



# DC 50<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY 1974 - 2024 HISTORY CONFERENCE

This draft program includes all 2024 DC History Conference sessions. A complete program with information about the attendee experience is forthcoming.



# ABOUT THE DC HISTORY CONFERENCE

The DC History Conference is an interdisciplinary, community conference considering the District's past, present, and future. The first conference was organized in 1973 and delivered in January of 1974, marking this as the 50th year of the conference. Since then, the conference organizers have provided a welcoming, educational, and stimulating forum for original research on and engagement with the history of the Washington, DC metropolitan area—prioritizing the local city but including nearby Maryland and Virginia, and the federal government.

The DC History Conference is co-presented by the **DC History Center**, **DC Public Library**, and **HumanitiesDC**, and supported by organizational partners and a volunteer planning committee.

## ORGANIZATIONAL PARTNERS

**DC History Center**  
**DC Historic Preservation Office,**  
    **DC Office of Planning**  
**DC Office of Public Records and Archives**  
**DC Preservation League**  
**DC Public Library**  
**Heurich House Museum**  
**HumanitiesDC**  
**White House Historical Association**

## CONFERENCE BRAINTRUST

**Maren Orchard**, *DC History Center*  
(conference project manager)  
**Kim Bender**, *Heurich House Museum*  
**Asantewa Boakyewa**, *Anacostia Community Museum*  
**Laura Brower Hagood**, *DC History Center*  
**Rob Hartman**, *DC Public Library Foundation*  
**Linnea Hegarty**, *DC Public Library*  
**Maryann James-Daley**, *DC Public Library*  
**Lopez Matthews**, *DC Office of Public Records and Archives*  
**Anne McDonough**, *DC History Center*  
**Lois Nembhard**, *HumanitiesDC*  
**Rebecca Lemos Otero**, *Humanities DC*  
**M.J. Rymsza-Pawlowska**, *American University Public History Program*

## CONFERENCE WORKING COMMITTEE

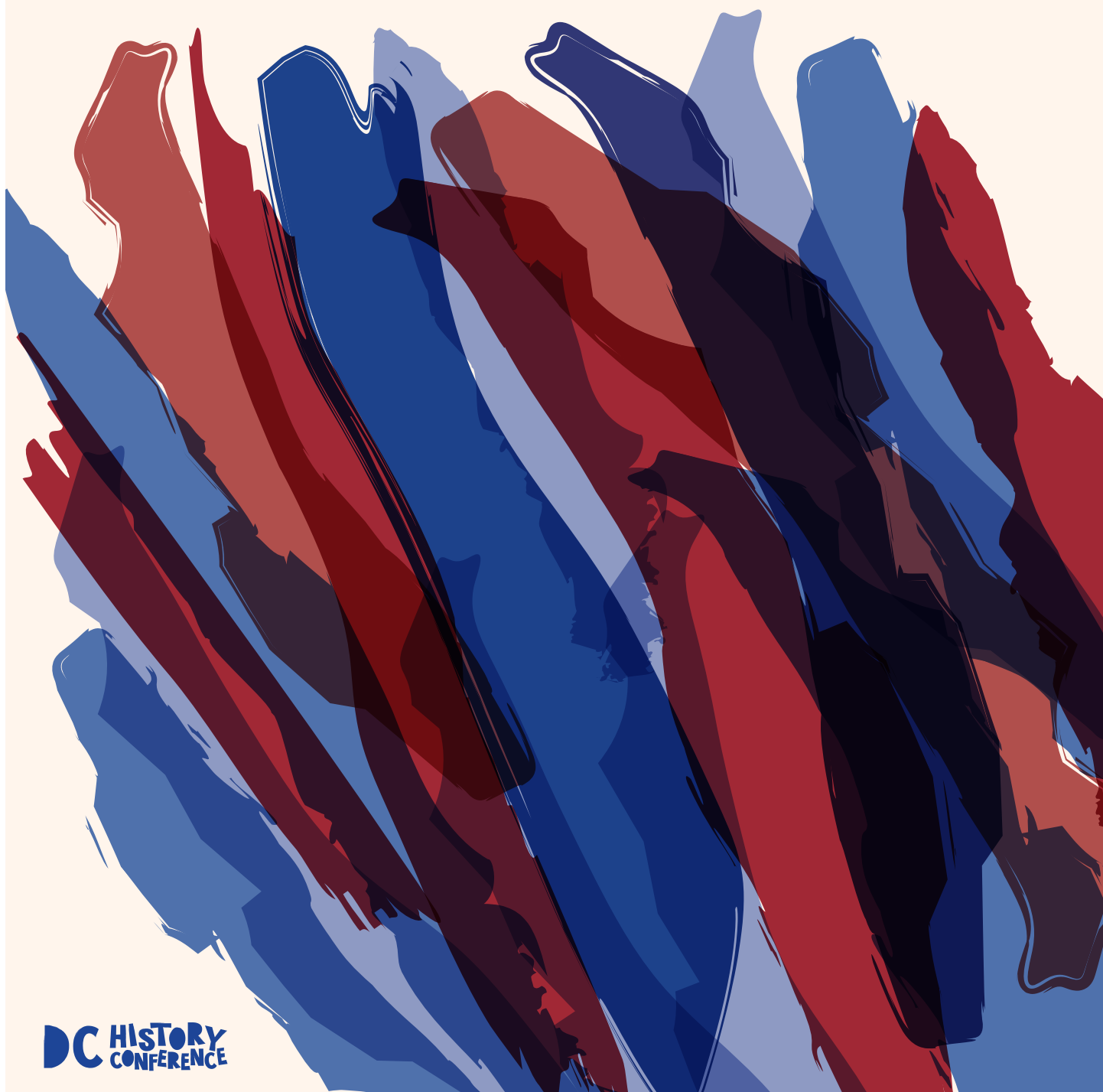
**Mariana Barros-Titus**, *DC History Center*  
**Mark Benbow**, *Arlington Historical Society*  
**Lorenzo Bright**  
**Natalie Campbell**, *DC Public Library*  
**Jenna Febrizio**, *Heurich House Museum*  
**Maria Ibañez**  
**Julianna Jackson**  
**Lina Mann**, *White House Historical Association*  
**Kate Morgan**  
**Andrea Pedolsky**  
**Ashley Preston, PhD**, *Howard University*  
**Jessica Rucker**  
**Makala Scurlock**  
**Kasey Sease**, *Albert H. Small Washingtoniana Collection at The George Washington University Museum and The Textile Museum*  
**Lisa Warwick**, *DC Public Library*  
**Vanessa Williams**, *Teaching for Change*

## PROGRAM

**Kyla Sommers**, *Editor*  
**Alex Fraioli**, *Designer*  
**Shedrick Pelt**, *Photographer*

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THURSDAY  
APRIL 4TH



DC HISTORY  
CONFERENCE

LETTITIA  
WOODS BROWN  
MEMORIAL  
LECTURE**VANN R. NEWKIRK II & JERUSALEM DEMSAS:  
IN CONVERSATION****6:00 – 7:15 pm****Location: Auditorium, 5th Floor***Reception to Follow*

*The Atlantic's* senior editor Vann R. Newkirk II and fellow staff writer Jerusalem Demsas discuss the 50th anniversary of Home Rule and Newkirk's related reporting, which looks to the past to navigate our present. In *The Atlantic's* recent *Holy Week* podcast, Newkirk told the story of the 1968 uprisings that followed the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. — and how the political fallout transformed DC. Newkirk and Demsas will draw from their extensive reporting on the ways that race and class shape the country's and the world's fundamental structures, considering the role of history and memory work as tools to make sense of the present and build a more just future.

## ABOUT THE SPEAKERS



### VANN R. NEWKIRK II

Vann R. Newkirk II is a senior editor at *The Atlantic*, and the host and co-creator of narrative podcasts *Floodlines* and *Holy Week*. For years, Newkirk has covered voting rights, democracy, and environmental justice, with a focus on how race and class shape the country's and the world's fundamental structures. Newkirk is a 2022 Andrew Carnegie fellow, and was a 2020 James Beard Award Finalist, a 2020 11th Hour Fellow at New America, and a 2018 recipient of the American Society of Magazine Editors's ASME Next Award. In 2021, Newkirk received the Peabody Award for *Floodlines*.



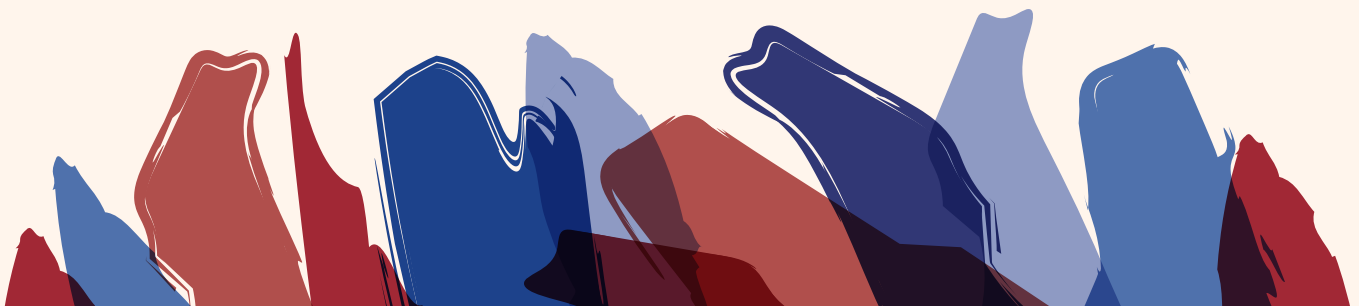
### JERUSALEM DEMSAS

Jerusalem Demsas is a staff writer at *The Atlantic*, where she writes about institutional failure and democracy through stories on housing, infrastructure, and mobility. Her work touches on citizen voice, federalism, and the politics of exclusion, among other topics. Demsas is also a visiting fellow at Johns Hopkins University's Center for Economy and Society. Previously, she was a writer at Vox covering policy stories and co-host of the politics and policy podcast *The Weeds*. Demsas received the American Society of Magazine Editors' 2023 ASME Next Award for journalists under 30.

## ABOUT LETITIA WOODS BROWN



Letitia Woods Brown was born on October 24, 1915, in Tuskegee, Alabama, to a family with strong ties to the Tuskegee Institute—known today as Tuskegee University. She received her BS from Tuskegee Institute and taught elementary school in Alabama before pursuing her graduate studies at Ohio State University and Harvard University. In 1966, Dr. Brown received her PhD in history from Harvard University after completing a dissertation centered on free and enslaved African Americans in Washington, DC. She went on to teach at Howard University and was awarded a Fulbright Fellowship. Dr. Brown joined the faculty of George Washington University in 1971 and taught there until her untimely passing in 1976.



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**FRIDAY APRIL 5TH**

**10:00 AM – 7:00 PM**



**DC HISTORY  
CONFERENCE**



## **BLACK FREEDOM STRUGGLES IN CHEVY CHASE, 1725 – TODAY**

Black Washingtonians have resided in and shaped DC's Chevy Chase for centuries, but this multiracial history is too often ignored. For example, generations of African Americans were enslaved on plantations in DC's northwest corner. Later, Black families were displaced from their land to create Lafayette Elementary School. This panel brings together descendants, scholars, and advocates to reflect on this fraught history and envision productive pathways forward towards restorative justice.

### **PANELISTS:**

**Mark Auslander**, *Anthropologist*, Mount Holyoke College

**Carl Lankowski**

**Jocelind Julien**

**Sharon Fletcher**

**MODERATOR:** Cate Atkinson

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## **EXPLORING BLACK DEAF HISTORY THROUGH THEATRE: VISIONARIES OF THE CREATIVE ARTS AND THE CENTER FOR BLACK DEAF STUDIES**

Both the Black Deaf Theatre on H Street and the Center for Black Deaf Studies at Gallaudet University emerged in the last five years. They provide a creative way for scholars and educators to center historical narratives about Black deaf communities. These organizations make space for the neglected experiences and unknown talent of their communities. This work is especially important as backlash to education Americans about diversity and oppression grows nationwide.

### **PANELISTS:**

**Sandra Jowers-Barber, PhD**, UDC-CC

**Carolyn McCaskill, PhD**

**Michelle Banks**

**Evon Black**



## MONUMENTS AND MEANING

American history, politics, and identity are embedded in the creation and legacies of our national monuments. This panel explores how American monuments—and the public's experiences visiting them—connect to American civics and controversies.

### COMING TO WASHINGTON: TRACING THE HISTORY OF VISITORS TO THE NATION'S CAPITAL

**M.J. Rymsza-Pawlowska**, *Associate Professor of History*, American University

Drawing from a larger research project, this presentation shows how expectations and experiences of the city and its residents have changed drastically over time, fueled by depictions in popular and political culture as well as decisions by local and federal officials. Many who visit DC don't interact with locals and end up with an understanding of the city as a mixture of a company town for politics and a staging ground for changing practices of citizenship.

### THE FORGOTTEN, CONTROVERSIAL HISTORY OF WASHINGTON'S FIRST MONUMENT

**Matthew Goetz, PhD**, *Visiting Lecturer*, George Washington University

In 1808, American naval officers erected a monument in DC's Navy Yard dedicated to officers who died in the Tripolitan War (1801-1805). Both the monument and the war it commemorated were enmeshed within debates over slavery and liberty. On the eve of the Civil War, Congress decided to move the monument from its second location on the Capitol grounds to the Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland where it remains today.

### IN BETWEEN: THE LYNDON BAINES JOHNSON MEMORIAL GROVE ON THE POTOMAC

**Angelina Ribeiro Jones**, *Historical Landscape Architect*, National Park Service

Located close to DC's monumental core but separated from it by the Potomac River, the LBJ Memorial Grove was designed to be a "living memorial" inviting visitor interaction and engagement, while simultaneously providing opportunities for reflection. Envisioned by former First Lady Claudia "Lady Bird" Johnson and designed by landscape architect M. Meade Palmer, the grove sits in a liminal space physically due to its location and conceptually as both a commemorative and a civic space.

**MODERATOR: Kasey Sease**, *Curator*, Albert H. Small Washingtoniana Collection at The George Washington University Museum and The Textile Museum



## CAPITAL ARTS AND ITS PATRONS

What can we learn about DC's history from the visual arts and its patrons? Contemplate this question by learning more about one of DC's most famous—and controversial—patrons and exploring a little-known glass plate negative collection.

### THE PAST AND PRESENT CONTROVERSIES OF WILLIAM WILSON CORCORAN

**Mark Goldstein**, *Author*

Drawing from a larger research project, this presentation shows how expectations lobbyist, and cultural influencer. While a controversial figure, Corcoran mastered the role of political and social chameleon to achieve success from which he, the capital city, and the arts benefited. This presentation explores Corcoran's life and legacy in the capital.

### THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS: ROBERT SADLER'S PLATE NEGATIVES

**Ann Bennett**, *Anthropologist and Executive Director*, Laurel Historical Society

This presentation explores a little-known glass plate negative collection held at the Laurel Historical Society, taken by photographer Robert H. Sadler, Jr. in the first decades of the 20th century. The collection showcases the people and places of Laurel, Maryland, and Washington, DC, and reveals hidden histories of some of its subjects.

**MODERATOR:** **Robert DeHart**, *Curator*, Tudor Place Historic House & Garden



### THE LEGACY OF LEE'S FLOWER SHOP

Lee's Flower Shop is the oldest Black-owned flower shop in Washington, DC. It has planted seeds of wisdom and perseverance in the District since 1945. Local filmmaker Kamilah Thurmon's short documentary shares the legacy of this community cornerstone and preserves the stories of new and old Washingtonians. This session includes a screening and a discussion.

#### PANELISTS:

**Kamilah Thurmon**, *Filmmaker*

**Stacie Lee Banks**

**Rick Lee**

**Kristie Lee**

## WINNING WITH WISH: TENANT ORGANIZING IN WASHINGTON, DC, 1978–2003

Washington Innercity Self Help (WISH) was founded in 1978 as a way for low-income Washingtonians to organize around issues of importance to them. Housing was consistently a critical issue for their members. WISH helped tenants turn their buildings into housing cooperatives and helped dozens of low-income tenant associations take ownership over their buildings. WISH disbanded in 2003, but its work lives on through its housing cooperatives that still exist throughout the city. In this panel, four members of WISH's staff reflect on their work and its relevance for today.

### PANELISTS:

**Linda Leaks**

**Benito Diaz**

**Martha Davis**

**Rozanne Look**

**MODERATOR:** **Amanda Huron**, *Associate Professor of Interdisciplinary Social Sciences and Political Science, University of the District of Columbia*

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## CELEBRATING DC HISTORY THROUGH CHINESE POETRY AND ART

In 1851, Mr. Chiang Kai was the first Chinese person to register an address in DC on Pennsylvania Avenue. Immigrants of Chinese heritage have made DC and the metro area home ever since. Mr. Bing Huang, a renowned local calligrapher and artist, will present an artwork series spotlighting historic sites in DC. Ms. Xia "Jenny" Gao, a prolific local poet, will share poems highlighting lived DC history written in Chinese by members of the local Chinese-American Community. Lily Liu will read the English translations of the poems.

**MODERATOR:** **Lily Liu**, *Writer and Literary Translator*

### PANELISTS:

**Bing Huang**, *Calligrapher and Artist*

**Xia "Jenny" Gao**, *Poet*

## ACTIVISM AND PROTEST

This panel discusses activism for gay rights and DC self-determination as well as the fight against anti-Semitism. Panelists will discuss how Washingtonians fought for their causes and what challenges they faced. Each of these presentations about activism of the past offers insight into activism in the present.

### **GAY RIGHTS AND THE RISE OF THE RELIGIOUS RIGHT IN WASHINGTON, DC, 1970-1980**

**Danny Ballon-Garst**, *PhD Candidate, Emory University, DC History Center Totman Fellow*

This presentation traces the role of religious people and institutions in the gay rights movement—and its opposition—in 1970s DC. Public displays of gay liberation and local legislative successes in 1976 and 1977 elicited the anti-gay backlash of the increasingly powerful and dominating Religious Right. This rise was a response to a brief moment in time when it looked like the gay rights movement, and the gay Christian movement in particular, just might win.

### **SELF-DETERMINATION, EQUALITY, AND THE 1982 DC STATEHOOD CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION**

**Tim Kumfer**, *Fellow, Georgetown University*

The all but forgotten 1982 District of Columbia Statehood Constitutional Convention adopted the New Columbia Constitution which guaranteed employment or income, protected reproductive and sexual freedom, and upheld affirmative action. Local elected officials and media commentators cited this as a key reason that statehood found few backers on Capitol Hill. Drawing on transcripts of the convention proceedings and oral history interviews, this presentation offers a different perspective on the New Columbia Constitution and the process that led to its ratification.

### **"THE ROCKWELL MADNESS": JEWS ENCOUNTERING THE AMERICAN NAZI PARTY IN 1960S WASHINGTON, DC**

**Andrew Sperling**, *Phd Candidate, American University*

George Lincoln Rockwell launched the American Nazi Party in Arlington in 1959 and sought publicity for his organization through pickets and demonstrations in DC. Jewish leaders in Washington disagreed on the best strategic approach to combating this hatred, from militancy to ignoring the neo-Nazi menace. Washington Jewry entered bitter disputes over the complexities of free speech and civil liberties. Some defended Rockwell's rights, leading to debates about how fascism succeeds in democratic societies.

**MODERATOR: Benji de la Piedra**, *Writer, Oral Historian*

# HISTORY NETWORK 1:15 - 3:15

The History Network provides conference attendees with the opportunity to meet representatives from organizations doing humanities-based work across the DMV. Learn about an organization, project, or initiative you'd like to follow, volunteer with, or join and pick up information and swag from participating organizations and individuals.

## SESSION C 3:30 - 4:45

### CITIZEN STRUGGLES TO IMPROVE HOUSING IN WASHINGTON DC, 1983 AND 2023

How do housing struggles in 1983 compare to those in 2023 and what does that tell us about economic opportunity, social mobility, and public revenue in the capital? How do the disorientation, loss, and opportunity that accompany gentrification shape these issues? How can the District create policies that include rather than exclude? This panel engages these questions by revisiting the 1983 paper "Safe, Decent and Affordable: Citizen Struggles to Improve Housing in the District of Columbia, 1890-1982 " and discussing the direction of activism and policy today.

#### PANELISTS:

**Jerome S. Paige**, *Board Chair*, DC Fiscal Policy Institute

**Erica Williams**, *Executive Director*, DC Fiscal Policy Institute

**Amanda Huron**, *Associate Professor of Interdisciplinary Social Sciences*, University of the District of Columbia

#### MODERATOR:

**Phylicia Fauntleroy Bowman**, *former DC Public Service Commission Executive Director*

## ORAL HISTORIES AND HEIRLOOMS

Collecting first-hand accounts of a community's experiences is a vital way to appreciate and preserve a group's history. Learn about efforts to gather oral histories of DC's Black Pride and Black literary arts community—and how to research family heirlooms.

### DC BLACK PRIDE, COMMUNITY SPACE AND RADICAL POSSIBILITY

**Orilonise Yarborough**, *Public Historian*, National Museum of African American History and Culture

A party is more than just a party and nowhere is this better illustrated than in the history of Pride celebrations. Black Pride programming, auxiliary events, and culture showcase the expansiveness of the local Black queer and trans communities. These communities make and remake traditions to respond to the needs of its people. This presentation will focus on the development of an oral history collection focused on DC Black Pride and the radical possibility of celebratory spaces.

### THE IMPACT OF THE DC YOUTH WRITERS ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

**Khadijah Ali-Coleman, EdD**, Hurston/Wright Foundation  
**DeAndrea Johnson**, Hurston/Wright Foundation

The Hurston/Wright DC Youth Writers Oral History Project debuted July 2023 on the campus of Howard University. The project provides youth participants with training on how to conduct effective interviews, research, and gather historical data on the Black literary arts community in DC. This session shares the strategy for designing the program and discusses the impact of implementing oral history projects that showcase aspects of the Black experience.

### LOVE LETTERS, HEIRLOOMS, AND TREASURES

**Wanda Alderman, PhD**, *Urban Sociologist and Author*

For nearly 100 years, 45 love letters stayed in a cardboard box. Every word described a Black couple's journeys and secrets during the Great Migration. The presenter outlines how to research and write family history with heirlooms and treasures gathered by ancestors. When family histories are overlooked, there is no ability to link family roots, heritage, and one's place in the world.

**MODERATOR: Shilpi Malinowski**, *Writer and Oral Historian*

## DC'S BUILT ENVIRONMENT

From alleys to sewers to bike lanes, the city's infrastructure is the product of American culture and politics. Learn about the history of the sanitation system, sustainability projects, and bicycle lanes that are part of DC's built environment.

### **SANITATION SYSTEMS AND SLUMS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF WASHINGTON, DC**

**Carmen Bolt**, *PhD Candidate*, American University

At the turn of the 20th century, government entities worked to expand public services and to address alley dwellings as part of the effort to implement the McMillan Plan, a design for the model capital city. Officials aimed to remove raw waste from the streets into the rivers and to displace predominantly Black residents from alley dwellings. Municipal officials believed in their capacity to address sanitation issues through public services but only for certain demographics and neighborhoods.

### **THE HISTORY OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN THE CAPITAL**

**Jaleel Shujath**, *Graduate Student*, University of the District of Columbia

How have sustainable development initiatives in Washington, DC transformed from the post World War II era to today's Sustainability 2.0 initiative? Charting the evolution of policy frameworks, urban planning, and community-driven endeavors, this presentation sheds light on the intricate balance between socio-economic growth and environmental preservation in an iconic urban setting. Learn how sustainable development has shaped and continues to shape Washington, DC.

### **THE GROWTH OF BICYCLING IN WASHINGTON, 1970 TO TODAY**

**Peter Harnik**, Washington Area Bicyclist Association

Learn about the 50-year political struggle to improve Washington's bicycling facilities, increase the number of cyclists, and reduce the tyranny of auto traffic. How can we boost this environmentally friendly urban transportation mode and protect cyclists' safety? The presentation will discuss bike lanes, trails, Bikeshare, bikes-on-Metro, bike parking, making Beach Drive a car-free road, river crossings, and more.

**MODERATOR: Dominique Hazzard**, *PhD Candidate*, Johns Hopkins University

## HONORING THE LEGACIES OF THREE DC WOMEN

This panel examines the impacts of three Washington women on education, diplomacy, and religious institutions. Each woman navigated different eras and circumstances, and their biographies offer valuable lessons about DC's past.

### **LUCY DIGGS SLOWE: A LEGACY OF SISTERHOOD AND INFLUENCE ON HIGHER EDUCATION**

**Amy Quarkume**, *Associate Professor*, Howard University

Lucy Diggs Slowe was a trailblazing presence in Washington, DC, whose life and contributions were characterized by a profound commitment to unity and solidarity among college-educated, Black women. Her enduring impact, both as an individual and as a symbol of communal empowerment and advocacy for women in academic circles, left an indelible imprint on the higher education landscape, influencing generations for years to come.

### **VIRGINIA MURRAY BACON: POLICY WHISPERER AND POWER HOSTESS**

**Elizabeth Warner**, *Archivist*, Bacon House Foundation

Virginia Murray Bacon (1890–1980), the last private owner of the historic DACOR Bacon House, spent her life dedicated to international diplomacy, democracy, and the political process. Roles for women were highly restricted in her day, but she exercised considerable power and influence through the channels available to her which included hosting fabulous dinner parties as well as speaking at political rallies and sponsoring conferences on how to deal with nuclear weapons.

### **BLACK CATHOLIC RESILIENCY THROUGH THE LONG LIFE OF AUNT PIGEON**

**C. Walker Gollar**, *Historian*, Xavier University

Aunt Pigeon served the Georgetown Jesuits both as an enslaved and a free individual. Her long story began generations before she was born, spanned centuries of injustice, and runs through the early history of Washington, DC. Her history indicts Catholics for fostering her ongoing oppression and challenges Catholic admirers, and all people of faith, to speak more honestly about the past.

**MODERATOR:** Daraja Carroll



# FRIDAY AFTER HOURS

**5:00 – 7:00 PM**

**LOCATION: 5TH FLOOR ROOFTOP**

Join us after Friday's final session for an evening of food, drink, music, and dancing! Our "after hours" party will include a short address from the conference partners, a cash bar, light bites, and live music. Take this opportunity to connect with friends—old and new, and raise a glass to 50 years of the DC History Conference!



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SATURDAY  
APRIL 6TH

10:00 AM – 6:00 PM



DC HISTORY  
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## QUEER IDENTITY AND EARLY DC WRITERS

What are the ethical issues that arise from using modern labels to identify writers of earlier periods who were living before the words “homosexual” and “gay” came into widespread use? Why does this kind of discovery and uncovering feel so compelling and significant? This panel will discuss specific examples of early DC writers including Benjamin Banneker, Walt Whitman, Mary P. Burrill, Alice Dunbar-Nelson, and Angelina Weld Grimké. Panelists will explore issues of public denial, personal safety, and hidden references to “othering” identities that are revealed in these authors’ writing.

### PANELISTS:

**Shay Dawson**, *Writer/Researcher and Museum Professional*

**Kim Roberts**, *Poet and Literary Historian*

**Dan Vera**, *Poet and Literary Historian*

### MODERATOR:

**Peter Montgomery**, *Writer/Researcher*

## CHALLENGES INTO POSSIBILITIES: MULTIGENERATIONAL PERSPECTIVES FROM BLACK MEN IN WARD 7

Life Pieces To Masterpieces (LPTM) is an arts-based youth development and mentoring organization for Black and Brown boys and young men ages 3–25 in Ward 7. Since its 1996 founding, 2,000+ young men have shaped LPTM’s Human Development framework. Panelists—current participants, alumni, and elders—will illuminate how LPTM’s unique framework provides tools to overcome community challenges rooted in systemic inequities. They will share their visions for the future of their city, and highlight how LPTM’s Human Development framework has already impacted Ward 7, Washington, DC, and the world.

### PANELISTS:

**William “Elder Bill” Pitts**, *LPTM Counselor and Family Engagement Advisor*

**Andre Johnson**, *LPTM Alum and Educator*

**Cateo Hilton**, *LPTM Alum and Sophomore at Delaware State University*

**Ricquan Greenfield**, *LPTM Junior Mentor and High School Student*

**Jevah Hubbard-Dance**, *LPTM Junior Mentor and High School Student*

**Josiah Maultsby**, *LPTM Junior Mentor and High School Student*

### MODERATOR:

**Raymond Covington**, *LPTM Board President*

## **ROUNDTABLE: THE ANC RAINBOW CAUCUS AND 50 YEARS OF LGBTQ+ ELECTED OFFICIALS**

2024 marks the 50th anniversary of the Advisory Neighborhood Commission, DC's non-partisan, neighborhood representative system. Members of the LGBTQ+ community have served as ANC commissioners from the very beginning. This panel discusses this history and the ANC Rainbow Caucus, a recent organization that helps LGBTQ+ ANC commissioners build community and support. Panelists will reflect on their experiences as "out" elected officials, evaluate the work of the Rainbow Caucus, and discuss an upcoming oral history project designed to preserve DC LGBTQ+ history.

### **PANELISTS:**

**Vincent Slatt, Kent Boese, Monika Nemeth, Phil Pannell, Rayceen Pendarvis, T. Michelle Colson, Salvador Saucedo-Guzman, Mike Silverstein**

### **MODERATOR:**

**Ra Amin**, *ANC Commissioner*

## NEIGHBORHOOD HISTORY AND HOUSING

What can we learn by narrowing our focus to a specific neighborhood or housing development? Gain an appreciation for neighborhood history as these presenters discuss white flight, housing development, and Black home ownership.

### REAL ESTATE SPECULATION AND WHITE FLIGHT IN BRIGHTWOOD PARK, DC

**Tanya Golash-Boza, PhD**, *Executive Director of the University of California Washington Center*

In 1940, Brightwood Park had no Black residents. By 1990, 96% of the neighborhood's residents were Black. What changed during those 50 years? Many scholars argue that White flight was provoked by real estate agents' blocking-busting—convincing White families to sell their homes by telling them that Black people were moving there—and the accompanying profits. Based on hundreds of real estate transactions, oral histories, and archival records, this presenter found there's more to the story.

### BUILDING HOUSING WASHINGTON DURING WORLD WAR I

**Neil Flanagan**, *Public Historian*

The United States Housing Corporation was created during World War I to address housing shortages. In DC, the war workers in need of housing were overwhelmingly white-collar, and many were educated single women and politically active members of the Black bourgeoisie. The USHC's leadership navigated this political landscape for eleven frenetic months before largely abandoning the housing projects. Nonetheless, relationships formed during this effort were essential to transforming DC into a monumental National Capital in the two decades that followed.

### HYPER LOCAL DC HISTORY AND THE BLACK HOMEOWNERS OF TRUXTON CIRCLE

**M Marie Maxwell**, *Neighborhood Historian*

This presentation is based on research examining Black home ownership during the early part of the 20th century and it will touch upon the issues of redlining, disinvestment, and attempts at renewal. Using resources such as Ancestry.com, deeds, newspapers, and traditional archival resources, this presentation will discuss African American homeowners in Truxton Circle from 1880–1950.

**MODERATOR: Daniel del Pielago**, *Housing Director, Empower DC*



## ROUNDTABLE: 50 YEARS OF LGBTQ PRIDE ACTIVITY IN THE NATION'S CAPITAL

In June 2025, Washington will host World Pride to coincide with the 50th anniversary of DC's first Gay Pride Day in 1975. The Rainbow History Project (RHP) is spearheading an 18-month initiative to create an exhibit on the history of Pride in DC. This roundtable will present the research findings and exhibit themes and solicit public feedback. Historians, activists, and community members are invited to review the progress, provide suggestions, and identify images and oral histories to include. Feedback will be critical before RHP designs the exhibit graphics in fall 2024.

**MODERATOR:** **Vincent Slatt**, *Director of Archiving*, Rainbow History Project

## FROM ATLANTIS TO THE 9:30 CLUB

The 9:30 Club has been an incubator and important part of DC's music scene for more than four decades. It has inspired countless musicians and music fans, fostered community, and continues to inspire future generations to be involved in artistic expression and creativity. But how did this DC institution start? This roundtable discussion brings together the people who turned the short-lived Atlantis into the legendary venue that continues to inspire new generations of music lovers. Join this entertaining and informative conversation.

### PANELISTS:

**Bob Boilen**, Tiny Desk Unit/NPR

**Dody DiSanto**, 9:30 Club/The Center

**Kevin Duplain**, Atlantis Nightclub

**John Paige**, Interzone/Universal Media, Inc.

**Chris Thompson**, Interzone/Tiny Desk Unit

### MODERATOR:

**Ian MacKaye**, Dischord Records/Fugazi/Coriky

## PLANNING PIONEER OR PARIAH? RETHINKING HARLAND BARTHOLOMEW'S LEGACY

As a planning consultant and later National Capital Planning Commission Chair, Harland Bartholomew profoundly shaped the physical and social landscape of Washington, DC. His work set the stage for urban renewal and the construction of major highways within the city. However, his projects institutionalized segregation, racialized displacement, and physically disconnected communities. This discussion highlights his work, the complex and disturbing legacy, and the racially inequitable impacts of his planning work on the city's residents and the physical form of the city. How do we recognize and confront these historic inequities in meaningful ways today, including through reform and thoughtful re-development?

### PANELISTS:

**Carmen Bolt**, *PhD Candidate, American University*

**Brittney Drakeford**, *DC Office of Planning*

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## STUDENTS AND SCHOOLS

This panel will discuss what the history of three DC schools—the physical buildings, students, and educators—can teach us about our city. Themes will include architectural design, Black history, and neighborhood history.

### OPEN-PLAN SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITY CONTROL IN “CHOCOLATE CITY”

**Esa Syeed**, *Assistant Professor of Sociology, California State University–Long Beach*

From its origins as a Black community-controlled school in the late 1960s, Marie Reed Learning Center (formerly the Thomas P. Moral School) was redesigned as an open-plan school and community center in the 1970s. The school's various incarnations speak to the critical connections between race, education, and space. This presentation re-frames school design as an antiracist practice that can build community identity as well as power.

### UPTOWN: THE HISTORY OF BELL VOCATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL

**Christopher Stewart**, *Librarian*

Bell Vocational High School is located in DC's Columbia Heights neighborhood. This presentation will discuss the school's history from the early 1900s to today and how national and local trends have shaped the school. Learn from the schools' senior librarian about Bell's students, the communities they come from, what they've done after graduation, and how the school has changed over time.

### THE MCKINLEY TECH YEARBOOK COMMITTEE AND THE 1969 TECHITE

**Marya McQuirter**, *Independent Historian*

This presentation focuses on the 1969 Techite, a yearbook produced by students at McKinley Technical High School. Through its "black awareness" theme, students collectively produced a rich text that researchers can mine for understanding Black aesthetics and Blackness in the late 1960s. While much of the scholarship on Black studies focuses on colleges and universities, this yearbook highlights how teenagers were artistically, intellectually, and physically producing Black aesthetics through their yearbook.

**MODERATOR: Erica Sterling**, DC History Center

# POSTER SESSION HIGHLIGHTS

## **HONORING BLACK FUGITIVE FOLKLORE THROUGH CREATIVE STUDY**

*Workshop 1:30–3:00, First Floor East New Books (9th and G)*

**Jessica Valoris**, Artist, Community Facilitator

The histories of slavery, abolitionist organizing, free Black towns, and Black liberatory practice are too often neglected in DC's public discourse. Using archival documents and materials, this session will invite participants to engage local stories, people, and sites; and to reflect on their significance through creative writing and song. Through guided creative study and writing, this special poster session feature will honor local histories of Black resistance to slavery and the legacies of community care that they activated.

## **WE WHO BELIEVE IN FREEDOM: BLACK FEMINIST DC COMMUNITY VOICE PROJECT**

*Guided Experience at 1:30 and 2:30 First Floor West*

**Rebecca Ljungren**, Educational Programs Manager, National Women's History Museum

Attendees can experience an interactive audio tour inside the exhibition We Who Believe in Freedom: Black Feminist DC and hear more about co-creating interactive tours in public spaces during the poster session, a project presented as a collaboration between the DC Public Library, The Playful City Lab at American University, and the National Women's History Museum. With the goal of democratizing the process of creating interactive, low-tech experiences in public spaces, this special audio tour uses the tool "Hive Mechanic," which empowers anyone to create outdoor and immersive experiences from ordinary phones – no coding or programming skills required.

## **REIMAGINING DC THROUGH ART AND ARCHAEOLOGY**

**Nikki Grigg**, Archaeologist, PhD candidate at the University of Chicago

Archaeology can help us recover the histories of ordinary people whose lives aren't included in the documented or oral record. This special poster session feature invites participants to connect to neighborhood histories through archaeological artifacts. Reflect through drawing, painting, collage, and writing on DC's past through neighborhood and household histories. Notice what themes reappear then and now: gentrification, immigration, and statehood. What District histories are remembered, forgotten, or obscured? How can DC's past—and our own memories of the city—help us reimagine its future?

## **LEARNING FROM MEMORY: SMALL GROUP DISCUSSIONS ON ORAL HISTORY**

*Location: People's Archive 1:30 - 3:00 PM*

Listen—no, really, listen to a sampling of oral history clips from the DC Oral History Collaborative and other DC-focused collections. Participants will immerse themselves in interviewees' stories and then will discuss them in small groups led by community oral history experts. What do we gain by closely listening to someone's memories? What might we hear? What might we learn: about history, about ourselves? Take this opportunity to explore, with us, oral history's incredible value as a medium for understanding life experiences beyond our own.

### **FACILITATED BY HUMANITIESDC:**

**Jasper Collier**

**Izy Carney**

**Dominique Hazzard**

**John Johnson**



## **PROGRESSIVE BLACK FEMINIST ORGANIZING IN DC FROM 1980-1990S**

This panel will uplift the stories of five Black women who were involved in the Black feminist movement in DC from the 1960s through the 1990s. Panelists will discuss the organizations they founded and were members of, ways they organized folks, how they lived and found joy and built community, and how they ultimately modeled the kind of world they wanted to live in. These stories can be fuel for the next generation of liberation fighters.

### **PANELISTS:**

**Tania Abdulahad**

**Linda Leaks**, *Organizer*, MSCED, Inductee into the Cooperative Hall of Fame, 2023

**Loretta J. Ross**, *Activist and Author* Smith College, 2022 MacArthur "Genius" Awardee

**Ajowa Nzinga Ifateyo**, MSNIH, MBA, MSCED

**Nkenge Toure**

### **MODERATOR:**

**Elizabeth Tibebu**

## CAPITAL CULTURE

How have Washingtonians historically worshiped, danced, and created music? Learn more about three pillars of DC culture at the turn of the twentieth century.

### WASHINGTON, DC'S FULL GOSPEL ASSEMBLY 1907–1934

**Donald Kammer, PhD**

Full Gospel Assembly was a local church that offered some of the most dynamic and well-attended religious activities through the Roaring Twenties and Great Depression years. The church grew out of interracial meetings during the Jim Crow Era and it later welcomed some of the most dynamic female preachers to its pulpit. Despite skepticism of Pentecostalism at the time, the church grew and received positive press coverage in the city.

### PLACES FOR DANCING ON U STREET, 1903–1910

**Bridget Jamison**, *Graduate Student*, University of Maryland

This presentation will discuss the opening of two U Street institutions—the True Reformer Building (1903) and the Howard Theatre (1910)—as the area took its first steps towards becoming “Black Broadway.” Washingtonians created these spaces to dance and watch dance performances. These spaces also fulfilled community needs for engaging with the arts.

### THE MUSIC BUSINESS IN DC IN THE GOLDEN AGE OF PIANOS

**John DeFerrari**, DC History Center

Pianos were a versatile and ubiquitous home entertainment mechanism in late Victorian and early 20th century homes. DC piano merchants mostly clustered downtown on G Street NW around 13th Street, which became a center for the music business. The presentation will offer portraits of some of the most prominent DC piano dealers and explore their rise in the 1880s and ultimate decline beginning in the 1910s.

**MODERATOR: Dwayne Lawson-Brown**, *Community Engagement Specialist*, DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities

## BURIED HISTORIES OF SLAVERY AND THE CIVIL WAR

A house buried beneath a garden; a forgotten freedom fighter; and the stories of Civil War sex workers. Learn more about the antebellum and Civil War eras in DC through three presentations.

### THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF AN ENSLAVED HOME SPACE IN GEORGETOWN

**Ianna Recco**, *Collections Manager*, Tudor Place Historic House

Invisible to the eye and buried beneath the Tudor Place Gardens in Georgetown lies what archaeologists in 2022 determined to likely be a dwelling used by enslaved individuals. Enslaved home spaces were built on foundations of bondage and oppression but were also homes where culture, community, and family bonds persevered. Although this home space was forgotten long ago, the stories contained within it continue to unfold as the legacy of its enslaved community persists.

### THOMAS SMALLWOOD: AN ANTISLAVERY WASHINGTON HERO LOST TO HISTORY

**Scott Shane**, *Journalist and Author*

After Thomas Smallwood bought his freedom, he became a shoemaker near Navy Yard in Southeast and in 1842 started organizing mass escapes from slavery. Smallwood wrote about these escapes in real-time satirical dispatches for a newspaper, using the real names of the enslavers he mocked and the escaping people he celebrated. He also gave the underground railroad its name. Learn more about this fascinating figure who has largely left out of history.

### SEX WORK IN CIVIL-WAR WASHINGTON AND BEYOND

**Katie Kirkpatrick**, *Founder*, Off the Mall Tours

Washington, DC saw an unprecedented rise in sex work during the Civil War due to the thousands of Union soldiers who flooded into the city for training. Brothels provided income, shelter, and independence for women who in some cases had few other places to turn. They built businesses and turned access to politicians into influence. This presentation focuses on these sex workers' stories.

**MODERATOR: Lisa Fager**, *Executive Director*, Black Georgetown Foundation

## COMMUNITY AND REPRESENTATION: THE 1960S AND 1970S IN DC

How did Washingtonians organize and fight for their communities and for political representation in the 1960s and 70s? Learn about DC's fight for democratic representation, the understudied stories of DC Latinos, and the power of go-go.

### DC'S NONVOTING SENATOR: A LOST DREAM OF HOME RULE

**Elliot Mamet**, *Political Scientist*, Princeton

The DC Home Rule Act of 1973 included a provision awarding DC a non-voting Senate seat. While non-voting delegates date back to 1794, never before had a non-state entity been awarded a nonvoting Senate seat. This provision was struck only at the very last minute. Fifty years after Home Rule, this presentation reconstructs that history.

### DC LATINO HISTORY, 1968-1975

**Arturo Griffiths**, *Activist and Organizer*

DC Latinos who organized and worked in the community prior to the 1980s wave of Central American immigration have stories to tell. While little has been written on this era of DC Latino history, valuable resources exist in living room archives and oral histories. This presentation will discuss the experiences of those who worked and lived during the period 1968-1975.

### GO-GO AND COMMUNITY IN THE LATE 1970S AND EARLY 1980S

**Alan Parkes**, *PhD Candidate*, University of Delaware

This presentation will uncover how go-go music both reflected and challenged racial politics. How did the political landscape of the late 70s—including the tension between local and national politics—inspire the go-go scene? Go-go scene members constructed a community in response to DC's political climate as well as a history of black suppression in the US.

**MODERATOR: Jerome Paige**, *Board Chair*, DC Fiscal Policy Institute

# SATURDAY KEYNOTE ADDRESS

## CRIME CAPITAL?: A HISTORY OF POLITICIZING DC CRIME AND HOW WASHINGTONIANS FOUGHT BACK

**Kyla Sommers, PhD**, *Independent Historian*

**5:00 – 6:00 pm**

**Location: Auditorium, 5th Floor**

Since desegregation, politicians have stoked fears of urban crime in Washington, DC to rally white voters and undermine civil rights. This reached a fever pitch after the 1968 rebellions. Richard Nixon turned the capital into an anti-crime policy laboratory and his “law and order” measures were modeled across the country. Yet amid rising crime rates and public panic, the DC Council ignored calls to expand police authority and instead launched initiatives to grant citizens more control over law enforcement. As DC crime dominates headlines today, this presentation examines the efforts of Washingtonians who fought to make the city a more equitable, safe, and democratic community.



## SCHEDULE AT-A-GLANCE



@DCHISTCON  
APRIL 4-6, 2024

### THURSDAY, APRIL 4

#### Letitia Woods Brown Memorial Lecture:

Vann R. Newkirk II &  
Jerusalem Demsas

6:00 – 7:15 pm | Reception to Follow

### FRIDAY, APRIL 5

**REGISTRATION** All Day

**SESSION A** 10:15 – 11:30 am

Black Freedom Struggles in  
Chevy Chase, 1725 – Today

Exploring Black Deaf History Through Theatre:  
Visionaries of the Creative Arts and the Center for  
Black Deaf Studies

Monuments and Meaning

Capital Arts and Its Patrons

**SESSION B** 11:45 am – 1:00 pm

The Legacy of Lee's Flower Shop

Winning with WISH: Tenant Organizing in  
Washington, DC, 1978–2003

Celebrating DC History Through Chinese  
Poetry and Art

Activism and Protest

**HISTORY NETWORK** 1:15 – 3:15 pm

**SESSION C** 3:30 – 4:45 pm

Citizen Struggles to Improve Housing in Washington  
DC, 1983 and 2023

Oral Histories and Heirlooms

DC's Built Environment

Honoring the Legacies of Three DC Women

**After Hours Party**  
5:00 – 7:00pm

### SATURDAY, APRIL 6

**REGISTRATION** All Day

**SESSION D** 10:15 – 11:30 am

Queer Identity and Early DC Writers

Challenges into Possibilities: Multigenerational  
Perspectives From Black Men in Ward 7

The ANC Rainbow Caucus and 50 Years of LGBTQ+  
Elected Officials (Roundtable)

Neighborhood History and Housing

**SESSION E** 11:45 am – 1:00 pm

50 Years of LGBTQ Pride Activity  
in the Nation's Capital (Roundtable)

From Atlantis to the 9:30 Club

Planning Pioneer or Pariah?  
Rethinking Harland Bartholomew's Legacy

Schools and Students

**POSTER SESSION** 1:15 – 3:15 pm

Special Feature: Honoring Black Fugitive Folklore  
Through Creative Study

Special Feature: Learning from Memory: Small  
Group Discussions on Oral History

**SESSION F** 3:30 – 4:45 pm

Progressive Black Feminist Organizing  
in DC from 1980–1990s

Capital Culture

Buried Histories of Slavery and the Civil War

Community and Representation:  
The 1960s and 1970s in DC

#### Closing Keynote:

Crime Capital?: A History of  
Politicizing DC Crime and How  
Washingtonians Fought Back

Kyla Sommers

5:00 – 6:00 PM