

AVERY

MESSENGER

SPRING 2011

21ST CENTURY BLACK STUDIES

COLLEGE OF
CHARLESTON

CELEBRATING

25
YEARS

Avery
Research
Center

archives

education

culture

readwrite

civil rights

HISTORY

initiative

artifacts

AIAAHC

AFRICAN-AMERICAN MUSEUMS
VANGUARD OF BLACK STUDIES

AVERY: CREATING AN ACTIVE ARCHIVE

FRUITS OF BLACK EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE
LOCAL CHARLESTON SCHOOLS

WOULD
YOU RUN
A THOUSAND
MILES
FOR
FREEDOM?

AVERY RESEARCH CENTER FOR AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY AND CULTURE

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MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT BENSON

FEBRUARY 2011

For 25 years, the Avery Research Center for African American History and Culture has documented, preserved, and promoted our region's rich African-American history. It has become a vital academic and cultural resource for the College of Charleston, the Lowcountry, the state of South Carolina, and the nation. Avery's roots, however, date back to the 1860s when the Avery Normal Institute functioned as a secondary school for African Americans. Throughout this long and proud history, many dedicated individuals and organizations helped lay the foundation for what the Avery Research Center is today.

The College is proud to celebrate the Center's accomplishments as it begins a new era under the leadership of Executive Director Patricia Williams Lessane. She brings energy, fresh perspectives, and a wealth of experience to the College at a pivotal time in our 240-year history. The College is implementing a 10-year Strategic Plan that emphasizes diversity and inclusiveness and our obligation to support and nurture the unique assets of Charleston and the Lowcountry. The Avery Research Center will play a vital role in these efforts and will continue to be a source of pride for the College of Charleston and the community for generations to come.

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The teacher's desk on display, an authentic 19th-century piece of furniture in the Avery Room, is on loan to us from the Charleston Museum. The desk came out of Memminger School, a contemporary of the Avery Normal Institute.



AVERY RESEARCH CENTER EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

PATRICIA WILLIAMS LESSANE, PH.D.

"Greetings. My name is Patricia Williams Lessane and I have the best job in the world."

Those of you who have attended one of Avery's recent public programs know my opening remarks always begin that way. It's true—I do have the best job in the world—and I am genuinely thrilled to serve as Executive Director of the Avery Research Center for African American History and Culture at the College of Charleston! For me, visiting Avery just last year during my interview was truly "love at first sight." To be sure, serving at the helm of the Center—where countless teachers and principals taught classical education to African-American youth for nearly one hundred years; and standing on the shoulders of pioneering Avery directors, including Dr. Myrtle Glascoe, Dr. Marvin Dulaney, and Dr. Karen Chandler—is daunting at best. But it is a task I relish daily as I comb through our extensive collections while aided by Avery staff members whose knowledge of local and national African-American history and culture is quelled only by their commitment to our united task to collect, preserve, and document the experiences of African Americans in Charleston and the Lowcountry.

As you know, the Center holds a special place in Charleston's African-American community, and we have been strengthening the Center's relationship with other intercollege fields of study and area cultural institutions. By working closely with the Lowcountry Digital Library, The Carolina Lowcountry

and Atlantic World program and the African-American Studies program here at the College of Charleston, we are poised to engage in meaningful and impactful work that will engage scholars, students, and local residents; and inspire a collective goal to gathering our history, which is American history.

With the support of the Avery Institute for Afro-American History and Culture Board, the commitment of The College of Charleston, and all of Avery's previous directors, I and my staff shall continue laying the groundwork for Avery's legacy of greatness. On April 14th, we will not only celebrate Avery's 25th-year anniversary, we will also chart a new course for the Center. This celebration kicks off Avery's "Running a Thousand Miles" fundraiser, where Avery staff members will run/walk one thousand miles from April 14, 2011–April 14, 2012 with the hope of supporters sponsoring the miles run with donations. Every sponsor who donates \$1000 or more will be named into the Avery Research Center's "Winners' Circle".

With your continued support, we will be able to expand our collections of rare books and manuscripts and archival materials. It truly is an exciting time at Avery and I am honored to play a role in charting the future direction of this very important institution.



AVERY INSTITUTE PRESIDENT'S REPORT

WALTER BROWN, JR.

Twenty-five years ago, the Institute Board, along with the College of Charleston and other community entities, helped establish the Avery Research Center for African American History and Culture; and throughout those twenty-five years, the Institute Board has been diligently working to fulfill its mission to support the Center as it strives to become a top-class research center for researchers and scholars; an archival center to preserve the history of African Americans in Charleston, the Lowcountry, and South Carolina; and a community center to make the public aware of the many contributions African Americans have made locally, statewide, nationwide, and even worldwide.

During this past year in particular, exciting changes have come to fruition. First, the Board would like to welcome Dr. Patricia Williams Lessane of Chicago, IL, as the new Executive Director of the Avery Research Center. After an exhaustive national search, Dr. Lessane was chosen and appointed to lead the Avery Research Center for the next twenty-five years and beyond. The Institute Board also welcomes Ms. Pamela Zaresk as the new Chair of Membership. The Board thanks those who have become members and encourages those who are not yet to consider becoming Avery Institute Members. Your dues, donations, contributions, and ads all help to support the Avery Research Center and its efforts, such as the Avery Summer History Camp, oral history projects, public programming, and the *Avery Messenger* itself.

The Avery Institute Board's 2011 Annual Meeting will be held in June at the Avery Research Center. Notices will be mailed out to our membership and more information will be available on Avery Research Center Web site for the date and time.

RUNNING A THOUSAND MILES FOR

AMANDA ROSS



Ellen Craft "The Fugitive Slave" frontispiece from *"Running A Thousand Miles For Freedom, Or The Escape of William And Ellen Craft From Slavery"* (1st edition, 1860)

The Davises are the nieces of the renowned Charleston architect and contractor Herbert A. DeCosta, whose mother Julia Ellen Craft DeCosta was the granddaughter of William and Ellen Craft. H. A. DeCosta, Jr. and his wife, Emily S. DeCosta, donated his papers to Avery Research Center prior to his passing in 2007. Recently processed, the H. A. DeCosta, Jr. Papers are a treasure trove of material related to historic preservation in Charleston, Herbert A. DeCosta, Jr.'s business activities and civic leadership, and the DeCosta, Craft, and Crum families. The family materials include a cane originally owned by the son-in-law of William and Ellen Craft: Dr. William Crum, physician and Collector of Customs in Charleston, South Carolina. The cane was presented to Crum by fellow physicians at a 1910 farewell banquet, prior to his service as United States minister and consul to Liberia.

avery.cofc.edu/archives/DeCosta_H_A_Jr.html

In spring 2010, Julia Ellen Craft Davis and Vicki Lorraine Davis generously donated the Craft and Crum Family Papers to the Avery Research Center. Archivists and historians alike are delighted with the major highlight of the collection: a tribute book to William and Ellen Craft, an enslaved couple from Macon, Georgia who completed a daring escape and became internationally known celebrities.

Opening the slim volume for the first time, Avery staff members gasped at the handwriting of thespian Ira Aldridge, an African American from New York who graced the London stage in the 19th century. Though celebrated in England and throughout the European continent, Aldridge also faced enormous prejudice due to his race. Invoking the sentiments of the Prince of Morocco in Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice*, Aldridge quoted, "Mislike me not for my complexion, / The shadow'd livery of the burnish'd sun." With these words, Aldridge welcomed American refugees William and Ellen Craft to England and all issued a shared plea for equality.

Created upon the Crafts' entrée into English abolitionist circles, this tribute book contains passages and quotations written by well-known supporters, including the American author Harriet Beecher Stowe as well as Ira Aldridge and his wife, the Swedish countess Amanda Aldridge. A cartes-de-visite album of these figures, the Crafts, and other abolitionists such as Frederick Douglass and William Lloyd

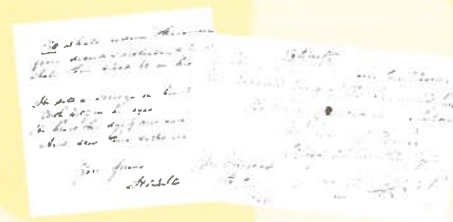


Ellen Craft and William Craft

Garrison provides a rich visual counterpart to the volume and hints at the international importance of these materials.

But just who were the Crafts and how did they emerge as public figures in the transatlantic abolitionist movement?

In 1848, the Crafts decided to escape slavery in the North American South before bringing children into the world. In an unprecedented plan, the light-skinned Ellen Craft dressed as a man and pretended to be a wealthy, white invalid seeking medical treatment in Philadelphia. Her darker-skinned husband, William, posed as her slave and generally spoke on behalf of his "master." Traveling on public transportation and risking severe consequences if discovered, the Crafts journeyed from Macon, Georgia through Savannah, Charleston, Wilmington, Washington, DC, and Baltimore before finally reaching freedom in Philadelphia. There, the couple was befriended by William Lloyd Garrison, who recognized the pair's usefulness to the abolitionist cause. The Crafts relocated to Boston and began a lecture circuit as antislavery activists.



Left to right
Handwritten letters from Harriet Beecher Stowe
and Ira Aldridge, Craft Family Tribute Book

F R E E D O M

In 1850, the United States Congress passed the Fugitive Slave Act, which made it a federal crime to aid escaped slaves and permitted slave hunters to pursue escaped slaves *even in free states*. Their celebrity made the Crafts particularly vulnerable. The Crafts' former owners sent two slave-catchers to retrieve them while abolitionist members of the newly formed Committee of Safety and Vigilance sought to protect the couple. The former owners went so far as to petition the President of the United States at the time, Millard Fillmore, for the return of their "property". In response, the President authorized the use of military force to return the Crafts to Southern slavery.

To flee Northern complicity in the slave system, the Crafts secured a stealth voyage to Europe with the assistance of the Boston Vigilance Committee. "It was not until we stepped upon the shore at Liverpool that we were free from every slavish fear," wrote William Craft. "We raised our thankful hearts to Heaven, and could have knelt down, like the Neapolitan exiles, and kissed the soil."

In England, the Crafts continued to work with antislavery activists and began to raise their family. They documented their incredible journey in the poignant narrative, *Running a Thousand Miles for Freedom*. Published 1860 on the eve of the American Civil War, the Crafts' narrative contains many accounts of slavery and freedom for blacks and discusses how they were treated in both the South and the North. *Running a Thousand Miles for Freedom* has been and continues to be analyzed for the issues of race, gender, and class so prevalent in the unusual

façade assumed by Ellen Craft as well as challenges to her ability to be a public figure as an African-American woman. The Crafts' lives and their publication hold many important comments on slavery in the South, prejudice in the North, and the internationalism of abolitionist movement.

In November 2010, the Avery Research

"It was not until we stepped upon the shore at Liverpool that we were free from every slavish fear. We raised our thankful hearts to Heaven, and could have knelt down, like the Neapolitan exiles, and kissed the soil."

WILLIAM CRAFT



Center acquired a first edition of *Running a Thousand Miles for Freedom* through the generosity of the Honorable Herbert U. Fielding, the Honorable Bernard R. Fielding, The Alpha Phi Alpha Inc. fraternity, and the Friends of the Library. This rare find is a fitting complement to the exceptional Craft and Crum Family Papers acquired early last year and helps tell the incredible story of Ellen and William Craft more fully.

On April 14, 2011, Avery will host a

special unveiling of *Running a Thousand Miles for Freedom* as well as materials from the Craft and Crum Family Papers and the H. A. DeCosta, Jr. Papers. Richard J.M. Blackett, Andrew Jackson Professor of History at Vanderbilt University will provide more insight into this exceptional couple and the Crafts' impact on the abolitionist movement.

Additionally, throughout the course of 2011, staff at the Avery Research Center will run 1000 miles to commemorate the Crafts' courageous escape from slavery. Using "running for freedom" and the importance of literacy as central themes for this yearlong campaign, Avery and the College of Charleston will demonstrate the deep connections between literacy and agency, and the humanities and human rights movements. As the staff engages in a symbolic race for freedom, Avery advocates and the community at-large will have the opportunity to support the development of a collection acquisitions fund for the Avery Research Center.



Image of Actor Ira Aldridge,
Craft Family photo album

CREATING AN **ACTIVE ARCHIVE**

GEORGETTE MAYO

The true magic of an archival repository is its ability to preserve the essence, unique elements, and enduring nuances of a person's life, a people's history, or an era's events, traditions, figures, and legacy. Indeed, something special happens when researchers and students, especially, engage with original primary-source materials. But creating this interactive and meaningful learning experience does not happen by accident. Creating an active archive is truly a science—one part instructional through library school, and two parts intuition and creativity. Here at Avery, we pride ourselves on the collaborative nature of how we process our collections, incorporating traditional archival standards with cutting-edge technology, and then adding our collective understanding of African-American history and culture to the mix.



The goal of our archival team and Reference Librarian is to make sure that our dynamic collections are attractive and accessible to a cross-section of the community. In doing so, our collections continue to attract the attention of seasoned scholars and emerging researchers, both graduate and undergraduate alike. And who better to use and learn from collections than burgeoning and future scholars?

As a distinct division of The College of Charleston's Addlestone Library, we are poised to greatly influence the learning and research experiences of professors and students. Most recently, our collaborative programs with CLAW, AAST, and the South Carolina Historical Society have deepened our impact on campus-wide learning and broadened our reach throughout the greater Charleston areas. Yet, in many ways, we've only just begun to see the results of our partnerships with campus colleagues and partnering institutions.

Working with the African-American Studies department provides an excellent case study on how students and its professors can benefit from Avery's archival resources. For example, Professor Roneka Matheny's Fall 2010 course, AAST 200 "Intro to African-American Studies," exposed a large and diverse class eager to learn about 19th- and 20th-century Charleston to our extensive collections. In order to properly provide Professor Matheny's students with an overview of working with archival materials, Deborah Wright and I developed a primer workshop to introduce the class to the fundamentals of doing research with primary-source materials. General research topics were provided as a guiding parameter by the professor as the students were tasked with using materials found in Avery to write a five-page report.

Initially, the students attended the primer workshop to learn how the archive functions, the ways in which it differs from a library, and how using materials from both sources can lead to authentically rich research. The students were taught how to use a finding aid to locate materials; advised of our reading room procedures, including proper handling techniques of fragile materials (with the use of cotton

The goal of our archival team and Reference Librarian is to make sure that our dynamic collections are attractive and accessible to a cross-section of the community. In doing so, our collections continue to attract the attention of seasoned scholars and emerging researchers, both graduate and undergraduate alike.

gloves); how to correctly cite materials used; and how to work with the reference librarian to obtain the best research results. The foundational skills learned in this primer workshop can be transferred to similar archival and special-collection repositories in varying degrees, locally or nationally.

From the onset, the students became immersed in our various collections, including our voluminous vertical files, oral history transcripts, and photograph collection. Many were introduced to Charlestonian Civil Rights grass roots activists and educators for the first time, such as Septima Poinsette Clark, Esau Jenkins, and Bernice Robinson, and their efforts to establish a Citizenship School on Johns Island. Others discovered the activism of unsung and unknown local heroes, including Mary Moultrie and William "Bill" Saunders with their efforts in staging the 1969 Hospital Workers' Strike. Several explored the works of renowned artisan Philip Simmons and the prolific architect Herbert DeCosta. Some researched the creation of the Phillis Wheatley Literary and Social Club (our



Reading Room's namesake) with other local women's clubs and the formation of the Charleston Branch of the NAACP.

Not only did the students learn about local people who made extraordinary impacts in their communities, they were able to realize Charleston's place in the larger scheme of American history. Essentially, working with archival materials expands critical-thinking skills by teaching students to analyze and synthesize selected raw information to be incorporated effectively in their work. The end result of researching with primary-source documents provided Professor Matheny with papers that were "original, insightful and informative." Many of the essays even enlightened her to people and events of which she had been previously unaware.

We are proud to report a record number of professors and students using our archives during the Spring 2011 semester in diverse subjects—from "Charleston as a Classroom: Exploring the City's Archives and Historic Sites" to "Minority Entrepreneurship", among several others. Our collections are actively researched for various disciplines, including English, literature, anthropology, art history, and historic preservation. Incorporating primary-source materials from archives offers professors unique and innovative teaching opportunities, thus supporting scholarship in higher education. Working with our colleagues, researchers, and students is a gratifying experience that sustains the legacies of the people whose stories we preserve and increases our ability to develop and maintain a truly active archive.

THE AFRICAN-AMERICAN MUSEUM MOVEMENT

CURTIS J. FRANKS



Dr. Margaret Burroughs, August 2009

In reflecting upon the mission, the work, the legacy—the spirit—of the movement to establish Black museums, Rowena Stewart invokes the soul as a metaphor for the essence and power of the Black museum aesthetic and burgeoning tradition. Truly, what is and what historically has been the tradition of Black museums is documenting, preserving, and interpreting the unique history, culture, experiences, and traditions of African Americans—the trailblazers, the unsung, and the drylongso. The early efforts of Black museum trailblazers such as Dr. Margaret Burroughs and Dr. Charles Wright remind me of the power and prevalence of historical and cultural memory within the Black Community and the great extent to which museum exhibitions, archives, material artifacts, etc. have been used to uncover and highlight the enormous cultural, political, and socio-economic contributions Africans and people of African descent have made to this nation. Writing on the heels of the recent death of Dr. Burroughs has afforded me the opportunity to revisit the African-American Museum Movement and to pay homage to some of the principals within the movement, including Dr. Margaret Burroughs, cofounder of The DuSable Museum in Chicago, Illinois; and Charles Wright, MD, founder of the Museum of African-American History in Detroit, Michigan.

During the late 1960s, Drs. Margaret Burroughs (1915–2010) and Charles H. Wright (1918–2002) sent out a call to African-American scholars and museum professionals to discuss the founding of a national organization. As a result, an informal association of Black museums known as the National Association of Museums and Cultural Organizations and the Black Museums Conference was formed. Thereafter, in 1978, a consortium of six museums, the recipient of conference

planning support grants from the National Museum Act under the auspices of the Smithsonian Institution established a more structured organization, which became the African-American Museum Association.

In 1997, the organization changed its name to the Association of African American Museums (AAAM). The organization has a membership of over 250 museums and cultural institutions nationwide. It remains true to its founding mission, dedicated to serving the interests and needs of African-American museums throughout the nation.

"Black Museums are the great Soul cleansers... They contain those things that stroke the Soul when you are down and out because they tell you who you are."

Rowena Stewart (1983), Executive Director of the Rhode Island Black Heritage Society and President of the African-American Museum Association

Though the founders of the Black museum movement faced a myriad of challenges in their effort to change the paradigm of American museums, these trailblazers set the tone for cultural institutions and museums created by and for people of color when they organized themselves into a national organization to support the development and sustainment of Black museums. Thanks to their tireless dedication and vision, we have world-class museums and archives across the country, including the Avery Research Center at the College of Charleston and The Stanback Museum and Planetarium at South Carolina State University. We certainly owe a debt of gratitude to Drs. Margaret Burroughs and Charles Wright, as well as countless others, for their diligence and determination.

42 YEARS OF BLACK STUDIES

DEBORAH WRIGHT & CHRYSTAL GRANT



Conseula Francis, Ph.D.
Associate Professor of English and Director of the African-American Studies Program, College of Charleston

"With our grounding in liberal arts, our commitment to academic excellence and social responsibility, and unparalleled opportunities for experiential learning both on and off campus, the African-American Studies Program at the College of Charleston is poised to become one of the premier African-American Studies programs in the country."

In 1968, the Black Student Union at San Francisco State University, other activists, and faculty demanded the establishment of a Black Studies Program. That program became a department a year later. Forty-two years since then, numerous colleges and universities offer majors, minors, and degrees in black, African-American, Africana and related studies. The College of Charleston's African-American Studies Program (AASST) formed in 1992 as an undergraduate minor. In 2012, the College of Charleston is on track to begin an African-American Studies major. Dr. Conseula Francis, the AASST Program's director, looks forward to the future and assures that "With our grounding in liberal arts, our commitment to academic excellence and social responsibility, and unparalleled opportunities for experiential learning both on and off campus, the African-American Studies Program at the College of Charleston is poised to become one of the premier African-American Studies programs in the country."



Though the Black Power Movement brought about the institutionalization of Black Studies, it was the black bibliophiles, African-American intellectuals, collectors and historians, who had already established and validated the discipline. We have put together a timeline, that while not comprehensive, it marks the foundation of Black Studies in the perspective of both 19th- and early 20th-century African-American scholarship and the Black Power Movement of the 1960s and 1970s.

TIMELINE



1773 *Poems on Various Subjects, Religious and Moral*, written by Phillis Wheatley, an enslaved Bostonian, is published in that city. It is the first book written by an African-American woman published in the United States and only the second book in the nation's history authored by a woman to be published.

1787 Free blacks in New York City found the African Free School, where future leaders Henry Highland Garnett and Alexander Crummell are educated.

1828 A group of free men of color in Philadelphia organized a Reading Room Society.

1834 David Ruggles, abolitionist, opens the first African-American bookstore in the nation in New York City.

1833 The Philadelphia Library Company of Colored Persons is established and appeals for books and donations. By 1838, the Library has 600 volumes. This stimulates free black people in several large cities to develop and maintain circulating libraries.

1852 Martin R. Delany publishes *The Condition, Elevation, Emigration and Destiny of the Colored People of the United States*.

1856 Janitor Joseph W. H. Cathcart develops a "scrapbook" from his collection of newspaper articles about black people. By 1882, Cathcart has amassed 100 volumes.

1882 George Washington Williams's *History of the Negro Race in America from 1619 to 1880* is considered the first history of African Americans that meets the standards of professionally written history of that era.



1897 Robert Mara Adger, a Charleston, SC native, organizes the Afro-American Historical Society in Philadelphia.

1911 Afro-Latino Arturo Schomburg and John Edward Bruce found the Negro Society for Historical Research.

1915 Dr. Carter G. Woodson ("Father of Black History") co-founds the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History (ASNLH)

1915 John Wesley Cromwell, Sr. organizes the "Negro Book Collector's Exchange."

1916 ASNLH begins publishing the *Journal of Negro History*, which becomes the first scholarly journal devoted to the study of African-American history.

1916 The Phillis Wheatley Literary and Social Club forms in Charleston, SC under the direction of Jeanette Cox, wife of Avery Institute principal Benjamin Cox. *Phillis Wheatley and Literary Social Club Records*, AMN 1031

1920 The Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) "Declaration of Rights of the Negro People of the World" called for black history to be taught to black children in school.

NEW DIRECTIONS IN PEDAGOGY

AT THE COLLEGE OF CHARLESTON

PATRICIA WILLIAMS LESSANE, Ph.D.

African-American Studies, CLAW and Avery collaborate to deliver innovative instruction to students and community.



In *Black Studies as Human Studies, Critical Essays and Interviews*, African-American scholar Joyce Ann Joyce writes the following about the visceral challenges Black Studies teachers, professors, and scholar-activists confront on the frontlines of the academy:

The teaching of literature, particularly African-American literature, requires that we as teachers strip ourselves bare; it requires that we struggle against our own fears and prejudices. It requires a clarity of vision that has its roots in our commitment to the integrity of a truth that levels all humanity. Both the teacher and the student of African-American literature need not only a strong sense of history, but they each also must reveal and then defeat the fear and dishonesty with the inner self that eclipses healthy relationships between Blacks and Whites. A Black professor of literature unwittingly full of self-hatred is as dangerous as a racist White professor of African-American literature. For if they both fail to grapple with the depth of the text, neither takes us forward in improving the societal ills fostered by racism.

As a museum, gallery, and archival repository, the work done at the Avery Research Center is, in many ways, applied Black Studies.

While Joyce writes passionately from her perspective as a Black professor teaching African-American literature to a predominately white class, her analysis has poignant implications for Black Studies in general. Truly, the history and success of Black Studies/African-American Studies/Africana Studies lies in the hard-fought battles and victories won by the progenitors of this intellectual and deeply political epistemology, and the revolutionary teacher-scholars, scholar-activists who continue the tradition of radical teaching started some four decades ago. Joyce suggests teaching African-American literature void of any real self-analysis and without full acceptance of the place of intrinsic racism within American society is a disservice not only to the student, but also the legacies out of which African-American literary and historical experiences have come. Such is the case with Black Studies.

(continued on page 12)

1922 Carter G.

Woodson writes *The Negro in Our History*, which becomes the first general history to be a standard reference.

1925 Alain LeRoy

Locke ("Father of the Harlem Renaissance" and "New Negro" concept) edits issue of the periodical "Survey Graphic," a special on Harlem and the Harlem Renaissance, which helps educate white readers about Harlem's flourishing culture.

1926 The Carnegie

Corporation purchases Schomburg's collection of books and artifacts on African-American life. The collection becomes the basis for Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture in New York City.

1926 Carter G.

Woodson founds the *Journal of Negro History*, the first professional scholarly journal devoted to black history.

1926 Carter G.

Woodson establishes Negro History Week in February in-between the birthdays of Abraham Lincoln and Frederick Douglass.

1927 At her own

expense, Susan Dart Butler establishes a reading room/library for Charleston, SC students.

1927 The Book Lovers

Club forms in Charleston, SC. *Book Lovers Club, AMN1044*

1929-1930s

Linguist Lorenzo Dow Turner ("Father of Gullah Studies"), after hearing students speaking Gullah at South Carolina State College, recorded and documented Gullah speakers, asserting that "African heritage, despite slavery, had retained and passed on their cultural identity through words, music and story..."

1949 Lorenzo Dow

Turner publishes *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect*, which is considered to be not only the "defining work of Gullah language and culture, but also the beginning of a new field, African-American studies."



1960s-1970s

The Black Power Movement, born out of Civil Rights Movement, emphasizes racial pride and the development of black political and cultural institutions.

1966 African-American

students create the 1st Black Student Union at predominately white San Francisco State University.

1968 Cleveland

Sellers promotes Black Studies programming to Historically Black Colleges and Universities in South Carolina. *Cleveland Sellers Collection AMN1017*

1968 San Francisco

State University establishes the nation's first Black Studies Program in September.

1969 The Ford

Foundation gives one million dollars to Morgan State University, Howard University, and Yale University to help prepare faculty members to teach courses in African-American Studies.

1976 Black History

Month (formerly Negro History Week) becomes recognized annually in the United States.



STAFF NEWS

HIGHLIGHTS



AVERY RESEARCH CENTER BIDS FAREWELL TO

- Mr. Oliver Smalls, long-term staff member who retired after over 30 years of service to the College of Charleston.
- CLIR Project Registrar Sue Jacoby, Project Photographer Liz Vaughn, and Project Archivists Melissa Bronheim and Mia Fischer.

We wish them nothing but continued success in their future endeavors.

- Amanda Ross recently received the Project Innovation Award from the South Carolina Archival Association.
- Georgette Mayo will attend Society of American Archivist EAD training in Minnesota.
- Amanda Ross and Jessica Farrell attended the Hidden Collection's Symposium sponsored by the Council of Information and Library Science
- Amanda and Jessica will present on Avery Research Center's artifact digitization program at a joint annual meeting for the Society of North Carolina Archivists and the South Carolina Archival Association.
- Deborah Wright was featured in the *Post & Courier's* "She's Got Moxie" column.
- Patricia Williams Lessane attended the Council for Advancement and Support of Education (CASE) Development Deans in Tampa, Florida.
- Patricia will be presenting a paper entitled, "Black Bodies of Desire and Discontent: *True Blood's* Lafayette and Tara Thornton" at the 2011 CAAR Conference in Paris, France.

PROFILE

PATRICIA WILLIAMS LESSANE, Ph.D.

AVERY RESEARCH CENTER'S EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

SAVANNAH J. FRIERSON



Six months have passed since Dr. Patricia Williams Lessane became the Executive Director of the Avery Research Center for African American History and Culture, and there have been a lot of changes in the interim—especially for her. A native Chicagoan, the transition from the big Windy City to the smaller, balmier one of Charleston has been one of creating a new support network to complement the one of family and close friends still in Chicago. Though her life moves just as fast here as it does in her hometown, she is busy getting herself and her family settled in their new city while going full steam ahead with her goals to accomplish for the Center. Chief among them is to establish a clearly defined mission for Avery that will help propel the Center onto the map locally and beyond. Having had aspirations to work in similar

institutions, such as the Schomburg, while in college, Lessane feels her training in anthropology, specifically as an ethnographer, and her previous museum professions at the Field Museum and the Museum of Science and Industry enable her to provide perspective on how scholarship, outreach, and public programming can combine to create innovative programs that capitalize on Avery's function as an archive, center for public programming, and research center. One such program she is spearheading is "We Carry These Memories Inside of We: Celebrating the 20th Anniversary of *Daughters of the Dust* and the Black Art Aesthetic of Filmmaker Julie Dash", which is a symposium that will marry the scholarship of various fields of study, including African-American Studies, Gender Studies, Film Studies, and visual art.

FRUITS OF BLACK EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE

FEATURING FORMER STUDENTS FROM LOCAL CHARLESTON SCHOOLS

CYNTHIA McCOTTRY SMITH

MR. WALTER F. JOHNSON III

Immaculate Conception School (Class of 1957)

Walter Johnson III was born in Charleston, SC. and spent the first ten years of his life in Charleston's Gadsden Green Projects. He attended West Virginia State University (BA), University of Missouri at Kansas City (MA), received advance training at Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government. Johnson is a retired United States Army brigadier general and founder of Eagle Group International, Inc., a multimillion-dollar contracting company that was purchased by Lockheed Martin Corporation. In 2010, he authored *I Can Do That! Advice for Spiritual Entrepreneurs*.

Quote: "God honors no drafts where there are no deposits."



Vanderbilt University (Ph.D.) and additional study at Harvard University and the College of Charleston. Dr. Dilligard is a lifelong educator. She served as Deputy Superintendent and second in command of the Charleston County School District, Interim Superintendent, Project Director, Ombudsman and grant writer.

Quote: Favorite quote told to her by former teacher Mrs. McCottry-Smith which propelled her to move on and to achieve, "The prettiest lilies grow in the muddiest pond."

NED EDWARD FELDER

Burke High School (Class of 1955)

Mr. Felder received his Bachelor of Science & Juris Doctorate degrees from South Carolina State University. He was commissioned as a second lieutenant through the Army ROTC program in the Finance Corps. He later transferred to The Judge Advocate General's Corps. As judge advocate, Felder served as prosecutor, defense counsel, and trial judge throughout the U.S., Germany, Turkey, and Vietnam. He was appointed a senior judge to the U.S. Army Court of Criminal Appeals, the highest military appellate court, prior to retiring as a colonel. He is the recipient of the National Bar Assn. Outstanding Jurist Award and the Federal Bar Assn. Award presented by former Supreme Court Chief Justice William Rehnquist.



Affirmation: Felder believes prayer and service are twins, and success is not measured by what Burke gave him, rather by what he gives to his Alma Mater.

JUDGE RICHARD E. FIELDS

Avery Normal Institute (Class 1940)

Judge Fields attended West Virginia State College (BS) and received his Bachelor of Laws from Howard University (1947). After passing the Bar, he was admitted to practice law in the District of Columbia and in South Carolina in 1948. Judge Fields was the first black person to open a law office in Charleston since the early 1900s, and the first to ever become a litigator. In 1950, Judge Fields, along with several black citizens, formed the Charleston County Political Action Committee (PAC) for the purpose of organizing and educating African-American voters in the power of the ballot, and for the additional purpose of electing African Americans to political office. Judge Fields was elected a Municipal Judge for the City of Charleston in 1969 and was reputed to have been the first black elected official in the entire Southeast.

Quote about Judge Fields: "Judge Richard E. Fields: A remarkable humanitarian and standard bearer of justice for all."



DR. BARBARA DAWSON DILLIGARD

C. A. Brown High School (Class of 1963)

Dr. Dilligard was in the first graduating class of C. A. Brown High School and valedictorian of her class.

She attended Johnson C. Smith University (BS), Citadel Military College of S.C. (MBA),

Full biographies are available in the Avery Research Center Vertical File.



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25 YEARS

NEW DIRECTIONS IN PEDAGOGY

AT THE COLLEGE OF CHARLESTON

PATRICIA WILLIAMS LESSANE, Ph.D.

(continued from page 9)



As a museum, gallery, and archival repository, the work done at the Avery Research Center is, in many ways, applied Black Studies. Through lectures, public programs, imbedded course instruction, and community workshops, Avery's robust collections are currently employed as teaching tools for College of Charleston faculty and resources for scholars and lay researchers around the globe.

For those at The College of Charleston (CofC) working as scholar-teachers, archivists, curators, librarians, and artists who teach Black Studies in classes, or via conferences and public programs, having rare books and archival materials as resources has afforded fascinating ways to deliver innovative pedagogy. Furthermore, having the Carolina Lowcountry and Atlantic World Program (CLAW), which highlights the connections between the South Carolina Lowcountry with the rest of the Atlantic World, and the Lowcountry Digital Library as partner resources has enabled Avery to employ technology for people around the world to access its collections. Such a partnership has great implications for both Avery and the ever-growing African-American Studies Program (AAST).

AAST and Avery have had an intimate relationship since the program's inception in 1992, particularly when former Avery director W. Marvin Dulaney was named the director of both Avery and AAST in 1994. As of 2007, Associate Professor of English Dr. Conseula

Francis has been the director of AAST, and she continues to work with affiliated faculty to develop an academically rigorous major that has at its center experiential learning opportunities that take advantage of the College's unique and historical significance and location. For example, the AAST's Emerging Scholars Speakers' Series exposes the CofC community to current scholarship in African-American Studies nationwide.

The strengthening partnership between AAST, Avery, and CLAW is innovative pedagogy because of the collaborative nature of programs, conferences, and class instruction provide a comprehensive and distinct way of teaching Black Studies and underscores CofC's mission of creating high-impact learning experiences for its students. And because of these efforts, the Avery Research Center is even more equipped to collect, preserve, and make public the unique historical and cultural heritage of African Americans in Charleston, the Lowcountry, South Carolina, and even beyond.

"We are not solo on this journey, even though we may feel like it times. As the story of our lives unfolds, it is what happens along the way that shapes and defines who we are in the world."



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AVERY INSTITUTE MEMBERSHIP NEWS

PAMELA ZARESK, *Membership Chairman*



As I was rushing to leave the house on Valentine's Day, I received a call from a friend inquiring about my plans for the evening. While

hurriedly telling her I was on my way to an Avery Institute Board meeting, she asked why, with all the other things with which I'm involved, I had chosen to get involved with the Avery Institute Board. I quickly replied, "Because I was asked" and hurried out the door. My friend's question did, however, trigger some introspection—"Why was I involved?"

My short answer of "because I was asked" is only part of the story. My friend and Board Chairman Mr. Walter Brown did ask me to join the board, but it wasn't a hard sell. My schooling was in a place (Fairfax County, Virginia) and time (the '60s) when African-American Studies and culture were an integral part of the curriculum. The Civil Rights

Movement was a big part of our lives, and I found myself particularly drawn to the written words of Langston Hughes, Richard Wright, W.E.B. DuBois, Dr. King, Malcolm X, Eldridge Cleaver, and James Baldwin for putting perspective, voice, and passion to political and sociological events that were shaping my world.

That was the beginning of my absolute belief in the essential need to preserve African-American history and culture.

As the Avery Research Center for African American History and Culture celebrates its 25th anniversary, there will be celebrations and moments for looking back, but what is palpable when one enters Avery today is the energy and enthusiasm for moving forward. It's difficult not to get caught up in the excitement. There is a sense of opportunity to expand collections as Avery's reputation for archival research grows. There is a varied list of scheduled events from film screenings, to art exhibits, to lectures, to poetry readings. And there is a huge desire to

expand outreach into the community. Only good things can come from the broadening exposure of Avery's resources—particularly if it can instill an interest and respect for history and culture in young people growing up today in a far different world than us "old timers".

You can be a part of this excitement. Through membership, you can help acquire more historical documents and collections. Your membership will support the development of outreach programs. And while your monetary contribution and membership will help Avery, you can help yourself, also. You will be provided with notification of programs and activities in which you can participate and I guarantee that will make you a richer person. If you have not yet renewed your membership or would like to become a member, an envelope is enclosed in this issue of the *Avery Messenger*. If you have already renewed your membership for this year, please give the envelope to someone else or donate a membership for a friend.



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The Avery Research Center is grateful to have the support of SunTrust Bank. Our ongoing partnership will ensure Avery's ability to enhance the learning and cultural experiences of College of Charleston students, faculty, researchers, and local residents through lectures, workshops, performances, and Avery's growing archival collections documenting the African-American experiences locally and throughout the African diaspora.



In photo from left to right: Curtis Franks, Deborah Wright, Allison Gregory, Patricia Williams Lessane, Mark Lattanzio, Mitchell Wright, Dr. George Hynd, Dean David Cohen.



"EVENING WITH FREDERICK DOUGLASS"

**MAY 5, 2011
6:00 PM
AVERY RESEARCH CENTER**

History comes to life as actor, historian Kevin McIlvaine re-creates the presence of American social reformer, orator, writer, spokesman Frederick Douglass.

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DAUGHTERS OF THE DUST A TWO-DAY SYMPOSIUM

**SEPTEMBER 16-17, 2011
AVERY RESEARCH CENTER**



**WE CARRY THESE MEMORIES INSIDE OF WE: CELEBRATING THE 20TH-YEAR ANNIVERSARY
OF DAUGHTERS OF THE DUST AND THE BLACK ART AESTHETIC OF FILMMAKER JULIE DASH**

Twenty years ago, filmmaker Julie Dash broke through racial and gender boundaries to become the first African-American woman to debut a film with wide release across the country. Dash's *Daughters of the Dust* introduced America to the Black life in the Gullah Sea Islands by examining Gullah-Geechee traditions, Black women's rights, and race relations at the turn of the 19th century.

The 20th-year anniversary of *Daughters of the Dust* provides the space and opportunity to reflect on converging discourses of race, gender, and class and the impact they have on Black women's lives, identities,

and agency at the turn of the 19th century. In a two-day symposium, The College of Charleston's Avery Research Center, Carolina Lowcountry and Atlantic World (CLAW) Program, and African-American Studies Program (AAS), The International African American Museum (IAAM) and the South Carolina Historical Society will examine the lessons learned from *Daughters of the Dust* and its influence in the academy and society.

FEATURING:

Juried art exhibition and poster art competition. Artists are encouraged to examine the central themes of the film including, but not limited to, Black female

identity and agency, Black love, the Black family, and of course, Gullah-Geechee cultural traditions. Artists may submit work in the following categories: Painting/ Drawing; Sculpture; Fiber Art; Mixed Media.

SUBMISSION FORMAT AND DEADLINE:

Jpeg images must be received by May 27, 2011. Submission Fees: \$25 for 1 image; and \$15 for each subsequent image up to 5 total.

Come explore Gullah-Geechee culture during this two-day symposium filled with film, panel discussions, paper presentations, and visual art!

*Free and open to the public.
Online Registration Required.*