, and appreciation of the arts. While the glitz of the 'housewives' lifestyle counts for some of the attraction in the form of today's television viewership, Black socialite clubwomen managed (and still manage without mainstream media capturing them) to simultaneously revel in glamour and lead extraordinarily progressive efforts in support of the advancement of people of color in the United States and elsewhere. The 1950's symbolize a golden era in the intersectionality of African American women's club work and their chic gatherings, often held in their own upscale residences and other ritzy venues.

On March 9, 1950, the *California Eagle* announced Zeta Phi Beta Sorority's Musical Tea in support of their national project, The Prevention and Control of Juvenile Delinquency. The occasion featured two artists, "Jean Keele, soloist and Ruth Parks Brown, pianist," and proceeds were earmarked for The Francis P. Williams School for Retarded Children. The paper noted Brown as a teacher in the Los Angeles Public School system and a former staff member of the Gray Conservatory of Music. Guests enjoyed the performance at "the palatial home of one of Zeta's former honorary women of the year, Mrs. Gertrude Reese Hicks" and were formally received upon entrance by assigned hostesses. On the same page *The Eagle* applauded the exquisite cuisine at a Sunday shower at which Verna Dauterive "was absolutely stunning in a navy blue dress with an ermine collar," Clara Fentress's dress "was set off by Korean jewelry," and "Earline Shaw made an appropriate bride in a lovely two piece Black taffeta."

The 1951 holiday season social calendar proved to exude all of the fanfare and pageantry Black society clubwomen had become known to espouse at their charitable events. In November, New York's James Weldon Johnson Literary Guild held its inaugural "Storybook Ball" at the Hotel Diplomat where invitees dressed "as a character in childhood fiction." Children in war-damaged areas benefitted from the proceeds reserved for the purchase of books through the CARE-UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) program. Designated as "one of the season's most glamorous affairs," the Bal de Tete, sponsored by The Women, also of New York, raised funds for students in the arts field and honored a Black woman, *Jet* magazine editor Gerri Major. A reporter recounted the elaborate headresses as "ranging from the fabulous to the fantastic."

Mary Church Terrell, a race woman featured in Paula Giddings' classic text *When and Where I Enter: The Impact of Black Women on Race and Sex in America* (1996), labored as an educator, anti-lynching activist, and a prominent community organizer. She guided groups such as the National Association of Colored Women and Delta Sigma Theta Sorority in their quest to seek enfranchisement, promote education and culture, and perhaps most significantly, transform the negative stereotypes of Black women. Her commitment pressed well into the twentieth century and collaborative efforts with young women's groups evidence this resolve to redefine and enhance the image of Black women. On December 28, 1951 she led the New York Debutante Ball's National Guard of Honor during the formal presentation of fresh ladies to society. Also in New York, the same month, at the Capitol Hotel, African American women defied old and vile labels of Jezebel and Mammy in favor of charm and beauty at the *Silhouettes in Fashion* Style Show. There, Mrs. Ray Robinson, dancer and real housewife of the legendary boxer Sugar Ray Robinson "wore a white satin gown with rhinestone straps and a

peacock train of flame red net." Observers described other attendees as having worn frocks that boasted sparkling accessories, blue satin, and yards of white fox. In Chicago, Irene Castle Enzinger, Black socialite and ballroom dancer, chaired and hosted "a sultry Jamaican Holiday dance contest staged at the Parkway Ballroom to raise funds for Jamaicans made homeless" by the hurricane that year. That evening more than 300 guests enjoyed models adorned in West Indian costume, plentiful roses, and Latin music.

The New Year bought more posh soirees and parties with a purpose. In January of 1952 a Chicago models and entertainers collective put on a "scintillating" benefit revue in which one scene alone displayed human mannequins "wearing \$55,000 worth of mink" at Club DeLisa. Profits helped to provide recreational facilities for Chicago youth at four large centers. The Moles, an African American women's social club with strongholds in the District of Columbia, Norfolk, and Richmond, held its conclave in May, which offered all of the excitement of "dining, wining and dancing." Additionally, the group held regular sessions on serious community projects that resulted in the Moles providing "a complete supply of linen" to a Norfolk hospital, "cash to the NAACP Defense fund," and other donations to organizations and individuals. The summer of 1952 proved once again that the homes of well-to-do African Americans often functioned as the backdrop for these benevolent events, as well as the scene of plain old affluent exhibitionism. Diane Dickerson's July societal debut took place on the spacious family lawn "where hundreds of white gladioli, pompon shaped florist's trees dotted with carnations, canopies, and umbrella-shaped tables transformed the garden into a dreamlike setting." Black and white guests sipped champagne while Diane, daughter of prominent Chicago Negro attorney Earl Dickerson, accepted gifts that included "four or five precious brooches, diamonds, and mother-of-pearl

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compacts, all heirlooms more than a century old." She also received an engraved passport case, which made for good use on her subsequent trip to Europe with five classmates.

However, as much wealth and prominence some African American families enjoyed within their own groups, racism still reared its ugly head in social matters. Today, reality shows depict Black "housewives" bitterly struggling to get along with one another, commonly using juvenile expressions like "the inner circle," and debating who is and is not welcomed inside of one. Much more serious barriers kept Black women out of certain spheres sixty years ago. A small measure of progress burgeoned in 1953 when the one-time all-white ladies auxiliary of the Columbus Academy of Medicine invited "a select few" wives of Negro physicians to join their ranks. Juanita Walker, "wife of the surgeon at Ohio State Penitentiary," attended a dinner meeting with them "at the exclusive Miramar Restaurant" where "Helen Smith was introduced as a new member." In considering their ventures into unknown territory and uncomfortable situations while attempting resolve the inner conflict of what W.E.B. DuBois called "double consciousness," the lives of *these* women must have made for truly intense and dramatic episodes. Moreover, Black clubwomen were not immune to gossip or disgruntled membership within their own assemblies. The "Club Whirl" section of *Jet* reported the following in 1955: "In Memphis they say Alpha Kappa Alphas are still fuming because Soror Ruth Beauchamp, popular civic and social leader was appointed a Boule officer at the Nashville conclave without the knowledge or endorsement of the local gals."

Despite dealing with both frivolous and tremendously arduous challenges head on, African American clubwomen remained steadfast in their commitment to racial uplift, in style. The meticulous planning of the National Council of Negro Women's (NCNW) annual Midsummer Garden Party confirms their

earnest approach. Held on the lawn of the Columbia Elks Lodge in the northwest section of the District of Columbia, planning for the August 1958 festivities took place at the Council House on Vermont Avenue. Renowned for their role in the desegregation of Maryland public parks, Wednesdays in Mississippi voting rights campaigns, and leadership in planning the March on Washington, NCNW sent life members formal correspondence stating the organization's request to support the Building and Education Fund. Specifically, the chairwomen identified needs for "a new home for NCNW-one which will be a real memorial to our beloved Founder," Mary McLeod Bethune. Donation cards were enclosed for members to share with the community. In African American organizational tradition, resourcefulness and negotiation guided the success of the execution of various projects and programs. NCNW sent letters to dozens of area businesses reminding them of the organization's considerable patronage and asking for reciprocity in the form of donated gifts. The effort returned over 30 prizes including live flowers, perfume, and silver and rhinestone jewelry to be won by guests. Meeting minutes also reflect strategy regarding publicity, the obtainment of free chairs from the Department of Parks, and acquisition of large table umbrellas from members and associates. The proposal outlined preparation for hedges and blossoms, 75 tables, a goal of at least 500 tickets sold, and plans for the national office to "write Mrs. Nixon and Mrs. Eisenhower asking them to give a cake or a gift as a prize."

The program involved live music, refreshments, Bid-Whist and Bridge games, a style show presented by the National Association of Fashion and Accessory Designers, and other special attractions. The event offered "music, soft lights and a charming garden setting" for those who wished to enjoy conversation with old and new friends of the Washington community. Re-emphasizing the dual philosophy of purpose-driven social activity,

instructions read: "Put on one of your pretty dresses and come on out and combine a lot of fun with fundraising." These women embraced ideas of swanky celebration and plush ambiance without sacrificing a worthwhile mission, the reputation of themselves, or the integrity of the race.

**Kimberly D. Brown**, is a doctoral student Howard University Department of History. This article is excerpted from her forthcoming dissertation challenging normative values of beauty and activism as disparate ideals within womanhood and non-existent within African American culture.

### Research Sources:

*JET* magazine; newspapers *Our World* and *The California Eagle*; various collections of organizational records from the Archives for Black Women's History at the Mary McLeod Bethune Council House National Historic Site.

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### "Our Voices Must Be Heard at a Time Like This!"

By Ashley Robertson

Black women have used vocalization in a number of ways. They speak through fashion wearing colors and styles that "speak" uniqueness. They speak through audible forms manipulating words and phrases to express emotion and intention. They have also used the printed word in public formats such as newspapers, newsletters, and journals as well as private form diaries and letters. This article seeks to explore the *African American Women's Journal* and its capacity to establish a sense of globalism and articulation for African American women via raising consciousness and agency by linking national issues to international audiences and events.

During the twentieth century the National Council of Negro Women (NCNW) became one of the most influential women's organizations of its

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time. Founded in 1935 by college president, educator and civil rights leader Mary McLeod Bethune she would lead NCNW to become a unifying factor for 28 national women's organizations. During the time of its founding the United States was in the midst of the Great Depression and by its fifth year of existence the country had become a part of the Allied war efforts of World War II. For African American women the war affected them deeply. With the global effects of the war and the beginnings of the civil rights movement taking place African American women were in need of a space to express themselves. In 1940 NCNW took on the task of creating a voice for Black women with its launching of the *Aframerican Women's Journal*. Spanning from 1940 to 1949 before becoming *Women United* the journal would highlight African American women's achievements, domestic impact of World War II and the international actions of Black women throughout the African Diaspora.

To explore an aspect of the domestic response, the NCNW's *Aframerican Women's Journal* provide a glimpse into the consciousness raising activism of these women who were larger than simply the NCNW leadership, their reach span across the country, denominations, ideologies and social location through membership organizations serving African American people. In 1940 the founding year of the *Aframerican Women's Journal* the United States had just entered World War II and by 1941 the country was fully involved in the war. Thus the founding and perpetual honorary editor after 1944 was Sue Bailey Thurman. Having worked on behalf of the YWCA for nearly six years as a traveling secretary lecturing throughout Europe, Mrs. Bailey brought a sense of internationalism and inter-culturalism as the founder of *Aframerican Women's Journal*. Along with her husband, theologian and civil rights leader Dr. Howard Thurman she traveled to India in 1935 and was the first African American to meet with nonviolent leader Mahatma Gandhi. In her quest to bring more international

awareness and unity she led a delegation of NCNW members to Havana, Cuba in 1940 where they would meet leading Cuban women's organizations and learn about the socioeconomic issues faced by Afro-Cubans. Captured by the *Aframerican Women's Journal* the trip put the NCNW and all of its products and intentions within the reach of Spanish speaking peoples abroad with its Spanish translations of the trip and the content of its workshops. Throughout her tenure as editor of the journal Mrs. Bailey used her cultural understanding and leadership skills to create a platform for women to be heard from across the world.



In the 1941 conference issue (Volume 1 No. 4) of the *Journal* in an article entitled "The Negro in the Defense Program" by Katharine Terrill, documents the limited inclusion of African Americans in war efforts. In her call for democracy Terrill points out exclusion of African Americans from many of the defense jobs created to support the war effort. Within in employment manufacturing jobs making army uniforms, engineering jobs crafting parts for aircraft and even in unionizing efforts many African Americans were denied opportunities to put their experience and their college degrees to use especially in engineering and certificates in Aircraft Materials to work. Although the military drafted African American men and the selective service act was to have "no discrimination as to race" Terrill addresses the fact that Black men were still not being allowed to serve in the Marine Corps and very few in the Navy. Ending with a call for action and a solution the article pushes

women to bring cases of discrimination before the proper channels and become informed on the opportunities that were available and act to secure them.

Terrill's article was not within a vacuum founding president Mary McLeod Bethune led by example and advocated for the inclusion of Black women in the non combatant aspects of military service. On May 15, 1942 the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps (WAAC) was slated to become the women's branch of the Army and the first women to serve in the military other than nurses. This groundbreaking inclusion of women in the military, particularly Black women was captured and supported by the *Aframerican Women's Journal*. In the 1942 Anniversary Pre-Conference Issue (Volume 3 No. 1&2) of the *Journal* in the article entitled "The W.A.A.C. The Girl Who Wouldn't Be Left Behind" the creation of WAAC is celebrated. The general outline of what a typical woman of the W.A.A.C. goes through during the process of entering the military, the training she must obtain and the basics of what is expected are expressed in the article, providing an understanding for those who may be interested in joining. At a time when entering the military was taboo for women, this article demystifies the process and promotes W.A.A.C. With Mrs. Bethune having played such an influential role in choosing the first 40 African American women to become officers in the Corp the article highlights those women celebrating their historic role in the military. The entrance of African American women into both a male dominated and segregated military position is groundbreaking and the *Aframerican Women's Journal* honors its significance.



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Harriet Tubman has long been known as the leader of the Underground Railroad, a Civil War spy and a nurse was immortalized and in 1944. The NCNW celebrated her in a very unique and meaningful way. In the *Aframerican Women's Journal* (Volume 4 No. 2) published in summer 1944 a special edition dedicated to the S.S. Harriet Tubman Issue. This issue of the *Journal* led African American women across the nation in celebration of the launching of the S.S. Harriet Tubman the first ship ever to be named after a woman of color. In the article "Harriet Tubman Goes Out to Sea" the launching of the ship was documented through the NCNW's singlehandedly selling of war bonds. The S.S. Harriet Tubman provided supplies across the world for men fighting in World War II.



In a speech made by Mary Church Terrell, featured in the issue she was hopeful that the ship would bring liberation to those oppressed abroad just as Tubman bought liberation to the enslaved in America. The launching and the naming of the ship after such an influential and radical leader of the freedom movement speaks volumes to the mission of NCNW and its journal regarding liberation for Black women in the matter of freedom of speech. The *Journal* provided an outlet to celebrate the achievements of women and their contributions placed women at the core of the discussion. Terrell, featured in

in the issue she was hopeful that the ship would bring liberation to those oppressed abroad just as Tubman bought liberation to the enslaved in America. The launching and the naming of the ship after such an influential and radical leader of the freedom movement speaks volumes to the mission of NCNW and its journal regarding liberation for Black women in the matter of freedom of speech. The *Journal* provided an outlet to celebrate the achievements of women and their contributions placed women at the core of the discussion.

Although the NCNW was founded in the United States its interest and involvement in global affairs pertaining to women are shared throughout the *Aframerican Women's Journal*. In the June 1945 issue Madame Vijaya Lamskmi Pandit is featured in the "Freedom for India" article in which she calls for freedom for the country from colonialism. Madame Pandit was an Indian ambassador and an ardent fighter for Indian independence from the British. In the 1942 Anniversary Pre-Conference Issue (Volume 3 No. 1&2) in the article "Getting Acquainted" Cuban Professor Ana Echegoyen de Canizares highlights the political struggles of Afro-Cuban women for social equality. With African American women striving to be respected and accepted into the military as W.A.A.C. in 1942, this article was timely and highly significant. Similar struggles for equality and freedom ring throughout the articles featuring international issues which draw those connections of shared oppression by people of African descent throughout the Diaspora.

The 1940's was a tumultuous yet historic time. Participating in the fight for victory abroad and at home, African American women were at the forefront of the struggle for equality and freedom. The *Aframerican Women's Journal* played a critical role in documenting and preserving the role of women who may have been otherwise left out of history. The voice of African American women speaking from a place of agency, asserting themselves with a fierce

determination to tell their stories with authority is evidence of the legacy of NCNW. We can be reminded of what activist scholarship looks like and why there is still a need for it today through the reading of the *Aframerican Women's Journal*.

### Sources Used:

Various collections housed at the National Archives for Black Women's History

**Ashley Robertson** is a Ph.D. candidate at Howard University and an archives technician at the National Archives for Black Women's History. This article is part of her dissertation which examines the National Council of Negro Women and its impact both globally and abroad.



Dr. Lorraine Anderson Williams  
Pioneer in African American History

*Courtesy of Moorland-Spingarn  
Research Center, Manuscript Division,  
Lorraine A. Williams papers. photo  
scrapbooks*

The Association of Black Women's Historians honors the contributions of African American Women to the American story.

*ABWH is honoring Black history and Women's history month together in this special collection of essays which covers a variety of issues from civil rights to jobs training and education and entertainment to contemporary issues such as the impact of literature feminism and the arts.*

ASSOCIATION OF BLACK WOMEN HISTORIANS

## In Spite of the Double Drawbacks:

### African American Women in History and Culture



Lopez D. Matthews Jr.  
Kenvi Phillips  
Ida Jones  
Marshanda Smith

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## DOROTHY PORTER WESLEY



**Dorothy Porter Wesley**, Curator Emerita Moorland-Spingarn Research Center. A bibliophile and trained librarian Dr. Porter Wesley curated and grew the initial donation of Jesse E. Moorland in 1914 to a world renowned collection documenting the Black experience world-wide. Her work in librarianship resulted in an innovating a unique cataloging system that incorporated the Black experience while her pedagogical interests resulted in numerous student internships as well as a number of bibliographic/biographical publications to inform anyone interested in learning about the contributions of Africana people.

*Courtesy Moorland-Spingarn Research Center*

Thomas Battle, Evelyn Brooks, Dorothy Porter Wesley, and Dorothy Gillen at Moorland-Spingarn reviewing a publication.

*Courtesy Moorland-Spingarn Research Center*



## • Use The Franchise ! •

### An Appeal to Colored Women to Vote

By Mary Church Terrell

EVERY woman without regard to race or religion should do her duty as a citizen, and vote to try to improve the conditions which obtain in America today. All women should be actively interested in the political affairs of the respective countries in which they live. So far as in them lies, all women should inform themselves, not only about conditions in their own country, but about those which obtain all over the civilized world.

But the duty of studying carefully the measures proposed and the questions discussed in the national congress, in their respective state legislatures and in their respective cities or town councils devolves upon no group of women more than upon the colored women of the United States. One does not have to possess more than her rightful share of gray matter to understand why this is so. Everybody who thinks at all, sees clearly why colored women should not only study the political situation in which they live and move and have their being, but should actively engage in politics wherever, whenever and however they can, without actually breaking the law.

Colored women have two high handicaps to hurdle—the handicap of race in addition to that of sex. White women all over the civilized world showed how great a handicap they thought sex was by the desperate efforts they made to secure suffrage. The extreme and violent efforts to which the English women especially resorted well illustrate that. But those white women had only one handicap to overcome. What would they not have done if they had been obliged to surmount TWO, as we colored women have to do?

There is no doubt that some of the disadvantages under which colored women labor may be removed by their votes. By casting their ballots properly, by putting good men and women into office and keeping bad office-holders out, colored women can do much to remove some of the disabilities under which they live in those sections where their votes are counted. And even in those sections where the Fifteenth Amendment is not violated, there are many conditions confronting colored people which should and can be removed.

Each group of colored women must study political methods for itself. As the first supervisor of the Eastern Division for Colored Women during the Harding-Coolidge campaign, I realized more than I had ever done before that situations, methods and conditions confronting colored women differ materially in the various states. The methods which can be successfully pursued in one state might not work well in another. A great deal depends upon the white leaders of a state and upon their attitude toward colored people on general principles. Much depends upon the breadth and justice of the white women who lead.

But there is one thing which colored women can do in every state. They can do everything in their power to GET THE RIGHT MEN IN THE PRIMARIES. There is where they should use diplomacy and tact. If they believe a certain man will deal justly by their race, they might go to him and urge him to become a candidate for governor, or senator (or for any other office) for nomination in the primaries of the party to which they belong, assuring him of their support and promising to do

everything in their power to secure his selection and election. Colored women must learn to play the political game as they would any other game in which they wish to become proficient and win.

Colored women should certainly watch carefully what the legislatures of their respective states are doing, and keep posted on the bills which will help or hinder the race. Colored women should cultivate the habit of writing letters to their Congressmen urging them to vote for measures which are just and will advance the interests of their race. It is a mistake to believe that writing letters to Congressmen does no good. Congressmen read letters written to them and when many letters are received urging them to vote for a certain measure, it makes an impression upon them and induces them to favor a bill whose passage many of their constituents request.

There is a special reason why colored women should use the elective franchise. A man belonging to our own race did a great deal to make it possible for the women of this country to vote ninety-eight years ago.

In 1848, nearly a century ago, Elizabeth Cady Stanton made a motion at the First Women's Rights Convention, which was then in session at Seneca, New York, that full political equality be given to women. But her motion seemed doomed to defeat. The most ardent advocates of Woman Suffrage deemed it untimely and unwise. Many good people deem anything "untimely and unwise" which changes the old order of things and which is new. Everytime this world of ours takes a step forward in progress some old moth-

*(Continued on page 12)*

MARY CHURCH TERRELL, suffrage leader, lecturer and writer, was the first president of the National Association of Colored Women's Clubs; is historian of the National Council of Negro Women.

## congratulations 2009-2011 graduates



Professor Elizabeth Clark-Lewis, ABWH Director, Dr. Ida Jones with newly minted Howard University graduates. Dr. Trichita M. Chestnut and Dr. Lopez D. Matthews, Jr., both defended their dissertations on March 4, 2009. Professor Clark-Lewis served as dissertation advisor and Professor Debra Newman-Ham served as committee member (not in photograph).



Dr. Joy G. Kinard defended her Ph.D. dissertation at Howard University on May 24, 2009. Joy's dissertation committee members consisted of Professor Elizabeth Clark-Lewis (Chair), Professor Michael Frazier, Professor Ben K. Fred-Mansah, Professor John L. Caughey and Professor Emory J. Tolbert. (not in photograph).



Dr. Kenvi C. Phillips defended her Ph.D. Dissertation at Howard University on June 4, 2010. Kenvi's dissertation committee members consisted of Professor Elizabeth Clark-Lewis (Chair), Professor Selwynn H. H. Carrington, Professor Michael Frazier, and Professor Emory J. Tolbert. (not in photograph).



Dr. Crystal R. Sanders after Ph.D. Defense at Northwestern University on April 14, 2011. Crystal's dissertation committee members consisted of Professor Nancy McLean (Chair), Professor Darlene Clark Hine, Professor Martha Biondi and Professor Charles Payne (not in photograph).

## congratulations 2012 graduates



Dr. Perzavia T. Praylow after Ph.D. dissertation defense at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign on April 20, 2012. Featured with Praylow are her with dissertation committee members (left to right) Professor Teresa Barnes, Professor James D. Anderson (Chair), Perzavia, Professor David R. Roediger, and Professor Erik McDuffie (not in photograph).



Dr. Mary F. Phillips after Ph.D. dissertation defense at Michigan State University on June 5, 2012. Featured with Phillips are her dissertation committee members (left to right) Professor Kristie Dotson, Professor Geneva Smitherman, Mary, Professor Pero Dagbovie (Chair), and Professor Nwando Achebe.



Dr. Marshanda A. Smith after Ph.D. dissertation defense at Michigan State University on June 5, 2012. Featured with Smith are her dissertation committee members (left to right) Professor Pero Dagbovie, Professor Darlene Clark Hine (Chair), Marshanda, Professor Geneva Smitherman, Professor Denise Troutman, and Professor Jerry Garcia (not in photograph).

# LETITIA WOODS BROWN MEMORIAL BOOK AWARD



Photo Courtesy: Special Collections Research Center,  
The George Washington University.

**1984**

**Sylvia M. Jacobs**

*African Nexus: Black American Perspectives on the European Partitioning of Africa, 1880 - 1980.* Greenwood Publishing Group, 1981.

**1985**

**Jacqueline Jones**

*Labor of Love, Labor of Sorrow: Black Women, Work and the Family from Slavery to the Present.* Basic Books, 1985.

**Barbara Jeanne Fields**

*Slavery and Freedom on the Middle Ground: Maryland during the Nineteenth Century.* Yale University Press, 1985.

**Juliet E. K. Walker**

*Free Frank: a Black Pioneer on the Antebellum Frontier.* University Press of Kentucky, 1985.

**1986**

**Darlene Clark Hine**

*Black Women in the Middle West Project.* Indiana Historical Bureau, 1986.

**Deborah Gray White**

*Ar'n't I a Woman? Female Slaves in the Plantation South.* W.W.Norton, 1985.

**1987**

**Nell Irvin Painter** *Standing at Armageddon: the United States, 1877 - 1919.* W.W.Norton, 1987.

**1990**

**Jacqueline Anne Rouse** *Lugenia Burns Hope, Black Southern Reformer.* University of Georgia Press, 1992.

**Darlene Clark Hine** *Black Women in White: Racial Conflict and Cooperation in the Nursing Profession.* Indiana University Press, 1989.

**1991**

**Patricia Hill Collins** *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment.* Routledge Press, 1990.

**1992**

**Linda Reed** *Simple Decency and Common Sense: the Southern Conference Movement, 1938 - 1963.* Indiana University Press, 1991.

**1993**

**Evelyn B. Higginbotham** *Righteous Discontent: the Women's Movement in the Black Baptist Church, 1880 - 1920.* Harvard University Press, 1993.

**1994**

**Elizabeth Clark Lewis** *Living In, Living Out: African American Domestic Workers in Washington, D.C., 1910 - 1940.* Kodansha America, 1996.

# LETITIA WOODS BROWN MEMORIAL BOOK AWARD

1996

**Stephanie Shaw** *What a Woman Ought to Do and to Be: Black Professional Women Workers during the Jim Crow Era.*

University of Chicago Press, 1996.

**Nell Irvin Painter** *Sojourner Truth: a Life, a Symbol.*

W.W.Norton, 1996.

1997

**Tera Hunter** *To 'Joy My Freedom: Southern Black Women's Lives and Labors after the Civil War.*

Harvard University Press, 1997.

1998

**Kim D. Butler** *Freedoms Given, Freedom Won: Afro Brazilians in Post-Abolition São Paulo and Salvador.*

Rutgers University Press, 1998.

**Rosalyn Terborg-Penn** *African American Women in the Struggle for the Vote: 1850 - 1920.*

Indiana University Press, 1998.

1999

**Juliet E. K. Walker** *History of Black Business in America: Capitalism, Race, Entrepreneurship.*

Twayne Publishers, 1998.

2000

**Chana Kai Lee** *For Freedom's Sake: the Life of Fannie Lou Hamer.*

University of Illinois Press, 1999.

2001

**A'Leia Bundles** *On Her Own Ground: the Life and Times of Madam C. J. Walker.*

Scribner, 2001.

2002

**Diane Batts Morrow** *Persons of Color and Religious at the Same Time: the Oblate Sisters of Provident, 1828 - 1860.*

University of North Carolina Press, 2001.

2003

**Barbara Ransby** *Ella Baker and the Black Freedom Movement: a Radical Democratic Vision.*

University of North Carolina Press, 2002.

2004

**Rhonda Williams** *Politics of Public Housing: Black Women's Struggle Against Urban Inequality.*

Oxford University Press, 2004.

2005

**Lisa Farrington** *Creating their Own Image: the History of African American Women Artists.*

Oxford University Press, 2005.

2006

**Kali N. Gross** *Colored Amazons: Crime, Violence and Black Women in the City of Brotherly Love, 1880 - 1910.*

Duke University Press, 2006.

# LETITIA WOODS BROWN MEMORIAL BOOK AWARD

## 2007

**Francille Rusan Wilson**

*Segregated Scholars: Black Social Scientists and the Creation of Black Labor Studies, 1890 - 1950.*  
University of Virginia Press, 2007.

**Nikki Brown** *Private Politics and Public Voices: Black Women's Activism from WWI to the New Deal.*  
Indiana University Press, 2007.

## 2008

**Paula Giddings** *Ida: a Sword Among Lions: Ida B. Wells and the Campaign Against Lynching.*  
Harper Paperbacks, 2009.

**Carol Boyce Davies** *Left of Karl Marx: the Political Life of Black Communist Claudia Jones.*  
Duke University Press, 2008.

**Deborah Gray White** *Telling Histories: Black Women Historians in the Ivory Tower.*  
University of North Carolina Press, 2008.

## 2009

**Margaret Washington** *Sojourner Truth's America.*  
University of Illinois Press, 2009.

**Katie McCabe and Dovey Johnson Roundtree** *Justice Older than the Law: the Life of Dovey Johnson Roundtree.*  
University Press of Mississippi, 2009.

**Paula Marie Seniors** *Beyond Lift Every Voice and Sing: the Culture of Uplift, Identity and Politics in Black Musical Theater, 2nd edition.*  
Ohio State University Press, 2009.

## 2010

**Tiffany Gill** *Beauty Shop Politics: African American Women's Activism in the Beauty Industry.*  
University of Illinois Press, 2010.

**Blair Murphy Kelley** *Right to Ride: Streetcar Boycotts and African American Citizenship in the Era of Plessy v. Ferguson.* University of North Carolina Press, 2010.

**Bettye Collier-Thomas** *Jesus, Jobs, and Justice: African American Women and Religion.*  
Knopf, 2010.

## 2011

**Cheryl D. Hicks** *Talk to You Like a Woman: African American Women Justice and Reform in New York, 1890 -1935.* University of North Carolina Press, 2010.

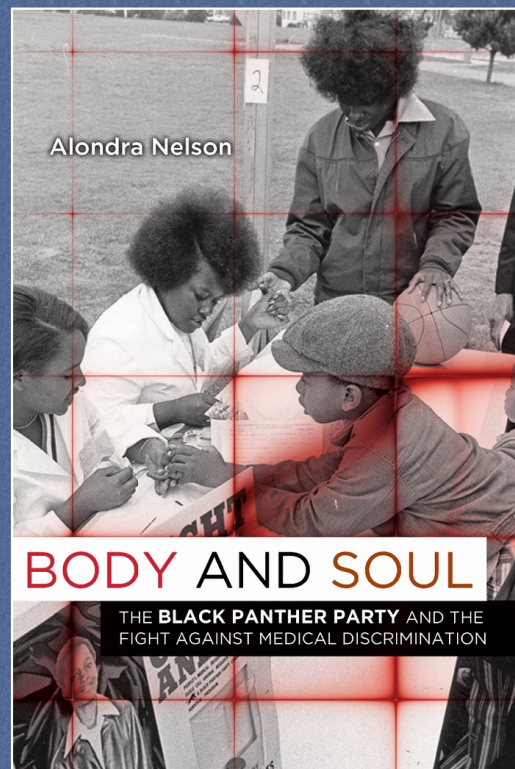
**Priscilla Dowden-White** *Groping Toward Democracy: African American Social Welfare Reform in St. Louis, 1910 - 1949.* University of Missouri Press, 2011.

**Erik McDuffie** *Sojourning for Freedom: Black Women, American Communism, and the Making of Black Left Feminism.* Duke University Press, 2011.

# LETITIA WOODS BROWN MEMORIAL BOOK AWARD

## WINNER 2012

***Body and Soul: The Black Panther Party and the Fight Against Medical Discrimination*** has been selected as the winner of the Letitia Woods Brown Book Award for 2012. The award is presented to the best book in the field of African American history published this year. There were many strong candidates for this year's prize and we believe that your work is among the best that embodies the spirit of this award. In the spirit of Letitia Woods Brown, your book employs activist scholarship through re-imagining the activities and aims of the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense. Vilified by the news media of their day, romanticized by Hollywood images - Nelson rescues an element of the BPP as a corrective and call to action in the age of under-insured Americans and the war over Obamacare.



*ABWH Congratulates Alondra Nelson*

## ABWH PHOTO COLLAGE

Bettye Gardner, Valethia Watkins, Gloria Mims, ABWH Luncheon Attendee, Jacqueline McLeod, Lillie Edwards, Stephanie J. Shaw, Elsa Barkley Brown, Cynthia Neverdon-Morton, Nell Irvin Painter



Mary Frances Berry, Barbara A. Woods, Wanda A. Hendricks, Elizabeth Clark-Lewis, Jacqueline Rouse, Edwards, Janice Sumler-Edmond, Rosalyn Terborg-Penn, Painter, Woods, Betty Collier-Thomas, Deborah Gray White, Painter, Darlene Clark Hine

## ABWH Salutes



Dr. Stephanie Y. Evans  
ABWH Member  
2012 ASALH Co-Program Chair  
Associate Professor and Chair -  
Department of African American  
Studies  
Clark Atlanta University



Dr. Cheryl Hicks  
ABWH Member  
2012 ASALH Co-Program Chair  
Associate Professor  
Department of History  
University of North Carolina  
at Charlotte



Dr. Natanya Duncan  
2012 ABWH LIFE MEMBER  
2012 ASALH Co-Program Chair  
Assistant Professor  
Department of History &  
Geography  
Morgan State University

## Two essays to read on Black women's history:



### Francille Rusan Wilson

Associate Professor of American Studies and Ethnicity and History,  
University of Southern California

"Black Women Historians from the Late 19th Century to the Dawning of  
the Civil Rights Movement" in the *Journal of African American History*,  
Vol. 89. Number 3. (Summer 2004), 199-202.

### Pero Gaglo Dagbovie

Professor of History,  
Michigan State University

"Black Women Historians from the Late 19th Century to the Dawning of  
the Civil Rights Movement" in the *Journal of African American History*,  
Vol. 89. Number 3. (Summer 2004), 241-261.



## Photo Credits Acknowledgements:

Cover page: Freedom Corner Pittsburgh by Ronald Woan - August 11, 2010.

Page 3: Rosalyn Terborg-Penn in front of Anna J. Cooper exhibit at Anacostia Neighborhood Museum. Image by Smithsonian Institution Archives, 1982. <http://siarchives.si.edu>.

Page 14: Freedom Corner Pittsburgh by Pam Panchak in the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* - March 30, 2012.

Photo Courtesy throughout the special edition from The Moorland-Spangarn Research Center, Howard University.

Snapshots of ABWH members through the years by Marshanda Smith and Lopez Matthews.

Other photos from members websites and the world wide web.

Giving Honor to select .....

## Founders in the field of African American Women's History



We salute our Founders in the field of African American Women's History.  
Thank you for paving the way!

### SPECIAL THANKS:



Marshanda Smith, Publications Director & Webmaster, for the design and composition of TRUTH.

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Printing Courtesy: Dr. Darlene Clark Hine, Founding Director, Center for African American History, Northwestern University and Founding Editor of TRUTH.



Association of Black Women  
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P O Box 7715  
Silver Spring, MD 20907