



BLACK METROPOLIS  
**BMRC**  
RESEARCH CONSORTIUM

# NEWS

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## Summer Short-Term Fellows Reunion and National Gathering of African American Studies Scholars Indianapolis, Indiana, October 6, 2018



*Former Fellows and BMRC Board Members at the Reunion*



*The “Future of Black Studies” panel featured scholars (l-r) Lionel Kimble, Christopher Reed, Elizabeth Todd-Breland, and Darlene Clark Hine.*

Over 50 participants converged in Indianapolis, Indiana for the first [Summer Short-term Fellows Reunion and \(Inter\)National Gathering of African American Studies Scholars](#). Former Black Metropolis Research Consortium (BMRC) fellows from all throughout the U.S., Canada and France gathered to share research and scholarship, reflect on experience, fellowship,

and celebrate the success of one of our premier programs. From 2009 to 2017, 95 fellowships have been awarded to scholars, independent researchers, writers and artists to conduct research within the archival repositories of BMRC member institutions. Through the years, fellows have completed dissertations, publications, digital humanities projects, documentaries, musical compositions and other works from their exploration in archives.

The Reunion was held in concurrence with the Annual Meeting of the Association for the Study of African American Life and History (ASALH), and featured presentations from former fellows on people and subjects such as Harold Washington, affirmative action at University of Chicago, the African Drum, and slave census schedules. In addition to former fellows, historians and African American Studies scholars attended to learn and share more on Black experiences related to Chicagoland. Invited panelists presented on “*Enhancing Scholarship with Archives: Practical Ways to Connect Students with Archival Research*” and “*Future of Black Chicago Studies – What’s Missing? What’s Next?*” Check out the full [Reunion program](#) online.

**BMRC thanks**



**for their generous support of the Summer Short-term Fellowship, and new scholarship and study on topics related to Black history in Chicago, and throughout the world.**

**See more highlights from the Reunion on page 7 >>>**

## Call for BMRC 2019 Summer Short-term Fellowship Applications!

BMRC is pleased to accept [applications for the 2019 Summer Short-term Fellowship](#).

Through an international competition, the BMRC offers 1-month residential fellowships in the summer (June to August) in the city of Chicago for its Summer Short-term Fellowship Program. This renowned Fellowship Program has engaged scholars, independent researchers, artists, and public historians from the United States, Canada and Europe to better formulate new historical narratives of Chicago's past through use of BMRC Member Archives.

The new, original research and art developed through this program is significant as it illuminates the national and international importance of Chicago's Black communities.

Submissions will be accepted through **Sunday, February 17, 2019**.

For more information, visit our [Fellowship webpage](#), and please ensure you are subscribed to our [mailing list](#).



### Executive Director's Letter

*Seasons Greetings!*

For many, the holiday season can bring about feelings of warmth, thankfulness, unity, as well as anticipation for a new year. The staff and Board members of the Black Metropolis Research Consortium are both reflecting on a productive, engaging 2018, and looking forward to continuing our mission and striving towards our vision in 2019. This year our dedicated Board members spent significant time developing a powerful strategic plan on which we look forward to partnering with our member institutions to implement. Our priority areas for 2018-2021 are the following:

- **Education**
- **Collections**
- **Collecting Advisement**
- **Membership**
- **Sustainability**

If you attended our annual meeting in July, you received a copy of the [BMRC Strategic Plan](#) created by our members. If you were unable to join us, fret not! You are invited to view our goals and strategies online. We would love to hear how you or your organization may be interested in collaborating with us to ensure the documentation, sharing, understanding, and preservation of the Black experience throughout metropolitan Chicago.

In this *Newsletter*, we share news about the last half of 2018 with member institution features, spotlight on collections, the preservation and preparation work of our Archie Motley Archival Interns, our recent public programming, and our first Summer Short-term Fellows' Reunion and (inter)National Gathering of African American Studies Scholars held in October. Much of the work we have done since our Annual Meeting was greatly aided by support from our temporary Cultural Program Assistant, Yolanda Gilmore-bivins, who has worked with BMRC since September. We are all extremely thankful for her hard work, innovative ideas, and quick leap into our organization's operations!

As some of you prepare to spend time with elders, family and friends during the holidays, I personally encourage you to share your narratives, as well as conduct oral histories to learn more about the legacies of people in your life – young and seasoned – as we all have stories to impart! If your family or friends have historical resources to share on Black experiences in Chicagoland, please do not hesitate to contact BMRC staff or our awesome member institutions to learn more about preservation of archival collections.

Wishing you peace and joy, I am,

*Andrea*

Andrea Jackson Gavin




*(l-r)  
Andrea  
Jackson  
Gavin  
and  
Yolanda  
Gilmore-  
bivins at  
Fellows  
Reunion.*



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**SPOTLIGHT ON ARCHIVES >>>**

**Kappa Alpha Psi**

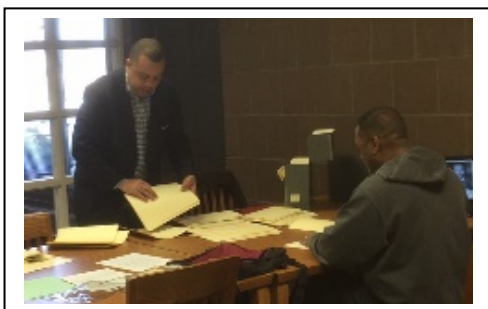


(First row) Chauncey Bertha, Thomas Bradley, Calvin Jones, Wilbur Gaines, Ned Dunbar, Earl Barnes; (second row) William Wright, Mark Upchurch, Don Richards, Loyal Wilson.

**“Story of historic African-American fraternity told through University Archives”**

Since 1911, the African-American fraternity, **Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc. ®** has initiated members throughout the world who have made great achievements in law, education, medicine, politics, the arts and more. The University of Chicago’s Iota Chapter has been celebrating its centennial this year, having been established on February 9, 1918. In honor of this occasion, Aaron Williams wrote an article, [“Honoring the Centennial of Chicago Chapter, The Iota of Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc.”](#) featured in the *Kappa Alpha Psi Journal*. Significant research was conducted within historical archives of BMRC members University of Chicago Special Collections Research Center and Vivian G. Harsh Research Collection of Afro-American History and Literature of the Chicago Public Library. [The University of Chicago Library News](#) also highlighted Williams’ research.

*Above image courtesy of the Kappa Alpha Psi Journal. Below: Williams and Fraternity Historian, Kevin Scott, conduct research at the Harsh Collection*



After visiting the archives, Williams noted that “when researching a collegiate student organization, vital resources are amassed in the archival collection of school yearbooks, chapter membership reports, newspaper articles, memorandums and other types of source materials. Accessing archival resources helps to validate the existence of the organization, understand its activities and provide context to chronicling its history.” He utilized resources at both institutions on Kappa Alpha Psi and its relationship with the University of Chicago. “The Harsh Collection had key resources from generous donors that buoyed research, while University of Chicago had extensive document and photo archives that were accessible to mine for information.” The extensive article, highlights the contributions by the Iota Chapter brothers to the Fraternity, in many cases to the city of Chicago, and to numerous industries of 20th century American society.

**Accomplishments of the 2018 Archie Motley Archival Internship Program**

Congratulations to our Summer 2018 Archie Motley Archival Interns – **Donna Edgar, Christopher Johnson, and Olamide Ogunbambo!** The Interns each completed 200 hours of practical archives work experience at a BMRC member institution, thus fulfilling the program’s purpose of exposing students of color to career options in archives and special collections, and preparing historical resources on Black experiences in Chicago-area archival repositories. We continue to extend gratitude to our host institutions and the University of Chicago Office of Career Advancement for their tremendous support of this internship program.

Ogunbambo – a third-year University of Chicago student – worked with Illinois Institute of Technology’s University Archivist, Ralph Pugh, to organize documents, photographs and audio visual materials from the **Progressive Community Church Papers**; this collection documents one of the first independent, non-denominational African American churches in the United States, founded in 1922. Upon completion of his first year at University of Chicago, Johnson prepared the **Chicago Reporter (Periodical) Records (1972-1989)** for research at the Chicago History Museum with Senior Archivist, Julie Wroblewski. The collection – now open for research – documents a monthly publication and organization founded in 1972 with a focus on race and poverty issues in Chicago and impact to African American and Latina/o communities. In addition to researching and providing recommendations for digital collection and preservation tools for her host institution – the Center for Black Music Research at Columbia College Chicago – Edgar organized the **Rachel Eubanks Collection** with Archivist and Digital Librarian, Laurie Moses, during her internship. A recent graduate of Dominican University’s Master of Library and Information Science program, Edgar processed original scores composed by Eubanks (1922-2009), also a music educator and founder of the Eubanks Conservatory of Music in Los Angeles.



*Intern Christopher Johnson working with an archival collection at Chicago History Museum*

**COLLABORATIVE PROGRAMS >>>**

BMRC and Chicago Collections partnered on October 30, 2018 to sponsor their first collaborative program, **Documenting Movements: Archivists as Social Justice Advocates** featuring Lae’l Hughes-Watkins, Founder of [Project STAND](#) (Student Activism Now Documented) University Archivist and Assistant Professor at Kent State University, with remarks from Verne Harris, Director of Archive and Dialogue, Nelson Mandela Foundation & Follett Chair in Library and Information Science at BMRC member Dominican University. Sincere gratitude was expressed for sponsorship from Illinois Humanities, which also included sign language interpreters for audience members. Well attended by over 85 people, the lecture was held at BMRC member Roosevelt University, and led to an engaging discussion as many shared about their personal collections on resistance. Project STAND is an online clearinghouse where academic institutions can

**Documenting Movements**

**BMRC** **CHICAGO COLLECTIONS**  
**OCTOBER 30 2018**  
 Tuesday, 5:30PM  
**Documenting Movements: Archivists as Social Justice Advocates**  
**Lae'l Hughes-Watkins**  
 Founder of Project STAND  
 University Archivist and Assistant Professor  
 Kent State University  
**Verne Harris**  
 Director of Archive and Dialogue, Nelson Mandela  
 Foundation & Follett Chair  
 Library and Information Science  
 Join us for a presentation on  
 documentation of social movements and  
 activism featuring Lae'l Hughes-Watkins.  
 Hughes-Watkins founded Project STAND,  
 an online clearinghouse where researchers  
 can learn about archival and historical  
 collections on student dissent, with special  
 focus on student groups representing  
 concerns of historically marginalized  
 communities. Remarks will also be  
 provided by Verne Harris, archivist of the  
 Nelson Mandela Papers.  
 This program is  
 supported by a grant from the  
 Illinois Humanities Council



*(l-r) Jeanne Long, Executive Director of Chicago Collections Consortium, Harris, Hughes-Watkins, and Andrea Jackson Gavin*

provide researchers a centralized access point to historical and archival documentation on the development and on-going occurrences of student dissent. Project STAND focuses on digital and analog primary sources which document the activities of student groups that represent the concerns student groups that represent the concerns of historically marginalized communities (e.g., African American, Chicano/a, LGBTQ, religious minorities, disabled, etc.).

**Connecting Past and Present: Police-Community Relations and Archival Collections**

BMRC member Chicago History Museum (CHM) is the archival repository for the [African American Police League Collection](#) (AAPL), documenting the formation and activism of organized Black police officers in Chicago. On November 13, 2018, CHM partnered with the Positive Anti-Crime Thrust, Inc., and BMRC to honor the work of AAPL, and host a discussion on police-community relations; a display of materials from the AAPL, Catholic Interracial Council, and John McDermott collections were also on view for attendees. Established in 1968, and formerly known as the Afro-American Patrolman’s League, the officers unified against direct orders to kill Black people following the tumultuous year when Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was assassinated. Committed to defending and protecting Black people in their communities, the officers worked to protect Black offenders from receiving unjust punishment and conduct by police,



*(l-r) Robinson; Andrea Jackson Gavin; Julie Wroblewski, Senior Archivist, Chicago History Museum and BMRC Board Member; Saffold; Tracy Drake, Archival Specialist, Chicago Public Library Harsh Research Collection, & BMRC Board Member*

and led efforts to increase the number of Blacks in law enforcement. Renault Robinson, an outspoken officer and early President of AAPL, filed several lawsuits on behalf of the organization against the Chicago Police Department and the City of Chicago. Forum participants also viewed a rare 1980s documentary, *From the Alley to the Hall*, filmed during a banquet honoring AAPL, Robinson and his successful win against the City. Several speakers greeted the audience at CHM, including former AAPL Executive Director, Howard Saffold, founder Edward “Buzz” Palmer, as well as surprise guest, Nation of Islam Minister Louis Farrakhan – who shared that AAPL members aided and protected him when he moved to Chicago. The AAPL Collection is available for research at CHM.

**MEMBER INSTITUTION HIGHLIGHTS >>>**

**WELCOME  
NEW MEMBERS**

**BMRC is pleased to welcome two new members to our consortium for 2018-2019!**



**“Say It With Pictures”**

Chicagoland was twice treated to enriching historical, visual presentations from the [“Say It With Pictures’ Then and Now: Chicago’s African American Photographers 1890-1930”](#) multi-tiered project, which seeks to highlight and explore the under-recognized work and impact of African American commercial photographers and studios owned and operated in Chicago. On October 12, 2018 at BMRC member Columbia College Chicago, project director, professor, and former BMRC Fellow, Dr. Amy Mooney welcomed noted photographic historian and professor, Dr. Deborah Willis as they led an engaging conversation on various Black photographers and their work. The following day at BMRC member Chicago Public Library, Woodson Regional Library, presentations on archival collections were offered to the public by Beverly Cook, Archivist from Vivian G. Harsh Research Collection, Artist and founder of the Kinship Project, Samantha Hill, and BMRC’s Executive Director, Andrea Jackson Gavin. Researchers and historians explored the photographic collections at Harsh after the program.



*Left: Willis and Mooney presenting on Black photographers between 1890 and 1930.*



*Right: Cook presents on photographic collections at the Harsh Collection of Afro-American History and Literature*

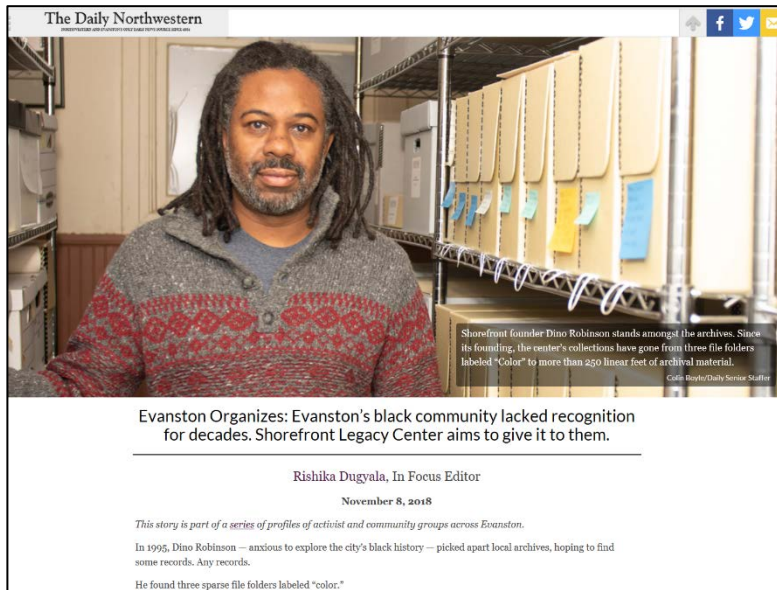
**Naming Ceremony and Dedication of Chicago State University Library in honor of Gwendolyn Brooks**

The Library at BMRC member Chicago State University was named in honor of renowned writer, Poet Laureate, first African American Pulitzer Prize Winner, and former faculty member, Gwendolyn Brooks on October 18, 2018. A full audience enjoyed remembrances, special performances presentations, and remarks from renowned poets, authors, family and friends of Brooks.



*Far left: Nora Brooks Blakely admires portrait of mother, Gwendolyn Brooks. Left: Blakely joined by speakers Tyehimba Jess, Haki Madhubuti, and Cornel West. Photo credit: David McDuffie*

**ANNOUNCEMENTS >>>**



**KUDOS!**

**Dino Robinson**, Shorefront Legacy Center founder and BMRC Board member was profiled by Riskhika Dugyala in an article for *The Daily Northwestern* entitled, “[Evanston Organizes: Evanston’s black community lacked recognition for decades. Shorefront Legacy Center aims to give it to them.](#)” The article shares Robinson’s professional passion for preserving the life and works of African Americans from the Evanston region. This essential work has grown from just a few files to a cataloged archive with a variety of materials documenting the experiences of African Americans in North Shore and Evanston communities. Anyone seeking to learn more about this region’s history should make an appointment with Dino at BMRC member institution [Shorefront Legacy Center](#).

- **The Bob Abrahamian Collection** of more than 30,000 “sweet soul” records, widely considered to be one of the most comprehensive of its kind in the world, has been loaned to Columbia College Chicago’s Center for Black Music Research and will be made available to the College, scholars, and the general public. <https://blogs.colum.edu/cbmr/2018/10/30/sweet-soul/>.
- **Opening Convening: Chicago 1919: Confronting the Race Riots**  
[Saturday, February 23, 2019](#), Time: TBD  
**DuSable Museum of African American History**  
 With Lee Bey, Christopher Reed, Robin Robinson, and more

**OPPORTUNITIES...**

- **Vivian G. Harsh Society - 2019 Timuel D. Black Fellowship**  
 The Vivian G. Harsh Society will again grant the Timuel D. Black short-term fellowship for summer 2019. This \$2,500 short-term fellowship supports research using collections from the Vivian G. Harsh Research Collection of Afro-American History and Literature at the Carter G. Woodson branch of the Chicago Public Library. Applications will be available soon. Please email Dr. Elizabeth Todd-Breland ([etoddbre@uic.edu](mailto:etoddbre@uic.edu)) for more information about the fellowship, and visit <http://harshsociety.org> for more information about the Vivian G. Harsh Society.  
*\*Please note: applicants may apply for both the BMRC Summer Short-term and Timuel D. Black fellowships, but cannot be a recipient of both in the same summer.\**
- **[Making Modernism: Literature and Culture in Chicago, 1893-1955](#)**  
**NEH Summer Institute for College and University Faculty at the Newberry Library, July 8 – August 3, 2019**  
 This institute will explore Chicago's distinct literary and artistic culture as well as the city's connections to other modernist metropolises. We will consider the dominant styles and guiding aesthetics that characterize Chicago from the turn of the century through the aftermath of the Second World War, asking how Chicago's cultural output during these decades is connected more broadly to transatlantic modernism. An important goal of the institute is to develop an expansive understanding of literary history that brings together Modernist Studies and African American Studies. Each week of the institute will include site visits to Chicago museums, clubs, neighborhoods, landmarks, or archives, including the Harsh Research Collection of Afro-American History and Literature at the Carter G. Woodson Library, the oldest and largest African American Studies repository in the Midwest.  
 Faculty: Liesl Olson (director), Davarian Baldwin, Jacqueline Goldsby, Amy Mooney, Walter Benn Michaels, Sarah Kelly Oehler  
**Application Deadline: March 1, 2019** (applicants will be notified on March 29, 2019). Stipend: \$3,300

Summer Short-term Reunion continued >>>



Left:  
Former  
Fellow, Ian  
Rocksborough-  
Smith and  
Jakobi  
Williams



Above: Panelists of the "Enhancing Scholarship with Archives" presentation included (l-r) Aaisha Haykal, Archival Manager at Avery Research Center; Maurice Hobson, professor of African American Studies & History at Georgia State University; Raquel Flores-Clemons, BMRC Board Vice-Chair and University Archivist, Chicago State University; and Erik Gellman, former BMRC Board Vice-Chair and professor of History at UNC-Chapel Hill.



Former Fellows Henri Peretz and  
Bonnie Claudia Harrison



2018-2019 Board of Directors at BMRC Annual Meeting

The **Black Metropolis Research Consortium (BMRC)** is an unincorporated Chicagoland association of libraries, universities, and other archival institutions with major holdings of materials that document African American and African diasporic culture and history, with a specific focus on materials relating to Chicagoland.

BMRC seeks to connect all who seek to document, share, understand and preserve Black experiences.

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**Tracy Drake**, Archival Specialist, Vivian G. Harsh Research Collection, Chicago Public Library

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**Janet Harper**, Librarian, Center for Black Music Research, Columbia College Chicago

**Skyla Hearn**, Chief Archivist and Special Collections Librarian, DuSable Museum of African American History

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**Jamie Nelson**, Head of Special Collections and Archives, DePaul University

**Liesl Olson**, Director of Chicago Studies, Newberry Library

**Morris (Dino) Robinson, Jr.**, Founder, Shorefront Legacy Center

**Cecilia L. Salvatore**, Associate Professor, Coordinator, Archives & Cultural Heritage, Dominican University

**Julie Wroblewski**, Senior Archivist, Chicago History Museum

**Kathleen E. Bethel**, Trustee Emerita

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## Faculty Advisor

**Jacqueline Stewart**, Professor, Department of Cinema & Media Studies & the College, University of Chicago

## BMRC Staff

**Andrea Jackson Gavin**, Executive Director

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**Bronzeville / Black Chicagoan Historical Society**

**Chicago History Museum – Research Center**

**Columbia College Chicago – Center for Black Music  
Research & Archives and Special Collections**

**Chicago Public Library – Harold Washington Library Center  
& the Vivian G. Harsh Research Collection of  
Afro-American History & Literature**

**Chicago State University – Archives & Special Collections**

**DePaul University Library –  
Special Collections and Archives**

**Dominican University – Rebecca Crown Library,  
Archives & Special Collections**

**DuSable Museum of African American History**

**Illinois Institute of Technology**

**Loyola University Chicago – University Archives and  
Special Collections & Women and Leadership Archives**

**The Newberry Library**

**Northwestern University – University Archives;  
Charles Deering McCormick Library, Special Collections;  
& Melville J. Herskovits Library of African Studies,  
Africana Collection**

**Rebuild Foundation**

**Roosevelt University – University Archives**

**Shorefront Legacy Center**

**University of Chicago –  
Special Collections Research Center**

**University of Illinois at Chicago – Library of Health  
Sciences, Special Collections and University Archives &  
Richard J. Daley Library, Special Collections and  
University Archives**