



NEWS

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BMRC 2021 VIRTUAL ANNUAL MEETING

Join the Black Metropolis Research Consortium for our Annual Meeting where we will recognize this past year's achievements and share important updates on our programs, grant-funded projects and new initiatives. The Annual Meeting will also feature short presentations on the BMRC's newest member institutions:

Oak Park Public Library
Cook County Historic Archives and Records
Office
North Park University
Northern Illinois University

Following the presentations, Steven Adams, BMRC Board Chair, will moderate a discussion with our new members on their collections initiatives and opportunities for collaboration across the consortium.

Wednesday
July 21, 2021
12:00 - 1:30pm
Central Time

VIA ZOOM

[REGISTER NOW!](#)

Supporting Chicago's Black Archives: CCE-BMRC Graduate Fellowships

Northwestern University's Racial Equity and Community Partnerships Grant program will fund 9-12 month graduate assistantships at BMRC member institutions.

Northwestern's Center for Civic Engagement (CCE) and the Black Metropolis Research Consortium (BMRC) are collaborating to create a new program to support Chicagoland's Black archives by embedding a small, select cohort of NU PhD students within BMRC member institutions each year. Through 9-12 month graduate assistantships at a BMRC-affiliated museum, library, archive, or community organization, each fellow will perform work determined by their host organization that:

- (1) documents, preserves, interprets, and/or promotes the use of Black historical collections, and/or*
- (2) advances equity & access in institutional practices & policies*

With increased capacity and funding support, BMRC institutions will be able to implement new projects that amplify and increase access to Black stories & histories. Prospective projects include processing & digitizing new collections, promoting community access through public programs, designing inclusive K-12 curriculum, and supporting Black Chicagoans in researching and preserving family legacies. We're excited to begin this partnership and will share more as it develops.

[Learn more about Northwestern's Racial Equity and Community Partnerships Grant](#)
[Learn more about Northwestern's Center for Civic Engagement](#)

About the BMRC

The Black Metropolis Research Consortium (BMRC) is a Chicago-based membership association of libraries, universities, museums, community/arts organizations and other archival institutions. The BMRC's mission is to connect all who seek to document, share, understand and preserve Black experiences.

It is the vision of the BMRC to be essential to promoting discovery, preservation, and use of Black historical collections. Through consortial programs, the BMRC aids in expanding broad access to its members' holdings of materials that document African American and African diasporic culture, history, and politics, with a specific focus on materials relating to Chicago.

Connect with us

Website: bmrc.lib.uchicago.edu

Email: bmrc@uchicago.edu



Facebook: @IBMRC



Twitter: @ChicagoBMRC



Instagram: black_metropolis

Executive Director's Note



BMRC ED Marcia Walker-McWilliams

Dear friends,

We're more than halfway through 2021 and making our way towards the light at the end of the pandemic's tunnel. Black history and culture have taken center stage in Chicago this summer with the unveiling of The Light of Truth Ida B. Wells National Monument - the first monument to a Black woman in the city. Chicago leaders voted to rename Lake Shore Drive to Jean Baptiste Point DuSable Lake Shore Drive, recognizing the explorer's role in the city's founding. And Juneteenth is now a federal holiday. The TRiiBE, a digital media platform focusing on journalism about Black Chicago, made the city's Black and Indigenous histories the focus of its annual printed magazine, TRiiBE Guide 2021. In this pivotal moment, many are recognizing the richness of Black history and culture and I personally hope that this moment leads to an even deeper engagement with Black experiences in the past and in our present.

Summer is a busy time of year for the BMRC. We host our annual meeting every July - you're invited! And this year are fortunate to resume our flagship summer programs welcoming interns and fellows to BMRC member institutions, whom you can learn more about on the following pages. This issue of the *BMRC News* also provides some exciting updates on new initiatives like the BMRC's partnership with Northwestern University's Center for Civic Engagement and progress on our grant from the Mellon Foundation.

Please continue to support us and spread the word about the Black Metropolis Research Consortium. And continue to celebrate with us - it's our 15th anniversary!!!

Stay well. Stay safe. Stay engaged.

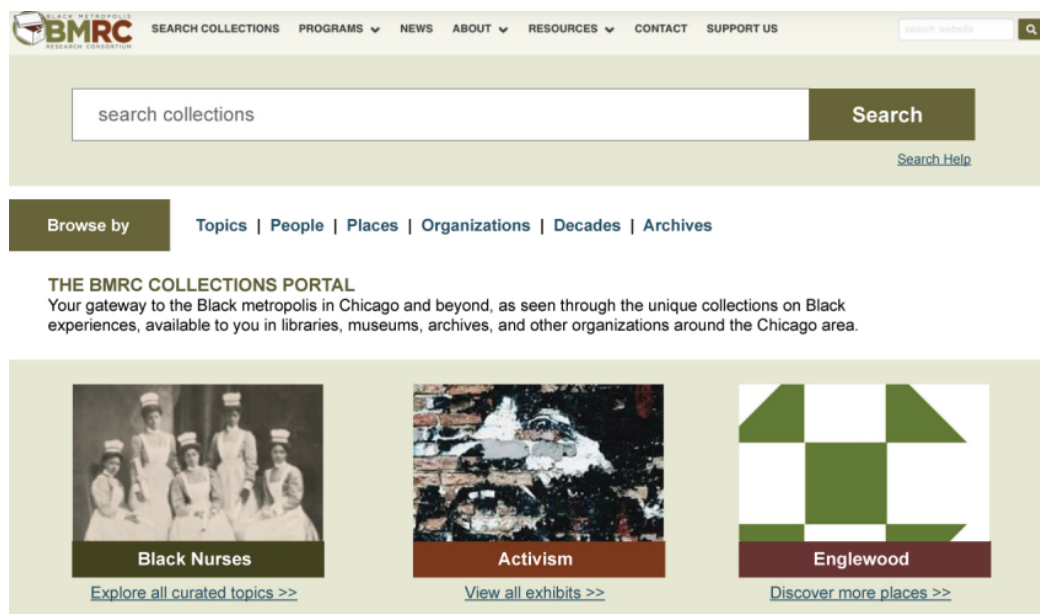
Marcia Walker-McWilliams

A Modern BMRC Collections Portal

The BMRC's grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, "Documenting Black Chicago Through Technology, Sustainability and Outreach" supports an update of the BMRC's searchable collections database into a more modern collections portal for locating and researching Black historical collections.

By Laurie Lee Moses

The summer challenge is on! A soft launch of the new BMRC Portal is slated for July 31, 2021, and we'll be looking for bugs to squash and issues to resolve. The full site will be ready in the Fall with new and updated finding aids, new members' collections information, and some exciting new features for you to discover. For now, here's a sneak preview of the mockup of the home page.



This spring I have enjoyed a season of synergistic conversations. Kathy Zadrozny, Web Developer and Graphic Design Specialist at the University of Chicago, joined me and John Jung, Programmer Analyst, also at the University of Chicago, on the Portal development team. Kathy brings her design, usability, and accessibility expertise to the public-facing part of the website and she has a sharp eye for how it all works under the hood. The Portal Working Group, the development team, BMRC staff, library staff at member organizations, and Board members have all contributed their ideas, tips, and resources, and continue to ask incisive questions to clarify and enhance the Portal's offerings and usefulness to a wide-



MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Institution Name

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ABOUT BMRC

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ranging community of constituents. This spring I also talked with an art collector and entrepreneur, faculty, undergraduates, museum staff, and K-8 educators who work with the History Fair.

From these conversations, we came up with an idea that we hope will, among other things, help remedy the pervasive invisibility of primary source material documenting Black history and culture—the BMRC Curated Topics List. We're putting out a call to scholars, local experts, enthusiasts, and GLAM (galleries, libraries, archives, museums) staff who work with collections on Black experiences to tell us what topics are

Collections Portal

most important to their work. The BMRC will develop a special vocabulary that concisely encapsulates this dynamic body of knowledge. It will be like having a subject matter expert at your elbow.

Over the course of my time at the BMRC, I have experienced an intertwining of

networks and new connections that is inspiring and energizing. While I envision the scaffolding of the Portal, the final structure is stronger, and the design more workable and more beautiful when many hands and many minds work together. I'm always open to your suggestions and your feedback as we go. More to come!

CURATED TOPICS CHALLENGE!!!

You can help! We're calling on you to join the BMRC 5-minute Black studies challenge. Add your own knowledge and understanding to the mix! Follow the BMRC on social media and watch for the challenge to launch in the latter half of July.



CALLING ALL SCHOLARS AND ARCHIVISTS IN BLACK STUDIES!

Help the BMRC with our new Portal and enter to win a \$50 gift card to Semicolon Bookstore! Our *Curated Topics List* will bring different collections together across institutions and methodologies. We want to hear what topics are important to you so we can highlight them! To participate, simply:

1. Go to the submission form link in our bio.
2. Enter your information in the first few fields.
3. Set a timer for five minutes.
4. Enter as many Black Studies topics you can think of that are important to your work. Put an asterisk (*) next to your favorite 3 topics.
5. Submit your form!

We'll look at your submissions when deciding what to include in our *Curated Topics List*, and a lucky participant will win a \$50 gift card to Semicolon Bookstore!

Please feel free to send questions or concerns to BMRC-topics@uchicago.edu

Here's a preview of our social media campaign for the challenge.

The challenge will run from July 12th - 30th!!!

BMRC Members Explore Fundamentals of Collection Diversification and Community Engagement

By Tanya Calvin

The "Documenting Black Chicago" grant that the BMRC received from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation in 2019 supports programming about collection diversification and community engagement for our members. As the Community Engagement Archivist, I organized a virtual four-part series to cover these topics from November 2020 to April 2021.

The first event of this series, our Collection Diversification and Community Engagement Panel, was recorded and can be viewed on the [BMRC YouTube page](#). This panel featured BMRC members Dino Robinson from Shorefront Legacy Center, Raquel Flores-Clemons from Chicago State University, Liesl Olson and Alison Hinderliter from Newberry Library, and Pam Hackbart-Dean from University of Illinois at Chicago.

In January 2021, we hosted a Cultural Diversity Competency Webinar facilitated by Helen Wong Smith from University of Hawai'i at Mānoa. Helen is an expert in CDC and led us through the process of implementing this competency in our archival practices and at our workplaces. At the end of March, Rebecca Hankins from Texas A&M University facilitated a two-day Collection Diversification Workshop where she discussed strategic planning and outreach to support community archival efforts, among other topics. Finally, I closed out the series in April with a small discussion to think of next steps for the BMRC to work on its collection diversification and community engagement initiatives as a consortium as well as individual members.

Throughout this series, we learned several key lessons.

- First, we discussed **the significance of meaningful community engagement** and how it can lead to collection diversification if done well.
- We talked about **building trustful, transparent, and radically empathetic relationships with community members**.
- Our panelists and facilitators taught us about **talking to and genuinely listening to what community members tell us and being respectful of their suspicions about our institutions**.
- Perhaps most importantly, we learned to **be patient and think long-term in our efforts**, as building meaningful relationships requires.

At the discussion in April that wrapped up this series, I brought up the possibility of a Community Engagement Working Group for the BMRC. This group would work together on professional development about working with Black communities around the Chicagoland area as well as facilitating community engagement initiatives with BMRC members. Be on the lookout for more about this potential working group and how you can participate in the future!

Community Archiving Workshops

Launching Summer 2021

By Tanya Calvin

In 2019, the BMRC was awarded the Documenting Black Chicago Grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. Part of this grant is currently supporting the Community Legacy Management Project, which includes the development of educational public programming for Black Chicagoland community members. I designed and conducted a Community Needs and Assets Assessment to survey Black Chicagoans about their archival needs. The goals of the CNAA were:

1. To understand the general knowledge and resources needed for Black Chicagoans to archive their histories.
2. To assess Black Chicagoans' understanding of archiving principles, access to archival resources, and donor's rights.
3. To ask Black Chicagoans which topics they would like covered in community workshops.

The CNAA, consisting of primarily an online survey, was launched in February 2021 and ran for a month and a half. BMRC Intern Viviana Jiménez assisted me in creating a social media campaign to promote the survey on our platforms. The CNAA was also featured in the [Hyde Park Herald](#) and [AustinTalks](#). With the help of BMRC Executive Director Marcia Walker-McWilliams, I called 40 community organizations and institutions offering to speak with them about their archival needs and topics they would like covered in archiving workshops.

After the CNAA closed, the data from the online survey and the notes from the phone calls were analyzed to determine 4 top community concerns about archiving and legacy management for Black Chicagoans. We also entered participants into an Archival Toolkit Raffle and provided 10 toolkits for community members consisting of an acid-free box, acid-free folders, photo and document sleeves, a notebook, pencils, brochures of our Legacy Management Resource Portal, and more.



BMRC Toolkit

I presented the data from the CNAA and the top concerns at two community discussions in April. There, we heard from community members and representatives from different Black organizations and institutions around the city. We spoke about the concerns Black Chicagoans have with the current state of archiving in our communities,

Community Workshops

which efforts we would like to see supported in the future, and suggestions community members had for initiatives the BMRC could support to promote legacy management.

After these discussions, I consulted the notes from each event and determined the topics for five community archival workshops to be held throughout the rest of 2021. In July and August, the BMRC will host a two-part Introduction to Archiving Workshop to

provide Black Chicagoland communities with an understanding of archival principles and best practices. The other topics for these workshops include family history and genealogy, donor's rights and donating to archival repositories, and funding archival projects at community organizations and institutions. Please look out for more announcements about these events coming soon!



Please join us for our

Introduction to Archiving Workshop: Part One

Community Engagement Archivist Tanya Calvin will be walking through the processes of determining the value of materials; organizing and describing them; small preservation tips; and providing access to collections for users. We hope you are able to make it, and be on the lookout for announcements about Part Two in the near future!

**Thursday July 29, 2021
4pm-5:30pm CST via Zoom**

Contact BMRC Community Engagement Archivist Tanya Calvin with any accessibility questions or concerns: tcalvin@uchicago.edu

This workshop is made possible by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

[REGISTER FOR THIS WORKSHOP](#)

A New Group of Students Exposed to Black Historical Collections

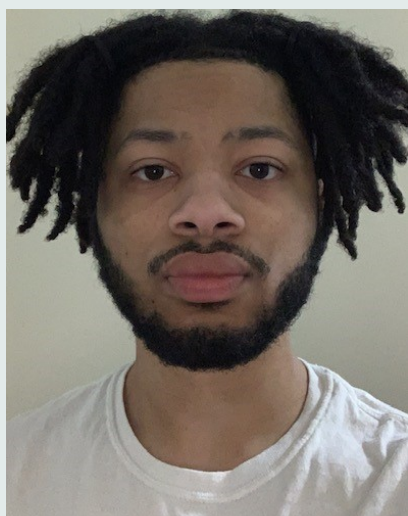
By Allison Sutton

SUMMER 2021 ARCHIE MOTLEY INTERNS

The Archie Motley Archival Internship Program provides stipends to students of color to provide practical employment experience as cultural heritage professionals working in BMRC member institutions. Thank you to the BMRC, DePaul University and University of Chicago Career Advancement for supporting this year's internship.



Callista "Callie" Smith is a rising Sophomore at the University of Chicago with a special interest in history and anthropology. A native of New Orleans, LA Callie recently worked with the Micah Project where she organized and taught classes to formerly incarcerated individuals to aid them in acquiring skills with varied technology as they returned to society. This summer, Callie is working with the archival team at the **Northwestern University Libraries** to help document and preserve the experiences of Black alumni who matriculated on campus during the 1960s and 1970s through the collection of oral histories. Callie believes "it is immensely important to safeguard the stories and objects that represent the lived experiences of so many Black Americans and to make often "hidden" histories public.



Malik Pitchford is majoring in political science and also pursuing a minor in African and Black Diaspora studies at DePaul University. Seeking more opportunities to write - a passion of his - Malik landed an article in DePaul's 14 East Magazine in February of 2020 that quickly became their "Most-Read Story of 2019-2020." Other publications of Malik's have appeared in the *Miami Herald*, *The Progressive*, *Urban Milwaukee*, *Star Tribune* and *Milwaukee Neighborhood News Service*. During the summer Malik is an intern with the **Northwestern University Libraries**. He is working with archivists, uncovering stories of Black Alumni of the 1960s and 1970s decades by collecting and transcribing oral interviews. Malik shared that he "Sees the value of documenting the lived experiences reflecting the times. I think all the time about the importance of preserving Black culture and accurately telling stories that will be remembered throughout generations."

SUMMER 2021 ARCHIE MOTLEY INTERNS



Jordan Wright is a 2021 graduate of DePaul University who received their BA in Art, Media and Design. One of their key work experiences centers on art history and includes extensive research, descriptive, and critical writings. Jordan is also adept in visual and graphic design and has spent some time analyzing social media data. Joining the Rights & Reproductions Manager at the **Chicago History Museum** this summer, Jordan is working to enhance the metadata of the vast Raeburn Flerlage collection. Flerlage was a photographer with a particular interest in the 1950s and 1960s Chicago music scene. Jordan is conducting research to identify people, places, events and/or dates of digital images of high aesthetic/research value to add to the inventory and create a final image caption. Most recently, Jordan has enjoyed working at a pop-up bookstore and in Special Collections & Archives with the DePaul University Libraries. Their experiences are a catalyst for aspirations to go on to graduate school, enrolling in a master's degree program in library & information science with an archives concentration.



Rebekah Otto is pursuing a master's degree in Critical Ethnic Studies at DePaul University after graduating in 2018 with a BS in English: Creative Writing. Rebekah describes formative learning experiences in community based and campus settings, "Advocating for students in marginalized groups and conducting oral history interviews of senior residents was significant. In those roles, I was committed to the details—to getting it right—because stories are sacred, allowing us to create a pathway towards healing even as we bring dignity to the lived experiences of others." Rebekah is excited about her summer internship assignment with the **Chicago History Museum** hoping this experience will influence future doctoral plans. She is working with an archivist and curator to develop and conduct oral history interviews of former members of the African American Police League in Chicago, an organization which existed from 1968 through the 1970s. Rebekah is also researching the historical relationship between law enforcement and marginalized communities in Chicago. Born and raised in Anchorage, Alaska, Rebekah learned early "that books, nature, and imagination could help her reach beyond the invisible. That the power of story could break through boundaries placed on women, African Americans, and mixed-race people." Rebekah also shared that she "learned that libraries and academic institutions overflowing with resources can be places where social change begins," and hopes to embody this change in her work.

Thank you to the 2021 Archie Motley Selection Committee!

Allison Sutton (BMRC) | Kimberly Black (Chicago State University)

Donna Edgar (Chicago History Museum) | Morgan MacIntosh Hodgetts (DePaul University)

Cecilia Salvatore (Dominican University)

CHICAGO BLACK DANCE LEGACY PROJECT INTERN

The Chicago Black Dance Legacy Project, developed through a partnership between Logan Center Community Arts and the Joyce Foundation's Culture Program, as well as leaders from each dance company, is a multi-year project that seeks to celebrate the historic impact of Chicago-based black choreographers in the national dance community, and strengthen the impact and reach of black dance for generations to come.

The BMRC is partnering with the Chicago Black Dance Legacy Project on some of its archiving initiatives, including supporting archival research into the history of its dance companies, dancers and choreographers.

[Learn more about the Chicago Black Dance Legacy Project](#)



Hope Houston is a rising junior at the University of Chicago where she is studying History & Critical Race and Ethnic Studies with a minor in Education and Society. Her passions include Black History and how it is taught in the education curriculum as well as storytelling and learning through the experiences of one another. Hope works to pursue these passions through her role as Production Manager of a podcast called "Kinda Sorta Brown" where they hold conversations around various policies that affect communities of color and how intersecting identities play a role in that. This summer Hope is working as an intern for the **Chicago Black Dance Legacy Project** (CBDLP) as a part of a new, recently formed partnership with the Black Metropolis Research Consortium. She is conducting primary research on dance collections at BMRC member institutions to acquire new materials for the online archive and will conduct oral history interviews with individuals important to the history of the eight Black dance companies that are a part of the CBDLP. Hope was born and raised in St. Louis, Missouri. Throughout her childhood she was heavily involved in dance. She is passionate about social justice and utilizes different mediums, podcasts, film, dance to express such passions.

Thank you to Allison Sutton - BMRC Program Manager, Princess Mhoon - Strategic Program Manager of the CBDLP and Emily Hooper Lansana - Senior Director of Community Arts at the Logan Center for the Arts and to University of Chicago Career Advancement for supporting this internship.

Welcome 2020-2021

BMRC Fellows!

LeNie Adolphson, PhD Candidate
Department of History
Northern Illinois University
**Project Title: Health Care in the
Black Metropolis: A History of
Provident Hospital**

Theodore Foster, PhD
Assistant Professor, Department of
History
University of Louisiana - Lafayette
**Project Title: Projecting Archives:
The Politics of Black Chicago
History, Memory and Civil Rights**

Grace Gipson, PhD
Assistant Professor, Department of
African American Studies
Virginia Commonwealth University
**Project Title: Telling HER-story and
Continuing a Legacy: Chicago's
Black Girl Magic in Comics**

Toussaint Losier, PhD
Assistant Professor, W.E.B. DuBois
Department of African-American Studies
University of Massachusetts - Amherst
**Project Title: United in Peace: The
History, Memory, and Politics of Street
Gang Truces**

David Stovall, PhD
Professor of African-American
Studies and Criminology, Law &
Justice
University of Illinois at Chicago
**Project Title: Engineered Conflict:
School Closings, Public Housing,
Law Enforcement and the Future of
Black Life**

Vanessa Stokes
Artist & Entrepreneur
**Project Title: Creating
Transformation on Chicago's West
Side By Using Photography and
Creative Placemaking**

Jakobi Williams, PhD
Ruth N. Halls Associate Professor
Department of African American and
African Diaspora Studies and the
Department of History
Indiana University-Bloomington
**Project Title: Neighborhoods First: The
Black Panther Party's Impact on Grassroots
Community Organizations**

Roots of the Black Chicago Renaissance wins award from Illinois State Historical Society



Richard Courage (l) and Christopher Reed (r).

Roots of the Black Chicago Renaissance: New Negro Writers, Artists, and Intellectuals, 1893-1930 (U of Illinois Press, 2020) recently received an award for scholarly excellence from the Illinois State Historical Society. The volume is edited by Richard Courage and Christopher Reed. **Richard A. Courage** was a 2009 BMRC Summer Fellow. He is a Distinguished Teaching Professor, State University of New York, and Professor of English, Westchester Community College/SUNY. Besides *Roots of the Black Chicago Renaissance*, he co-authored *The Muse in Bronzeville: African American Creative Expression in Chicago, 1932-1950*. **Christopher Robert Reed** has served as a consulting scholar for BMRC. He is Professor Emeritus of History, Roosevelt University, and General Secretary of the Black Chicago History Forum. His numerous books include *Knock at the Door of Opportunity: Black Migration to Chicago, 1900-1919*, and *The Rise of Chicago's Black Metropolis, 1920-1929*.



Artists and Models: A Tribute to the South Side Community Art Center

July 10-August 29, 2021

South Side Community Art Center
3831 S. Michigan Ave, 2nd flr gallery



Artists and Models celebrates the South Side Community Art Center's pioneering role in promoting Black art and creativity in Chicago. This exhibition features documents from the Center's archival records and traces aspects of the Center's history from its first four decades.

Artists and Models was created by students at Columbia College Chicago. It was curated by Charlotte Briskin, Anastasia Murphy, Justin Ridgel, James Ross, Matthew Walcott, and Teanna White in Dr. Melanie Chambliss's (2014 BMRC Summer Fellow) Fall 2020 course Black Artistry and the Archive. The exhibition was designed by Elsa Mae Brydalski, Hannah Davila, Bri Elliott, Raegan Townsend, and Joseph Trezek in Sarah Faust's Spring 2021 Graphic Design Practicum.

2020-2021 Board of Directors

Steven M. Adams, Chair,
Librarian for Graduate and Postdoctoral Initiatives,
Northwestern University

Raquel Flores-Clemons, Vice-Chair,
University Archivist, Chicago State University

Elizabeth Long, Treasurer, Associate University Librarian for
IT & Digital Scholarship, University of Chicago

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

Lynn Hudson, Associate Professor,
Dept. of History, University of Illinois at Chicago

Elizabeth Loch, Archivist,
Chicago Public Library

Estevan Montaño, Director of
Libraries, Roosevelt University

Liesl Olson, Director of Chicago
Studies, Newberry Library

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

Cecilia L. Salvatore, Professor and Coordinator,
Archives and Cultural Heritage Certificate Program,
Dominican University

Adam Strohm, Director, University Archives and
Special Collections, Paul V. Galvin Library, IIT

Leigh Tarullo, Manager and Curator of Special Collections,
Oak Park Public Library

Julie Wroblewski, Head of Collections,
Chicago History Museum

Kathleen E. Bethel, Trustee Emeritus
Leroy E. Kennedy, Trustee Emeritus

BMRC Faculty Advisor

Jacqueline Stewart, Professor, Dept. of Cinema & Media Studies
& The College, University of Chicago

BMRC Staff

Marcia Walker-McWilliams, Executive Director

Allison Sutton, Program Manager/Archivist

Laurie Lee Moses, Portal Archivist

Tanya Calvin, Community Engagement Archivist

Member Institutions

Chicago History Museum

Chicago Public Library

Chicago State University

Columbia College Chicago

Cook County Historic
Archives and Records Office

DePaul University

Dominican University

DuSable Museum of
African American History

Illinois Institute of
Technology

Loyola University Chicago

The Newberry Library

North Park University

Northern Illinois University

Northwestern University

Oak Park Public Library

Rebuild Foundation

Roosevelt University

Shorefront Legacy Center

University of Chicago

University of Illinois at
Chicago