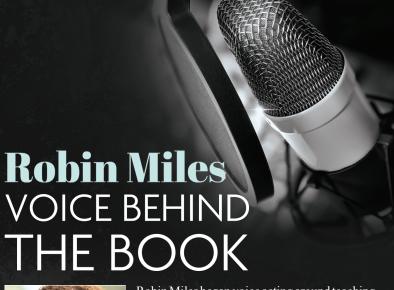
# BCALANEWS

Black Caucus of the American Library Association Inc.



BCALA President Denyvetta Davis (left), poses with (from left to right) U.S. Congressman John Lewis, and NCAALX conference co-chairs Dot Guthrie and Carolyn Garnes during our successful tenth National Conference of African-American Librarians in Atlanta, Georgia. With over 500 attendees, NCAALX had one of the largest numbers of registered attendees of recent NCAALs. You can find plenty of photos and more about NCAALX in this edition of BCALA News!





Robin Miles began voice acting around teaching Shakespeare and accents at SUNY Purchase, doing late-night improy, and Broadway and regional theater. Now with more than 350 audiobook titles to her credit, Robin Miles is an *AudioFile* Golden Voice, 2014 *Booklist* Voice of Choice, and Audie and Earphones Awardwinning performer, as well as a Grammy finalist director in genres from sci-fi to memoir to erotica. *AudioFile* calls her "a performer who never disappoints."



The Best of Contemporary African-American Literature on Audio!



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# Dear BCALA Members,

It was great to see so many of you at BCALA's 10th National Conference of African American Librarians (NCAAL) in Atlanta/Buckhead.

Special thanks to Conference Co-Chairs Carolyn Garnes and Dorothy Guthrie, conference planning leaders and their teams, Atlanta local arrangements, sponsors, exhibitors and especially all who attended.

Thank you for sharing this time with us!

The NCAAL is often described as a family union where we get together, meet old friends, make new ones, share ideas, learn best practices and gain insight into the latest technology and trends. The NCAAL X did not disappoint. It was a high-energy, fun-packed professional experience we will not soon forget.

We welcomed more than 500 librarians and information professionals, administrators, retirees, trustees, students, authors/illustrators, presenters and exhibitors to Atlanta/Buckhead. Not only did we celebrate the 10th NCAAL, but also 25 years of convening our national conferences since the first one was held in Columbus, OH in

1992. Our national conference has an esteemed reputation of excellence, as it is the largest conference devoted to African American librarians and those librarians serving African American and/or minority constituents. NCAAL was envisioned thanks to the vision of Dr. John Tyson, BCALA president from 1990-1992. His legacy lives on!

The theme "Beyond the Walls:
Innovative Ways to Engage Our
Communities" was highlighted by
our opening speaker Tom Joyner and
closing speaker Reverend Dr. Bernice
A. King, and inspired the creation
of more than 70 programs featuring
presenters using various formats and
time periods.

During the closing session, we announced the 11th NCAAL will be held the first week of August 2020 in Tulsa, Oklahoma. The year 2020 was chosen to coincide with BCALA's 50th Anniversary. Save the date!



Denyvetta Davis, President, BCALA 2016 - 2018

Be the change you want to see in the world.

- Mahatima Gandhi



# BCALA Mourns with Clovis-Carver Public Library in Wake of Shooting

Press Release For Immediate Release September 1, 2017 Contact: Jason Alston jasonalston@gmail.com

The Black Caucus of the American Library Association (BCALA) wishes to extend sincere sympathies to the families, coworkers, and friends of the victims of this week's shooting at the Clovis-Carver Public Library in Clovis, New Mexico.

According to news reports, our field lost two great and dedicated workers: 61-year-old circulation assistant Wanda Walters and 48-year-old youth services librarian Kristina Carter. Also injured was 30-year-old circulation assistant Jessica Thron. Three patrons were also injured in the attack, which was allegedly perpetrated by a 16-year-old high school student. The teen, not named here in an effort to deny him any additional notoriety, was taken alive by law enforcement officers after surrendering.

"The two lives lost were our colleagues and two people who worked each day to enhance the quality of life for people in the Clovis, New Mexico community," BCALA President Denyvetta Davis said. "When a librarian or library worker is harmed on duty anywhere in the country, it is painful to all of us."

Safety in public spaces continues to be a concern throughout the nation, with libraries being no exception. BCALA applauds the ongoing efforts of the American Library Association to offer resources to libraries on how to provide the safest possible facilities and experiences to their communities. ALA links to some of these resources in their press release regarding the shooting, which is here: <a href="http://www.ala.org/news/member-news/2017/08/ala-offers-support-clovis-carver-public-library-wake-shooting">http://www.ala.org/news/member-news/2017/08/ala-offers-support-clovis-carver-public-library-wake-shooting</a>.

"We do want to assure the public that libraries throughout the nation are doing active shooter preparedness drills and constantly reviewing and updating emergency plans," Davis said. "Safety of staff and patrons is a top priority for all libraries."

###

Learn more about BCALA at www.bcala.org

# Kelvin Watson Wins 2017 Demco Award

Press Release For Immediate Release August 22, 2017 Contact: Jason Alston jasonalston@gmail.com 803-822-3075

The winner of this year's Demco/ALA Black Caucus Award for Excellence in Librarianship is Kelvin Watson, director of Broward County (Fla.) Library. A native of Saint Louis, MO, he has developed an interesting reimagining of libraries that shatters the rigid concept of "library as a place" and replaces it with library as holding digital space.

"Kelvin Watson is the ultimate library professional exemplifying excellence and commitment," said BCALA president Denyvetta Davis. "He is a role model, mentor, and coach that is committed to sharing his wisdom and knowledge with others."

The joint Demco/BCALA award recognizes significant accomplishments that promote the status of African American librarians in the profession, or the development and implementation of resources and services for the African American community. Demco presents the winning librarian with a \$500 check and a commemorative statue, and makes an additional \$500 donation to the BCALA Scholarship Fund in the winner's name. BCALA and Demco have teamed up to bestow this award annually since 1994, when BCALA founder, the late Dr. E.J. Josey, received the honor.

Watson became the leader of Broward County Library in February of this year, and under his leadership, Broward County libraries system has already begun a transformation. Tablets are being distributed to local libraries in preparation for a tablet-loaning initiative. Digital content is expanding rapidly. As a personal nod to his years of service in the Army, he has also led the creation of the Veterans Connect Hotspot program, a free mobile internet service for Veterans and Active Military. Already within his first three months, he has set the trajectory for a revolutionized library experience in Broward County.

Watson felt considerably honored upon hearing his biography read by President Denyvetta Davis at the awards ceremony during the Black Caucus of the American Library Association's biannual conference in Atlanta, GA.

"Few people realize how critical public libraries are to economically depressed communities, and how heavily they are relied on by communities of color," Watson said. "In this digital age, the digital potential of libraries is going to make them even more integral in the mission of erasing the digital divide and bringing communities of color to equitable footing with majority communities. I'm glad to have a hand in helping this community strive for equity, and I'm very thankful that Demco and BCALA have recognized these efforts."

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Learn more about BCALA at www.bcala.org

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# **The Ties That Bind:** 500 Plus Gathered in Atlanta for the Awe-inspiring 10th National Conference of African American Librarians

Press Release For Immediate Release August 31, 2017 Contact: Carolyn Garnes

Opening with the beat of the drums and a lively entrance led by all-female drumming ensemble Giwayen Mata to a standing room-only afternoon keynote speech by radio personality and philanthropist Tom Joyner, BCALA's 10th National Conference of African American Librarians was attended by more than 500.

Joyner, in his opening remarks, stated, "Literacy is knowledge and knowledge is power. Everyone should read as it will change your life. Libraries were a special place in my life; a magical place. It was a safe haven for kids like me."

Those in attendance heard ALA President Jim Neal assure the audience that ALA stands in solitary with BCALA.

Attendees also got a major surprise when congressman and civil rights icon John Lewis (D-GA) shared some memories of his late wife Lillian, who was a librarian, and the importance of reading.

"You never ever know where books will take you. We can travel all over this planet through books," said Congressman Lewis during his appearance at the Opening Reception and Literary Awards Ceremony hosted by the Auburn Avenue Research Library of African Culture and History.

The conference theme, 'Beyond Library Walls / Innovative Ways to Engage Our Communities,' highlights the opportunity to explore virtual access and programs 24/7, outside of our traditional brick and mortar libraries. The theme also embraces and emphasizes the strength of the organization's focus and commitment to community engagement. Substantial takeaways on community engagement and other library initiatives were shared.

Another highlight of the four-day conference at the Grand Hyatt Buckhead Hotel in Atlanta was a special "Lunch with the Legends and Children of the Civil Rights Movement" that included Xernona Clayton, Andrea Young, Angela Watkin, and Atlanta city councilmen Kwanza Hall and Michael Julian Bond. Conference participants heard spirited conversations with actual participants and several of their children as they revealed how their parents' involvement changed their lives.

Dr. Bernice A. King, chief executive officer of The King Center, gave the keynote address on Sunday. The closing session was inspiring as Dr. King gave the ultimate challenge to BCALA and all African American librarians to, "Be a bridge to bring the communities together and share critical information." King also stated, "Everybody is somebody in the library."

The conference was filled with a host of distinguished and renowned authors, speakers, sessions and workshops, and collaborative activities. The Authors/Illustrators Pavilion provided a forum for many authors including Jerry Pinkney,

Jason Reynolds, Sharon Draper, Sharon Flake, Evelyn Coleman and Kelly Starling Lyons, as well as the ladies of contemporary fiction; Kimberla Lawson Roby and ReShonda Tate Billingsley.

The authors of "We Are Charleston: Tragedy and Triumph At Mother Emanuel" took conference participants on a journey that included the history of slavery in South Carolina, the Civil War, Reconstruction, Jim Crow, the Civil Rights Movement and the present day. A great takeaway from the three authors and this touching sage, is the power of forgiveness and its lesson for the world.

The Robert W. Woodruff Library/Atlanta University Center (AUC) Library hosted an exquisite reception and helped connect Clark Atlanta University library school alumni. Woodruff Library CEO Loretta Parham promised to keep in touch with the alumni and assemble them in the future.

"We look forward to gathering together in Tulsa, Oklahoma in 2020 as BCALA celebrates its 50th Anniversary. Let us all stay engaged, remain proactive and help shape the future," said BCALA President Denyvetta Davis.

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Learn more about BCALA at www.bcala.org



# BCALA Joins ALA and Other Organizations in Condemning Violence in Charlottesville

Press Release For Immediate Release August 21, 2017 Contact: Shaundra Walker marketing@bcala.org

The Black Caucus of the American Library Association (BCALA) joins the American Library Association (ALA), its divisions and affiliates, along with other organizations around the country, in condemning the recent violence perpetrated by white supremacists and neo-Nazis in Charlottesville, VA. We extend our condolences to the victims of this tragedy and their families.

We stand with and support of the Charlottesville public and university libraries that faced challenges during the violent protest. Any actions that threatened our communities are unacceptable and cannot be tolerated.

Since its inception in 1970, the BCALA has been an advocate for inclusion and social justice, both within library profession and in the communities where we live and serve. It is in this tradition that we denounce these atrocities. As the oldest of our profession's ethnic caucuses, we have a long tradition of challenging issues that do not match our core values. We trace our roots to the bold actions of E.J. Josey and others who helped to organize librarians to address the concerns and unmet needs of African American professionals within our ranks. One of the caucus's first actions was to submit a resolution to the ALA council that would censure libraries and librarians providing materials and services to private segregated schools that were formed to avoid integration.

Says BCALA president, Denyvetta Davis, "For nearly 50 years, the BCALA has been an advocate for equity, inclusion and social justice. The library family is a social justice family. The struggle is real but the opportunities are real also. We still have work to do in times like these!"

###

The Black Caucus of the American Library Association serves as advocate for the development, promotion and improvement of library services and resources to the nation's African American community. This esteemed national organization also provides leadership for the recruitment and professional development of African American librarians. Established in 1970, BCALA is a registered nonprofit organization with 501©3 IRS status. All donations to BCALA support our mission and are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law. For more information, please visit http://www.bcala.org.

# BCALA National Conference Awards and Honors Recipients Named

Press Release For Immediate Release August 12, 2017 Contact: John S. Page 202-320-8990 jpage.mspace@gmail.com

Eleven individuals were honored August 12 as recipients of BCALA awards and honors at the Presidents' Ball and Awards Ceremony during the tenth National Conference of African American Librarians (NCAAL) in Atlanta, GA. The conference theme was "Culture Keepers X: Beyond Library Walls: Innovative Ways to Engage Our Communities."

Dr. Jessie Carney Smith, librarian, author, and educator, was awarded the BCALA Honorary Life Membership Award. Smith has been the university librarian at Fisk University in Nashville, TN since 1965. She has taught part-time in library science programs, lectured widely, served as consultant to the U.S. Office of Civil Rights, the U. S. Office of Education, the National Endowment for the Humanities, and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS). She has published numerous research guides and reference books including "Notable Black American Women," "Notable Black American Men," and "Black Firsts: 4000 Groundbreaking and Pioneering Historical Events", among others. She has also received numerous awards, including being named "Academic/Research Librarian of the Year" from the Association of College and Research Libraries in 1985.

Immediate past president of BCALA and current director of the Broward County (FL) Libraries, Kelvin Watson, received the Demco/BCALA Award for Excellence in Librarianship. The Demco award is presented to a librarian who has made significant contributions to promoting the status of African Americans in the library profession. Watson is a futurist and innovator who has served as chief operating officer at Queens Borough Public Library, received many awards including the inaugural "Ernest A. DiMattia Jr. Award for Innovation and Services to the Community and Profession" while advocating for virtual library services.

Other BCALA winners were: Tamika Barnes, department head at the Perimeter College Library of Georgia State University – BCALA Library Advocacy Award, given to those who have demonstrated dedicated commitment in support of library and information services to African- American and other ethnic communities.

Michelle T. Fenton, federal documents librarian at the Indiana State Library in Indianapolis, IN, Eboni Curry Njoku, children's librarian, D.C. Public Library, and Gladys Smiley Bell, librarian at Hampton University and former BCALA president – BCALA Appreciation Award for members who have volunteered their services to enhance the association's growth.

ayo dayo, administrative librarian with the Prince William County (MD) Library and life member of BCALA – Distinguished Services to the BCALA Award, to an individual who has demonstrated, over a period of years, significant and continuous services to the ongoing operation, organization, and growth of BCALA.

Cassandra R. Allen, outreach librarian with the Outreach and Special Populations Branch of the National Library of Medicine and longtime financial supporter of BCALA conferences for health and preventive health projects - BCALA Professional Achievement Award, to an individual who has exhibited meritorious achievement and distinction in the field of African-American librarianship.

Elizabeth Jean Brumfield, distance services librarian at the Prairie View A&M University – BCALA Distinguished Service to the Library Profession Award, to those who have made significant and extraordinary contributions in service to the library profession, such as introducing new concepts, providing exceptional leadership, or setting unprecedented standards for participation in the profession.

Brian Hart, deputy director of the Greensboro (NC) Public Library – BCALA Leadership Award, for demonstrated significant and continuous service to the library profession that has resulted in their recognition as a leader in the profession.

Tiffany Arielle Duck, branch manager at the Norfolk (VA) Public Library – BCALA Tyson Leadership Award, for significant contribution to the profession during the first ten years after receiving a library science degree.

The National Conference of African American Librarians (NCAAL), hosted by BCALA, is the largest conference devoted to African-American librarianship and those librarians serving African American and/or minority constituents.

###

Learn more about BCALA at www.bcala.org



# The New York Black Librarians' Caucus is pleased to announce:



Saturday November 18, 2017

Alhambra Ballroom

2116 Adam Clayton Powell Boulevard (at 126th Street)

New York, NY 10027

(www.alhambraballroom.net)

This event is a fundraiser for the Donna Hoke Scholarship, this scholarship provides financial support to graduate students of African American descent, who are pursuing a master's degree in library and information science. The night will also include the naming of the 2017 NYBLC's Distinguished Author Award. Jason Reynolds was the first recipient of this award and he continues to create great work for our youth. We are also proud to announce our newly created Andrew P. Jackson Scholarship Award for library support staff. The Caucus recognizes that many librarians of color may begin their careers as a library support staff member, and we want to encourage and support them on their pathway to becoming a librarian.

The New York Black Librarians Caucus (NYBLC) is a nonprofit 501(c)3 organization and an affiliate to the Black Caucus of the American Library Association. We promote diversity and library advocacy in the New York library community. For this occasion, we are asking for your support by purchasing an ad in the souvenir journal. This is an opportunity to advertise your business and offer words of support to the Caucus.

All are welcome to join us (library directors, librarians, administrators, library advocates, information assistants, clerical staff, and all other notable members of the library and education community) at the well renowned Alhambra Ballroom.

For more information, please visit our website www.thenyblc.org or email us at contactnyblc@gmail.com. On behalf of the New York Black Librarians Caucus, thank you in advance for your generous support.

# Adrian King of University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign Wins Smiley Student Travel Award

By Gladys Smiley Bell, Hampton University



Adrian King, a student in the School of Information Sciences program (MLIS '18) at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, is the winner of the 2017 Smiley Travel Award, sponsored by BCALA. The award gives King a \$500 stipend to attend BCALA's 10th National Conference of African American

Librarians (NCAAL), held in Atlanta, GA from August 9-13, 2017. The winner is chosen via an essay contest, with essays judged by a review committee within BCALA.

King wrote a brief essay on the theme "Beyond Library Walls: innovative Ways to Engage Our Community." He was formally introduced and awarded during BCALA's general membership meeting at the American Library Association (ALA) annual conference in Chicago, IL on June 25, 2017.

BCALA is a nonprofit organization for different areas of librarianship, including school, public, academic, and special, with national and international membership. It also provides game-changing leadership for the recruitment and development of African American education and information professionals. It is one of five ALA ethnic affiliates and advocates for promoting and improving library services to diverse populations and communities of color. In addition, BCALA has sponsored literary awards for African American authors since 1994 and is also a sponsor of the prestigious Coretta Scott King Book Awards.

# NCAAL 10 Final Registration Data

4-Aug 2017	Total 2017	Reg Fee	Income to Date
141	141	\$299.00	\$42,263.00
44	44	\$330.00	\$14,595.00
29	29	\$360.00	\$10,440.00
35	35	\$269.00	\$9,146.00
18	18	\$125.00	\$2,2500.00
39	39	\$350.00	\$13,650.00
7	7	\$380.00	\$2,660.00
10	10	\$400.00	\$4,000.00
2	2	\$310.00	\$620.00
9	9	\$175.00	\$1,575.00
36	36	\$50.00	\$1,800.00
64	64	\$0.00	\$0.00
4	4	\$0.00	\$0.00
21	21	\$0.00	\$0.00
52	52	\$0.00	\$0.00
4	4	\$50.00	\$200.00
511+1=512			\$103,199.00
			\$125,979.00

# NCAAL 10 Registration Demographics

Academic	100
Federal	6
First Time Attendee	108
New Member	41
Guest	20
Other	17
Public	110
Retiree	36
School Media	7
Student	18
Special	7
AILA Caucus Member	2
APALA Caucus Member	5
BCALA Caucus Member	170
CALA Caucus Member	3
REFORMA Caucus Member	5



# THE BLACK CAUCUS OF THE AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION, INC.

"Commitment to Excellence"

For Immediate Release: September 6, 2017 Press Contact: Shaundra Walker marketing@bcala.org

### **BCALA Stands With and Supports DACA Participants**

The Black Caucus of the American Library Association (BCALA) stands with and supports the nearly 800,000 participants in the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program, who face an uncertain future following yesterday's announcement regarding the demise of the program. We appeal to Congress to resolve this issue by passing legislation that is consistent with the values that we as Americans hold dear.

\*\*\*\*\*

The Black Caucus of the American Library Association serves as an advocate for the development, promotion and improvement of library services and resources to the nation's African American community. This esteemed national organization also provides leadership for the recruitment and professional development of African American librarians. Established in 1970, BCALA is a registered nonprofit organization with 501©3 IRS status. All donations to BCALA support our mission and are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law. For more information, please visit http://www.bcala.org.

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# Joint statement on Libraries and Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

By American Library Association

Equity, diversity, and inclusion are core values of our associations, as we believe that as a profession we must continue to support the creation of a more equitable, diverse, and inclusive society.

On June 27, 2017, ALA approved a new interpretation of equity, diversity, and inclusion within the ALA Library Bill of Rights. The interpretation (developed by the Association's Office for Intellectual Freedom) reaffirms our shared commitment to the role that libraries of all types – public, academic, school and special – must play in effecting equity, diversity, and inclusion in the communities and institutions they serve. It also provides a concrete framework for insuring that every library's policies and practices, collections and programs reflect these values.

As organizations, we strive to advance our capacity as a profession

to identify and address barriers to equity, diversity, and inclusion with a broad spectrum of best practices, tools, and resources. In addition to the American Library Association, which has adopted equity, diversity and inclusion as one of four strategic directions, the vital contributions of affiliate organizations including The American Indian Library Association; Asian Pacific American Librarians Association; Black Caucus of the American Library Association; Chinese American Librarians Association; REFORMA (The National Association to Promote Library & Information Services to Latinos and the Spanish Speaking); Joint Council for Librarians of Color, help to further this work.

All of these organizations, as well as the ALA Office for Diversity, Literacy and Outreach Services, provide resources, in person workshops and webinars, and a network of library peers that offer leadership and support for libraries in the areas of equity, diversity, and inclusion.

Libraries lead! We must not lose sight of the role libraries and library staff play in promoting mutual understanding through education and lifelong learning. Libraries serve as the cornerstone of our democracy and work to acknowledge the needs of their communities. As our nation increasingly becomes more diverse, so should library collections, staff and our nation's social consciousness.

Regardless of the type of library, constituency, or represented region, our nation's library community continues efforts to provide community members with free access to diverse collections, multicultural staff and diverse resources.

# Affiliates News

By Andrew (Sekou) Jackson

- \*\* Affiliate organizations are asked to submit updates to their organizational profile and annual dues to membership chair Rudy Clay.
- \*\* Affiliate organizations are currently located in Atlanta, California-Northern and Southern Chapters, Chicago, Connecticut, Indiana, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York and Pennsylvania.
- \*\* The affiliates and membership committees met at the ALA Annual Conference in Chicago on Friday,
  June 23rd, facilitated by membership chair Rudy Clay and affiliates chair Andrew (Sekou) Jackson.
  Attendees included members of affiliate organizations in Atlanta,
  Connecticut, Indiana, New York and Pennsylvania as well as library directors and trustees, prospective members and current students and recent graduates.

Discussions included topics of interest and membership issues of affiliates, organizations; inactive

- affiliates and leadership issues, organizational sustainability, leadership training and mentorship, affiliate leadership transition planning and the need for greater outreach and recruitment of younger members; affiliate attendance and participation at ALA Annual and NCAAL Conferences; development of virtual capabilities by BCALA; outreach and library support staff membership; dues and fundraising; concerns and issues over use of the term "Black" versus "African American" and the impact on recruitment of new members and accurate representation of our Caucus and affiliate organizations.
- \*\*\* Interest in the formation of new affiliate organizations or renewal of dormant affiliates have been voiced by members or students in Florida, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Ohio and Washington, D.C.
- \*\* An outgrowth of planning for the 10th NCAAL, the Metro Atlanta African American Librarians Caucus was formed. Membership includes current library professionals and

support staff, retired librarians and friends. Congratulations!!

- \*\*\* New York Black Librarians Caucus (NYBLC) to host the Second Black Librarians Ball on Saturday, October 14th at the Alhambra Ballroom in Harlem. For additional ticket information and/or to place a journal ad, contact NYBLC president Sandra Michele Echols at sandraechols@gmail.com.
- \*\* NYBLC established a new scholarship in honor of retired Langston Hughes director emeritus Andrew (Sekou) Jackson. The NYBLC Library Support Staff Development Scholarship was created to support the educational pursuits of non-librarian staff, promote and encourage membership and participation in NYBLC and help lay a foundation for undergrads to become more active in our profession and/or go on to earn their MLS degree. The \$1,000 scholarship award is open to students who have earned at least 24 credits in their undergraduate studies.

\*\*\* Following retirement in mid-2016, Andrew (Sekou) Jackson has been appointed to the Board of Trustees of Queens Library by Queens Borough president Melinda Katz. Mr. Jackson is the first librarian and former QL staff member to receive such an appointment.

Sekou's retirement gift was a round trip airfare ticket to Ghana, West Africa. He was part of a tour group led by Professor Mwatabu Okantah of Kent State University's Pan African Studies Program for "The Real Africa Tour 2017" from May 25th-June 6th. The group of ten undergrad and grad students and five faculty/community members visited Accra, Lagon and East Lagon, Cape Coast and Elmina, Kumasi, toured the Central and Ashanti Regions, University of Ghana, University of Cape Coast, the Coconut Grove Resort and had extensive interaction with the elders, families and children of the Cape Coast village of Antonkwa.





# THE BLACK CAUCUS OF THE AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION, INC.

"Commitment to Excellence"

From: President Denyvetta Davis

**To:** BCALA Members **Date:** July 24, 2017

**RE:** President's Report #3 (March 2017 – June 2017)

# **President's Highlights**

- ♣ Participated in weekly conference calls and as needed with NCAAL X Conference Co-Chairs
- Submitted BCALA's "Intent to Sponsor" form for Emerging Leaders Program, 2017-2018
- Facilitated President's Advisory Council meeting at ALA Annual
- ♣ Participated in Tour of Harold Washington Collection at ALA Annual
- Represented BCALA at JCLC Reception at ALA Annual
- Presented BCALA sponsored CSK Author Award (plaque and honorarium) to Congressman John Lewis and Andrew Ayden at CSK Book Award Breakfast
- ♣ Coordinated Chicago Dine-Around for BCALA members at ALA Annual
- Greeted New Members at the "Meet and Greet for New Members" session facilitated by Angeline Beljour, Co-Chairs of the Recruitment and Professional Development Committee
- Reached out via telephone and email to the Director of Evanston Public Library and the City of Evanston's Equity and Empowerment Consultant after ALA Annual to offer BCALA's assistance in recruiting African American librarians and share resources related to conducting an equity audit. Calls were not returned and emails were not answered.
- Signed new contract with Site Services, Inc. to coordinate site selection process for NCAAL XI.
- Served as Judge for *Reading is Grand* Grant Award Program
- Will represent BCALA at the 5<sup>th</sup> REFORMA National Conference in San Juan, Puerto Rico, September 7-9, 2017.

### What's New!

Purchased two 90" w x 19.75"h, 3-sided Table Throws with BCALA logo and tag line for displays, membership table, etc. A third throw was donated by the vendor Signs by Tomorrow.

Updated membership brochure - Print copies available from Membership Committee.

# **♣** Membership Increased by 24% since November 2016

Membership Type	November 15, 2016	June 16, 2017
Corporate	6	7
Exempt	0	0
Institutional	26 (incl. 4 Affiliates)	29 (incl. 9 Affiliates)
Library Support Staff	17	21
Life	49	51
Regular	217	282
Retired	136 [9-paid]	154 [23-paid]
Student	52	80
Total Active	503	624

### Committees/Task Force - Updates

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Available on website.

If interested in serving on a BCALA committee, please contact committee chair. The committee chair will inform you of their specific need.

### New Ad Hoc Committee/Task Force

### Organizational Consultant Committee -

Keshia Garnett, our current Organizational Consultant has resigned effective December 1, 2017. Charge: Shall provide leadership for the search process, write position description, advertise, identify and interview finalist, check references, offer position in consultation with Executive Board and coordinate training.

The timeline is to hire a Consultant by October to allow for training and seamless transfer of duties.

Denyvetta Davis, Chair

Richard Ashby

Wanda Brown

Annie Ford

Kelvin Watson

#### NCAAL XI Site Selection Team -

Charge: Shall select a site for NCAAL XI to be held in 2020, BCALA's 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. The timeline is to select a site by August 1, 2017 so it can be announced during the closing session of NCAAL X in Atlanta.

Denyvetta Davis, Chair Carolyn Garnes
Richard Ashby, Jr. Jos Holman
Langston Bates Shaundra Wright

Rudolph Clay

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### **NCAAL Task Force**

Goal: Organization Excellence - Strategic Directions, 2016-2020

**Key Strategy:** Review site selection, frequency and planning process for the National Conference of African American to ensure it is efficient, cost effective and meets the needs of our members.

The timeline for completing their work is by ALA Midwinter 2018 in Denver.

Emily Guss, Chair Gerald Homes Shauntee Burns Richard Ashby, Jr. Derek Mosley Tiffany Duck

Jene Brown Connie Scott

### Website Additions

- ✓ Links to new Facebook page and You Tube Channel (see bottom of home page)
- ✓ Bylaws approved by membership posted under "About US" tab. Committee charges
  updated to match revised bylaws
- ✓ Complete list of Committee Chairs/Co-Chairs
- ✓ 2017-2019 Executive Board members with photos

# **Executive Board News**

### **Executive Board Retreat**

- ✓ Finalized Strategic Directions Action Plan
- ✓ Reviewed draft of Webinar Policies & Procedures prepared by Recruitment & Professional Development Committee

# The Board:

- ✓ Approved revised 2017-2018 Budget as presented by Dr. Stanton Biddle, Chair of Budget & Finance Committee.
- ✓ Approved the BCALA Budget and Finance Committee's recommendation to authorize the BCALA President to negotiate an agreement with DSGNR Unlimited of New York for the upgrade of the <u>www.BCALA.org</u> website. This effort should be considered a special project outside of the annual operations budget.

### Reason for the upgrade:

- The www.BCALA.org website is the public face of the organization for many people and institutions.
- For many years, the BCALA Career Center (BCALAjobs.org) has been the primary source of revenue for the organization.
- The vendor who designed our current system is no longer available. For the past several years we have been working with another vendor, DSGNR Unlimited that has kept the site functional by a variety of stopgap measures.
- With advances in technology and an increased concern with cyber security, this approach can no longer be sustained.
- A major upgrade will be needed for the site to continue to serve the organization's needs.
- ✓ Ratified the results of election of Executive Board members for 2017-2019

✓ Annroyed Joint Statement with ALA addressing shared values with respect to t

✓ Approved Joint Statement with ALA addressing shared values with respect to the Evanston Public Library situation.

# BCALA Programs/Activities – Chicago

Friday, June 23, 2017, 2-4 PM

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### Tour of Harold Washington Collection / Reception - 35 attendees

Hosts/Sponsors: Emily Guss – President, Chicago Affiliate of BCALA; Brian O'Bannon, Commissioner & CEO of CPL; Rodney Freeman, Asst. Commissioner, CPL Central Library Services, CPL and CPL's African American Services Committee

Saturday, June 24, 2017

## <u>Inaugural Walter Dean Myers Memorial Lecture</u> - 45 attendees

Moderator: Bettye Smith; Panelist: Jason Reynolds, Karen Lemmons, Phoebe Yeh, and Jessica Anne Liddell. Special thanks to Janice Greenberg

Sponsors: AASL, ALSC, BCALA, CSK Book Award Committee, EMIERT, PLA, Simon and Schuster, Inc., and YALSA

### BCALA Social: Chicago Dine Around - 20 attendees

Group was picked up by bus at the Palmer House Hotel. We started at Crossroads House of Blues for the first course, live music, Giordano's for the main course, ending up at Dolce for dessert and return to hotel. A fun evening!

# **Diversity Fair**

BCALA was represented by Fannie Cox, Co-Chair, Recruitment & Professional Development Committee. Fannie presented a Poster Session.

### Sunday, June 25, 2017

# **Interest Circles**- 4 attendees

Angeline Beljour, Co-Chair, Recruitment & Professional Development Committee facilitated the session. Initial meeting of members interested in participating in an Interest Circle (Interest Group).

### New Members Meet and Greet- 24 attendees (16 new members, 5 existing members, 5 guests)

Attendees were welcomed by President Davis. Angeline Beljour, Co-Chair, Recruitment & Professional Development Committee facilitated the session.

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An overwhelming success!

### **Membership Meeting** - 92 attendees

- Members voted/approved Bylaws
- Members ratified results of election of Executive Board members for 2017-2019

Guest Speaker: Dr. Duchess Harris, author of *Hidden Human Computer: The*Black Women of NASA published by ABDO Publishing Company - 67 attendees

**Sponsor:** ABDO Publishing Company – Free autographed books were distributed to attendees

# NCAAL X

**Don't miss it!** The last day to register is August 1<sup>st</sup>. Remember: No on-site registration available.

- Awesome opening and closing speakers, fantastic presenters, authors and exhibitors
- Over 350 attendees (including authors and exhibitors)
- ♣ 25+ sponsors
- ♣ Tour, 2 Pre-Conferences, 70 programs/poster sessions
- SCHED.COM Attendees can view a real-time schedule of conference events on their mobile phone, table or PC and sync their sessions to their calendars giving an app like experience. Access information coming soon!
- Online store NCAAL X will be the test site for the BCALA online store. BCALA Marketing/Public Relations Committee and Fundraising Committee will offer NCAAL and BCALA items for sale online only.

Link to article in COGNOTES highlighting conference, page 10 – iebms.heiexpo.com

# Coming Soon!

- Comprehensive Member Survey
- Webinar Policies & Procedures Coordinated by the Recruitment and Professional Development Committee



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THE NEW YORK BLACK LIBRARIANS' CAUCUS INC.

# THE 2017 NYBLC SCHOLARSHIP BALL



# AWARDS



-2017 NYBLC DISTINGUISHED AUTHOR BOOK AWARD

-THE DONNA HOKE SCHOLARSHIP AWARD

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# THE TIES THAT BIND:

# 500 Plus Gathered in Atlanta for the Awe-Inspiring 10th National Conference of African American Librarians

By Diane Larche', Larche' Communications

Opening with the beat of the drums and a lively entrance led by all-female drumming ensemble Giwayen Mata to a standing room only afternoon keynote speech by radio personality and philanthropist Tom Joyner, The Black Caucus of the American Library Association, Inc. (BCALA)'s 10th National Conference of African American Librarians was attended by more than 500.

Joyner, in his opening remarks stated, "Literacy is knowledge and knowledge is power. Everyone should read as it will change your life. Libraries were a special place in my life; a magical place. It was a safe haven for kids like me," he said.

Those in attendance heard ALA president Jim Neal assure the audience that ALA stands in solitary with BCALA.

Attendees also got a major surprise when congressman and civil rights icon John Lewis (D-GA), shared some memories of his late wife Lillian who was a librarian, and the importance of reading.

"You never ever know where books will take you. We can travel all over this planet through books," said Congressman Lewis during his appearance at the Opening Reception and Literary Awards Ceremony hosted by the Auburn Avenue Research Library of African Culture and History.

The conference theme, 'Beyond Library Walls / Innovative Ways to Engage Our Communities' highlights the opportunity to explore virtual access and programs 24/7, outside of our traditional brick and mortar libraries. The theme also embraces and emphasizes the strength of the

organization's focus and commitment to community engagement. Substantial takeaways on community engagement and other library initiatives were shared.

Another highlight of the four day conference at the Grand Hyatt Buckhead Hotel in Atlanta was a special Lunch with the Legends and Children of the Civil Rights Movement that included Xernona Clayton, Andrea Young, Angela Watkin, Atlanta Councilmen Kwanza Hall and Michael Julian Bond. Conference participants heard spirited conversations with actual participants and several of their children as they revealed how their parent's involvement changed their lives.

Dr. Bernice A. King, chief executive officer of The King Center, gave the keynote address on Sunday. The

closing session was inspiring as Dr. King gave the ultimate challenge to BCALA and all African American librarians to, "be a bridge to bring the communities together and share critical information." She also stated, "Everybody is somebody in the library."

The conference was filled with a host of distinguished and renowned authors, speakers, sessions and workshops, and collaborative activities. The Authors/Illustrators Pavilion provided a forum for many authors including Jerry Pinkney, Jason Reynolds, Sharon Draper, Sharon Flake, Evelyn Coleman

and Kelly Starling Lyons as well as the ladies of contemporary fiction; Kimberla Lawson Roby and ReShonda Tate Billingsley.

The authors of "We Are Charleston: Tragedy and Triumph At Mother Emanuel" took conference participants on a journey that included the history of slavery in South Carolina, the Civil War, Reconstruction, Jim Crow, the Civil Rights Movement and the present day. A great take-away from the three authors and this touching sage, is the power of forgiveness and its lesson for the world.

The Robert W. Woodruff Library: Atlanta University Center (AUC) Library hosted an exquisite reception and helped connect former Clark/ Atlanta University library school graduates. Library CEO Loretta Parham promised to keep in touch with the alumni and assemble them in the future.

"We look forward to gathering together in Tulsa, Oklahoma in 2020 as BCALA celebrates its 50th Anniversary. Let us all stay engaged, remain proactive and help shape the future," said BCALA President Denyvetta Davis.



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# Black Girlhood: A Selected List of Recent Books\*

Compiled by Kathleen E. Bethel, Northwestern University Libraries

Abraham, Nana. For Black Girls: The Shaping of a Young Woman. Bloomington, IN: WestBow Press, 2016.

Adewole, Candice A. The Black Girl's Guide to Being Blissfully Feminine. [s.l.]: CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2016.

Boylorn, Robin M. Sweetwater: Black Women and Narratives of Resilience. New York: Peter Lang, [2017].

Chatelain, Marcia. South Side Girls: Growing up in the Great Migration. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2015.

Collins, Catherine Fisher. Black Girls and Adolescents: Facing the Challenges. Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger, 2015.

Conner, Jerusha O, and Sonia M. Rosen. Contemporary Youth Activism: Advancing Social Justice in the United States. Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger, 2016.

Cooper, Brittney C, Susana M. Morris, and Robin M. Boylorn. The Crunk Feminist Collection. New York: Feminist Press at the City University of New York, 2017.

Cox, Aimee Meredith. Shapeshifters: Black Girls and the Choreography of Citizenship. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2015.

Crenshaw, Kimberlé, Priscilla Ocen, and Jyoti Nanda.
Black Girls Matter: Pushed Out, Overpoliced, and Underprotected. New York: Columbia University Center for Intersectionality and Social Policy Studies; African American Policy Forum, 2015. <a href="http://www.aapf.org/s/AAPF\_BlackGirlsMatterReport.pdf">http://www.aapf.org/s/AAPF\_BlackGirlsMatterReport.pdf</a>>

Davis, Mo'Ne. Remember My Name: My Story, from First Pitch to Game Changer. New York: Harper, 2016

Evans-Winters, Venus E. Black Feminism in Education: Black Women Speak Back, Up, and Out. New York: Peter Lang, 2015.

Fordham, Signithia. Downed by Friendly Fire: Black Girls, White Girls, and Suburban Schooling. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota, 2016

Habila, Helon. The Chibok Girls: The Boko Haram Kidnappings and Islamic Militancy in Nigeria. New York: Columbia Global Reports, 2016. Jefferson, Margo. Negroland: A Memoir. New York: Pantheon, 2015.

Kunjufu, Jawanza. Educating Black Girls. Chicago, IL: *African American Images*, 2015.

Kunjufu, Jawanza. Raising Black Girls. Chicago, IL: *African American Images*, 2015.

Lamb, Sharon, Tangela Roberts, and Aleksandra Plocha.
Girls of Color, Sexuality, and
Sex Education. New York:
Palgrave MacMillan, 2016.

Maddox, Lucy. The Parker Sisters: A Border Kidnapping. Philadelphia, PA: *Temple* University Press, 2016

Mason, C. Nicole. Born Bright: A Young Girl's Journey from Nothing to Something in America. New York: St. Martin's Press, 2016.

Morris, Monique W. Pushout: The Criminalization of Black Girls in Schools. *New York: New Press*, 2016.

Rae, Issa. The Misadventures of Awkward Black Girl. New York: 37 Ink/Atria, 2015.

Richardson, Sylvia, and Gwen Richardson. You Are Wonderfully Made: 12 Life-Changing Principles for Teen Girls to Embrace. Houston, TX: Cushcity Communications, 2015

Simmons, LaKisha M. Crescent City Girls: The Lives of Young Black Women in Segregated New Orleans. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina, 2015.

Smith, Tracy K. Ordinary Light: A Memoir. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2015.

Williams, Bethany H. The Color of Grace: How One Woman's Brokenness Brought Healing and Hope to Child Survivors of War. New York: Howard Books, a division of Simon & Schuster, Inc., 2015.

Woodson, Jacqueline. Brown Girl Dreaming. New York: *Puffin Books*, 2016.

Wright, Nazera Sadiq. Black Girlhood in the Nineteenth Century. Urbana, IL: *University* of *Illinois Press*, 2016.

\*Compiled in honor of Dr. Darlene
Clark Hine, the dean of African
American women's history, on the
occasion of her retirement from
Northwestern University; and, in
praise of the Global History of Black
Girlhood Conference, University of
Virginia, March 17-18, 2017. KEBethel

# African American Speculative Fiction for Kids

By Zetta Elliot, Zettaelliott.com

- 1. JUSTICE AND HER BROTHERS by Virginia Hamilton (1978)
- 2. DUSTLAND by Virginia Hamilton (1980)
- **3. THE GATHERING -** by Virginia Hamilton (1981)
- 4. SWEET WHISPERS, BROTHER RUSH by Virginia Hamilton (1982)
- 5. THE MAGICAL ADVENTURES OF PRETTY PEARL by Virginia Hamilton (1983)
- **6. SHADOW OF THE RED MOON -** by Walter Dean Myers (1995)
- 7. TRAPPED BETWEEN THE LASH AND THE GUN by Arvella Whitmore (2001)
- **8. THE GOLDEN HOUR -** by Maiya Williams (2004)
- 9. 47 by Walter Mosley (2005)
- **10. ZAHRAH THE WINDSEEKER -** by Nnedi Okorafor (2005)
- 11. THE HOUR OF THE COBRA by Maiya Williams (2006)
- 12. THE HOUR OF THE OUTLAW by Maiya Williams (2007)
- 13. THE MARVELOUS EFFECT by Troy CLE (2007)
- 14. THE SHADOW SPEAKER by Nnedi Okorafor (2007)
- **15. RACING THE DARK -** by Dawn Alaya Johnson (2007)
- **16.** A WISH AFTER MIDNIGHT by Zetta Elliott (2008)
- 17. NIGHT BITERS: A TALE OF URBAN HORROR by AJ Harper (2008)
- 18. M+O 4EVR by Tonya Cherie Hegamin (2008)
- PEMBA'S SONG: A GHOST STORY by Marilyn Nelson and Tonya C. Hegamin (2009)
- 20. THE ANCIENT LANDS WARRIORS QUEST by Jason McCammon (2009)
- **21. ASLEEP -** by Wendy Raven McNair (2009)
- **22. DOPE SICK -** by Walter Dean Myers (2009)
- 23. EXPLORER-X ALPHA by LM Preston (2009)
- **24.** THE GOBLIN KING by Dawn Alaya Johnson (2009)
- 25. OLIVION'S FAVORITES by Troy CLE (2009)
- **26. WERE WOLVES: THE MIX TAPE -** by AJ Harper (2009)
- 27. AWAKE by Wendy Raven McNair (2010)
- 28. THE CLONE CODES by Patricia McKissack et al. (2010)
- 29. BLEEDING VIOLET by Dia Reeves (2010)
- **30. MANIFEST -** by Artist Arthur (2010)



- **31. NINTH WARD -** by Jewell Parker Rhodes (2010)
- **32. SHADOW -** Walker by LA Banks (2010)
- **33. SLICE OF CHERRY -** by Dia Reeves (2011)
- **34.** CYBORG by Patricia McKissack et al. (2011)
- **35. AKATA WITCH -** by Nnedi Okorafor (2011)
- **36.** MYSTIFY by Artist Arthur (2011)
- **37. MUTINY -** by Artist Arthur (2011)
- **38.** MAYHEM by Artist Arthur (2011)
- **39.** MODELLAND by Tyra Banks (2011)
- 40. LIVING VIOLET: THE CAMBION CHRONICLES #1 by Jaime Reed (2011)
- 41. BREAKING FREE by Alicia McCalla (2012)
- **42. SHIP OF SOULS -** by Zetta Elliott (2012)
- **43.** THE CHAOS by Nalo Hopkinson\* (2012; Canadian author, US press)
- 44. BURNING EMERALD: THE CAMBION CHRONICLES #2 by Jaime Reed (2012)
- **45. MESMERIZE -** by Artist Arthur (2012)
- **46. THE DIARY OF B.B. BRIGHT -** by Alice Randall and Caroline Randall Williams (2012)
- 47. FADING AMBER: THE CAMBION CHRONICLES #3 by Jaime Reed (2012)
- 48. THE CLONE CODES #3: THE VISITOR by Patricia C. McKissack, Fredrick McKissack, and Pat McKissack (2012)
- **49. THE BOOK OF WONDERS -** by Jasmine Richards (2012; UK author, US press)
- **50. THE SUMMER PRINCE** by Alaya Dawn Johnson (2013)
- **51. ORLEANS -** by Sherri L. Smith (2013)
- **52. ROOTS: WITCHBOUND BOOK ONE -** by Kelbian Noel (2013; Canadian author)
- 53. BENDING TIME: THE ADVENTURES OF EMERY JONES, BOY SCIENCE WONDER by Charles & Elisheba Johnson (2013)
- **54. VENGEANCE BOUND -** by Justina Ireland (2013)
- **55. THE OFFENDERS -** by Jerry Craft (2013)
- **56. THE DEEP -** by Zetta Elliott (2013)
- 57. CHARIS: JOURNEY TO PANDORA'S JAR by Nicole Y. Walters (2013)
- **58. CURSED -** by Trakena Prevost (2013)
- **59. GAME WORLD -** by Christopher John Farley (2014)
- **60. PROMISE OF SHADOWS -** by Justina Ireland (2014)
- **61. LOVE IS THE DRUG -** by Alaya Dawn Johnson (2014)
- **62. THE PHOENIX ON BARKLEY STREET -** by Zetta Elliott (2014)
- **63. THE LOST TRIBES -** by C. Taylor-Butler (2015)
- **64. THE JUMBIES -** by Tracey Baptiste (2015)
- **65. THE MARK OF NOBA -** by GL Tomas (2015)
- **66. DAYSHAUN'S GIFT -** by Zetta Elliott (2015)
- **67. BLACK BEAUTY -** by Constance Burris (2015)
- **68. COAL: BOOK ONE OF THE EVERLEAF SERIES -** by Constance Burris (2015)
- **69. THE DOOR AT THE CROSSROADS -** by Zetta Elliott (2016)
- **70. THE BLAZING STAR -** by Imani Josey (2016)
- **71. THE GHOSTS IN THE CASTLE -** by Zetta Elliott (2017)
- **72.** WILLOW BORN by Shanna Miles (2017)
- **73. AMERICAN STREET** by Ibi Zoboi (2017)
- **74. MOTHER OF THE SEA -** by Zetta Elliott (2017)







# PHOTO CONTRIBUTORS FOR THIS ISSUE'S NCAALX PHOTO GALLERY

By Jason Alston, Coastal Carolina University

I would like to thank the following people for directly submitting images to run in the NCAALX photo gallery:

SHAUNTEE BURNS

JINA DUVERNAY

LOIDA GARCIA-FEBO

**CAROLYN GARNES** 

**GERALD HOLMES** 

ANDREW P. JACKSON

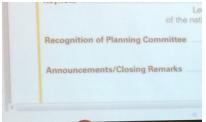
**TAMMI LAWSON** 

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**CHERESE MCKNIGHT** 

TRINA MEGGINSON

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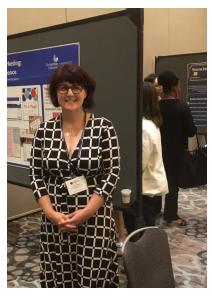




















































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# First Time Around: The Mystic of Debut Novels

By Carolyn Garnes, NCAALX Co-chair

There's something magical about a first novel — that promise of a new voice, the possibility of finding a writer you can follow for years to come. The debut novel is even more important for the writer because it might spark a great career. Writing your first book is no mean feat. Here are two exciting debut novels that were featured at the 10th National Conference of African American Librarians in Atlanta, GA.

Winner of the Center for Fiction's 2016 First Novel Prize: the hotly anticipated first novel by lauded playwright and "The Wire" television writer Kia Corthron.

# "THE CASTLE CROSS THE MAGNET CARTER: A NOVEL"

The story sweeps American history from 1941 to the twenty-first century through the lives of four men—two white brothers from rural Alabama, and two Black brothers from smalltown Maryland—whose journey culminates in an explosive and devastating encounter between the two families. Leonard Pitts, Jr. sums up the novel's impact in his review: "The Castle Cross the

Magnet Carter' is a big book that has a lot — arguably too much — on its mind. But it succeeds admirably in a novel's first and most difficult task: It makes you give a damn. It also does well by a novel's second task: It sends you away pondering what it has to say. Four boys, two white, two Black, grow up on opposite sides of America's racial DMZ. Their lives and disparate fates weave a story of men striving toward brotherhood — and a reminder that the ideal is difficult to achieve and sustain, regardless of which definition you choose."

Sharing a cultural and literary heritage with the work of Toni Morrison, Alex Haley, and Edward P. Jones, Kia Corthron's "The Castle Cross the Magnet Carter" is a monumental epic deftly bridging the political and the poetic, and wrought by one of America's most recently recognized treasures and a noble book club selection. "Castle Cross" will come out in a new paperback edition in October.

# LOOK FOR THE SEPTEMBER 26, 2017 RELEASE OF "PASSAGE" BY KHARY LAZARRE-WHITE.

"Passage" tells the story of Warrior, a young Black man, who is surrounded by deep family love and a sustaining connection to his history, bonds that arm him as he confronts the urban forces that surround him – both supernatural and human—including some that seek his very destruction.

Though the story told in "Passage" takes place in 1993, there is a striking parallel between Warrior's experience and the experiences of Black male youth today, since nothing has really changed. Every memory in the novel is the memory of thousands of Black families. Every conversation is a message both to those still in their youth and those who left their youth behind long ago. "Passage" is a novel for then and now.

Susan Taylor says of the novel, "In Lazarre-White's world, mysticism and madness walk hand in hand with the waking reality of so many young Black men in America, a reality that by any rational measure is itself insane."

Khary Lazarre-White is a writer, social justice advocate, attorney, and activist who has dedicated his life to the educational outcome and opportunities for young people of color at key life stages. His support base is far-reaching and diverse, built over the past twenty-two years as co-founder and executive director of The Brotherhood/Sister Sol.

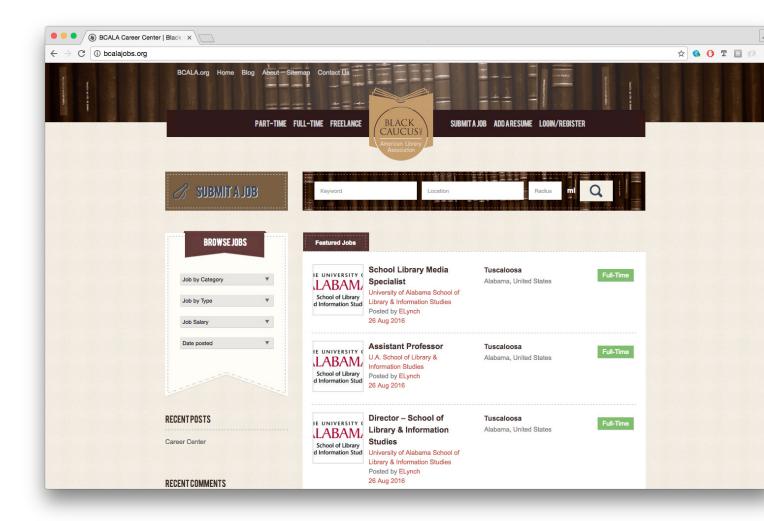
Both books are published by Seven Stories Press.

(Editor's note: The author of this column submitted it as a follow up to the appearances of these two authors at NCAALX).



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# NCAALX An Exciting Follow Up to NCAAL9

By Cherese McKnight



It was such a joy attending the 10th National Conference of African Americans in Buckhead Atlanta, Georgia. I learned a lot about presenting, heard great stories from authors, gleaned tips on how be a better leader and person, explored a city I'd never been to and met some people I never would have met otherwise.

My first day I went on the African American Heritage Tour. The tour guide was fantastic! She shared every bit of information she had about Atlanta and its vibrant and troubled history. I saw the home that "Gone with the Wind" was written in, and

learned that much of the earnings from that book went to assisting the Black doctoral candidates at Meharry Medical College. I visited Ebenezer Baptist Church and was able to sit where Coretta Scott King sat during her husband's funeral. I visited the King Center and saw actual video footage of Martin Luther King, Jr.'s funeral. I felt like I saw everything from where Lena Horne grew up, to where Whitley from "A Different World" goes to church, to where the 1996 Olympics were held and all in between. That was definitely a day where my wealth of knowledge grew rich.

The next day, I presented an ignite session titled "Yoga While You Work". My nerves all melted away when I began speaking and sharing what I've learned and ways I've found helpful to be at peace while working. My session was very well attended with 26 participants. I had so much more to share that I would love to present on the topic again at my next conference for a longer time frame. I would also really like to be able to present my shortened or lengthened version at work with staff.

That evening I attended the Literary Awards Ceremony. I was not expecting to meet and shake hands with Rep. John Lewis! He was very down to earth and willing to talk with anyone. The awards ceremony was one of the best I've ever attended. The host was timely and the authors all shared brief but powerful anecdotes. One of the books nominated was "Pushout: The Criminalization of Black Girls in Schools". When I think of some of the teen girls I've come across at the library and recall their experiences at school, I can't help but to think this book will lay out what is going on very clearly. That book is a must-read for me. While on the topic

of authors and books, I met Kimberla Lawson Roby. She was one of my favorite authors from my late teens and early twenties. I learned she is from Rockford, IL and now lives in Belvidere. I know she has presented at RPL before, but I plan to connect with her and hopefully we can offer a more innovative type of author visit.

One of the most enlightening sessions I attended was titled "Am I Overreacting? Dealing with Microaggressions in the Workplace". I was able to get feedback from peers on situations and learned helpful tips on how to handle them. One of the attendees said at her workplace when someone says something out of

line or makes you feel uncomfortable you respond "Ouch". That is a quick standard way to let the person you're communicating with know that they've crossed the line. Then that person can either apologize, or open a dialogue on how they could have handled the situation more appropriately. That is something I would like to use with my staff.

I would be remiss to leave out one of my favorite parts of any conference. That would be the meeting of like minds late at night. I connected with librarians from across the country, from D.C. to Portland, and we shared stories of struggles and plans to make BCALA stronger. I was encouraged

to run for office so I am considering running for treasurer next term. The energy in spontaneous these meetings are incomparable and I am now channeling it into my work.

I had been looking forward to this conference ever since I left the 9th NCAAL in 2015. It was certainly everything I wanted and more. Who would have thought I would meet and have a photo with Martin Luther King Jr's youngest daughter, Dr. Bernice King? BCALA extends opportunities that I can only dream of and now I have new positive memories, energy, and plans for a better library to carry me through to 2020.









# Rembrances of the 10th NCAAL

by Andrew P. Jackson (Sekou Molefi Baako) Past President (2004-2006)

I've been fortunate and blessed to have attended each of the National Conference of African American Librarians since 1992: Columbus, OH; Milwaukee, WI; Winton-Salem, NC; Las Vegas, NV; Ft. Lauderdale, FL; Ft. Worth, TX; Birmingham, AL; Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky; St. Louis, MO and now Atlanta, GA. Conferences in cities of our choice, planned by our members with sessions of interest to us all, and enjoyable tours and activities that reflect our interests and culture. I enjoyed and learned much from each of them. As "Culture Keepers", this is our golden opportunity to gather together as a family of Black librarians and others who joined us, to meet, network and collaborate with colleagues from across our profession, America and beyond. This is our conference.

Although each NCAAL has their own significance and place, each also served as lessons learned for the conference and committee chairs. Each strove to plan and offer a better conference that will encourage higher registration and sessions and topics worthy of our attendance. Conference planning is a most difficult task no matter how accomplished the planners may be. This is a volunteer task beyond the planner's day to day

responsibilities and personal lives. I take my hat off to each and every conference chair and committee chair that have been a part of the ten NCAALs held.

Special congratulations to conference chairs Carolyn Garnes and Dorothy Guthrie for a masterful job at planning the 10th NCAAL. Through the use of today's technology, especially those mini-animation promotion videos and creative thinking, a true sisterhood of effort and pulling together a dedicated group of committee chairs and volunteers the 10th NCAAL was one of the best planned and a real tribute to 25 years of conferences. We can't ignore the logistical work of Langston Bates and Jason Alston. They partnered with the contracted technology folks and kept things running smoothly daily and our session technology operating. Just like with the 9th NCAAL, without them our conference would have had mini glitches. Thanks guys!

The Grand Hyatt (Buckhead) was the perfect location where we received great customer service and a most convenient setting for our conference sessions and special events. Our off site gatherings at City Hall, Atlanta University's renovated Woodruff Library and the expanded Auburn

Avenue Research Library on African American Culture and History offered a true flavor of the culture of Atlanta for us. We had opportunities to hear from and interact with a great selection of authors and messages from Tom Joyner and the indomitable Dr. Bernice King.

For me, the highlight was the hosting of the BCALA Literary Awards, with the unplanned and truly inspiring message from America's living Civil Rights hero and legend, Congressman John Lewis. We have been blessed to hear him on many occasions at ALA Midwinter and ALA Annual meetings, but for him to think enough of BCALA to take his personal time to join us, mingle among us in the gallery and halls of the Auburn Avenue Research Library, and then speak to us was a true conference gift not to be forgotten. The second gift that evening was receiving the beautiful, colorful literary awards booklet, compiled Tiffany Duck, Horace Downing and Gladys Smiley Bell, that highlighted in detail every book that has been recognized by BCALA since the inception of the awards in 1994. What a historically, culturally and literary relevant documentation of the written word. Thank you, thank you, thank you.

One of the saddest moments of each NCAAL is leaving my friends, family and colleagues at the end of the conference. But, with that sadness, I am invigorated with a greater passion for our roles as "Culture Keepers" and Black librarians, inspired by the work we do each and every day to serve our respective

communities and be a part of a profession that makes a difference in the lives of everyone. We are change agents giving access to those who need and want our services. Our rewards are and will always be in the smiles on the faces of those we serve and in the form of a thank you, and the knowing our lives are richer as well because our customers are all the better for what we do as librarians. There is no greater profession than that of a librarian.

I hope to see more of you at the 11th NCAAL in Tulsa, OK in 2020. Blessings and Good Vibrations...until we meet again.



# Youth, Literacy, and Literature: A Reflection

By Karen Lemmons, Detroit School of Arts

In the Fall 2014 BCALA newsletter, I wrote an article about the African American Male Youth Literacy Summit held at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in June, 2012. Public and school librarians, educators, and others met to develop and implement strategies to address the literacy needs of African American male youths. We returned to our respective cities renewed, recharged, and recommitted to helping our youth become more literate.

After the conclusion of the summit, a report was published, "Building a Bridge to Literacy for African American Male Youth" https://sils. unc.edu/sites/default/files/news/ Building-a-Bridge-to-Literacy.pdf and a website was created, http:// bridgetolit.web.unc.edu/. The website has many free resources for school and public libraries to develop programs and services that will best meet the literacy needs of our African American male youth. One particular professional development tool is training modules for school and public

librarians that will guide and prepare them to help our youth <a href="http://">http://</a> librariesliteracyandaamaleyouth. weebly.com/modules.html. These are resources definitely worth using.

At the 10th NCAAL, Dr. Sandra Hughes-Hassell and Dr. Pauletta Bracy presented a session on libraries, literacy and African American youth. Both professors, along with Casey H. Rawson, have edited a book titled "Libraries, Literacy, and African American Youth Research and Practice." Dr. Hughes-Hassell and Dr. Bracey presented and discussed two theories, Critical Race Theory (CRT) and A. Wade Boykin's Black Cultural Ethos (BCE), which formed part of the framework for the research. To summarize, BCE has nine dimensions that characterize how African Americans interact with the dominant society: spirituality, affect, harmony, oral tradition, social perspective of time, expressive individualism, verve, communication and movement. Dr. Hughes-Hassell also introduced "Students' Six", which are instructional strategies for students of color. These

instructional strategies are: visibility, proximity, connecting to students' lives, engaging students' culture, addressing race, and connecting students' future selves. We received handouts listing additional resources and best practices.

I was very fascinated with this research partly because our School Improvement Plan mandates research-based literacy strategies. But more importantly, how I can strategically use BCE to teach our youth. I had not heard of Students' Six; however, I do use these strategies with our students. I wanted to learn more about BCE, Students' Six, other theories and best practices so I bought the book.

I moderated the session "Vanguards of Culture." Tonya Bolden, Zetta Elliott, and Renee Watson are three authors whose body of work fill a much needed void in telling our stories. Bolden writes stories about little known African American people and historical events. Elliott, who has written and self-published several children's and young adult

books, writes fascinating MG & YA speculative fiction. Watson, a poet and author, writes stories about embracing cultural identity in predominantly white environments.

Each author gave a short presentation and read from their current book. Elliott's presentation on white supremacy and how it controls and impacts everything, especially the publishing field, started a lively discussion. The publishing houses are primarily responsible for the small percentage of books published by writers of color for a few reasons. First, most, if not all, of these publishing houses lack a diverse staff who are sufficiently knowledgeable about other cultures. Second, these same publishing houses seem to have an "invisible" quota for authors of color: one African American male, one African American female, one Latino, one Asian, one Native American, and one from other cultures. A few publishers may have more than one. Consequently, fewer books written by and about people of color are

published. However, the publishers will publish books written by Caucasian authors who write about people of color. The Cooperative Center for Children's Books (CCBC) at the School of Education, University of Wisconsin-Madison, annually reports on the small percentage of books published by and about people of color in comparison to the percentage of books published. The report can be found at this link: http://ccblogc.blogspot. com/2017/03/the-ownvoices-gapin-african-american.html. Third, marketing efforts and dollars seem to be inadequate for authors of color. Few books written by people of color are sent to book award committees.

Some solutions and recommendations were discussed. One solution is self-publishing, which Elliot does. Another solution is to discuss possible actions authors and librarians can take to convince publishers to become more diverse at all levels. We agree that we need to continue this conversation.

As the moderator of this session, I planned to pose questions to the panel about their role as a vanguard. I emailed the questions to the presenters prior to the session. However, Elliot had another idea, which was better: each author explain how she is being a vanguard of culture. During the individual presentations, each author did explain how she is being a vanguard. When it was time for questions, the discussion was honest, engaging, and thought-provoking. So lively was the conversation that it continued at least thirty minutes past the session official ending time. We left, planning how to continue the conversation. Kelly Starling Lyons, author and one of the founders of "The Brown Bookshelf", is taking the lead to continue this discussion.

In my humble opinion, I attended two great sessions that not only presented excellent information, but gave me ideas that I can use.



# Raising Awareness and Recognizing Advocacy Needs for Public Service Loan Forgiveness

By Kyra Hahn, Douglas County (CO) Libraries

As a new member of BCALA and recently attending the "Culture Keepers X Beyond Library Walls: Innovative Ways to Engage Our Communities" NCAAL, I leave Atlanta, GA inspired by many messages I heard. The written message that resonated with me was BCALA President Davis's advocacy letter in the spring 2017 newsletter and many references to Gandhi's quote of, "be the change you want to see in the world." The spoken message that resonated with me the most was from Dr. Bernice King's speech at the close of the conference to challenge us as librarians to be the bridge that brings people together to strategize within unbiased spaces. and to share credible and accurate knowledge to help with formulating strategy necessary for our success and community success.

Here I sit, taking up the challenge, by writing this piece for BCALA. I am new to being a published writer, as this may be my second published article. My first written piece will

appear in "Public Libraries", since my initial thoughts were that this was the audience most impacted by my research. After attending the BCALA conference, I realize the impact of my early research and advocacy efforts are much broader and wider than just me and the niche issue I picked to advocate for, which is public libraries or public service. Since our peeps like their credentials, I'm going to share the "inside story" as it relates to student loan repayment and tips for qualification for the Public Service Loan Forgiveness (PSLF) program offered by the Federal Student Aid office in the U.S. Department of Education. Inspired by my own personal challenges to qualify for PSLF, I have begun to research, write, and talk with people so we can have a chance to free ourselves from the chains of student loan debt faster.

The PSLF program was created as a part of the College Cost Reduction and Access Act of 2007 under the Bush administration. Basic requirements of the program are:

- + Working full-time in a qualifying 501(c)(3) public service organization (30+ hours/week) - although you may also qualify with part-time jobs if both are with public service organizations and you meet the 30+ hour/week requirement,
- + Have student loans with Direct Loans – non-qualifying loans may be consolidated into a Direct Loan,
- + 120 payments, on a qualifying repayment plan – income-driven repayment plans REPAYE (Revised Pay As You Earn), PAYE (Pay As You Earn), IBR (Income-Based Repayment), and ICR (Income-Contingent Repayment).

Then the remaining outstanding balance of loans will be forgiven. The earliest eligibility date projection for loan forgiveness is approaching in October 2017, and yet it's unclear if anyone will qualify for loan balances being forgiven this year, due to problems with policy rollout and problems encountered with student loan servicing. I anticipate a rise in negative media coverage regarding

student loans, unless other issues in the media overshadow this concern. People will be upset to learn that they may not qualify as soon as they expected and it will feel very much like a broken psychological contract. Armed with the knowledge I'm going to share, you will be able to keep your temper in check and have the patience to advocate for yourself to successfully enroll in PSLF. I also hope you will become inspired to advocate for necessary changes in the student loan servicing process.

Here's a brief list of policy and qualification changes to the PSLF program, occurring after its introduction in 2007:

- + Income-driven repayment plans – Several have been introduced between 2009-2015; IBR / ICR / PAYE / REPAYE.
- + Employment certification forms -Introduced in 2013.
- + Repayment estimation calculators - Introduced in 2016.
- + Form for PSLF forgiveness -Set to be introduced between Sept.-Oct. 2017.

According to an annual report from Federal Student Aid in 2010, "Interest in PSLF is one reason for additional loan consolidation inquiries. Effective July 1, 2009, the Income Based Repayment Plan enabled borrowers to establish monthly payments based on adjusted gross income, family size, and debt amount. The new option is important to borrowers with

repayment challenges and has also been linked to PSLF." If you've tried to change your repayment plan and haven't had success changing it to a qualifying plan for PSLF prior to 2014, I encourage you to consider trying again due to the addition of the REPAYE income-driven repayment plan in late 2015. According to NerdWallet.com, REPAYE "allows grads of all income levels to participate; your eligibility no longer depends on the year you borrowed; your loans will be forgiven after 25 years; the government will pay more of the accrued interest on your loans." Personally, I had to request to change my repayment plan three times over the span of three years before I was able to get onto REPAYE, which is a PSLF-qualifying repayment plan.

Employment certification forms were introduced around 2013 and the general purpose of the form is to have the loan servicer see if you are on track for having payments count toward the 120-payment requirement. While submitting this form isn't required, you won't know how many of your payments are counting towards PSLF program requirements. On Federal Student Aid's website, it says, "If you want to qualify for Public Service Loan Forgiveness now or in the future, complete and submit the **Employment Certification form** as soon as possible. Too many borrowers wait to submit this important form until they have been in repayment for several years, at

which point they learn that they have not been making qualifying payments. In order to ensure you're on track to receive forgiveness, you should continue to submit this form both annually and every time you switch employers." This will remain a point of contention for me because in my experience, the loan servicer, FedLoans, who is a private company that has been awarded a government contract, is in charge of determining how many of your payments count toward the 120-payment requirement for a government policy-based program. That's too much power in the wrong hands!

Currently, the bulk of consumer complaints with student loans center around loan servicing companies providing poor customer service and not working in the borrower's interest. This is evident in both the number of complaints received by the Consumer Finance Protection Bureau (CFPB) and the lawsuit that CFPB brought against the loan servicer Navient. As news related to the CFPB's lawsuit against Navient revealed, "there is no expectation that the servicer will act in the interest of the consumer... Its job is not to help its debt holders, rather it is to get its creditors—in this case the U.S. Department of Education—paid." I can personally attest to being one of those borrowers submitting employment certification forms when they were announced in 2013 and claim partial responsibility for the disclaimer now appearing on Federal



Student Aid's website due to filing complaints to CFPB. I had to submit the employment certification form several times due to the loan servicer rejecting it for 'errors.'

Reports show low numbers of people currently on track for qualifying; FedLoan's Public Service Loan Forgiveness Employment Certification Forms Report shows a total of only 661,598 borrowers qualifying for PSLF from 2012-early 2017. Based on FedLoan's own reporting numbers, it appears that the earliest year for people to qualify for actual loan forgiveness may not be until 2022, which is 10 years out from 2012, since that is the earliest year for reported ECF data. A significant area of borrower complaint has been the qualifying payment counts by the loan servicer. Often the qualified payment counts toward the 120-payment requirement, as determined as by the loan servicer, have been lower than expected, resulting in borrower disappointment and frustration. At this time, there is no report that details the reasons for employment certification denials or why certain payments count and others don't.

Repayment estimation calculators were introduced sometime between late 2015 and early 2016. The purpose of these calculators was to increase transparency and show borrowers the difference in loan payments based on the variety of repayment plans offered. This tool is helpful to borrowers when deciding

what repayment plan works best for their personal financial situation. Of the calculators available, I recommend the Federal Student Aid's repayment estimator calculator since the PSLF program falls under the U.S. Dept. of Education's purview. Your loan servicer may also have their own version of the repayment estimator calculator. I encourage you to do a side-by-side comparison of the numbers produced by each calculator. When I did this for myself in 2016, I found significant discrepancies between my loan servicer's calculator (FedLoans) with their numbers being more than double the rates quoted by Federal Student Aid's calculators. I had to include screenshots to FedLoans, along with a letter asking them to honor repayment estimation quotes offered by Federal Student Aid's calculator when submitting a paper application for an income-driven repayment program.

Recommended tips for successful PSLF enrollment are:

- + Submit a paper application to apply for an income-driven repayment plan.
- + Include your employment certification form(s) with paper application; you will need to submit an ECF form for each employer you've had from 2007-present.
- + Include tax papers for the most current year available.
- + Include correspondence to spell out exactly what you're asking for.

+ If you are married and file taxes jointly, make sure to request that your payment be calculated on only your income, if you are the only person within your household that works in public service.

If for some reason you still have problems working with your loan servicer, I recommend filing a complaint with CFPB. When you file a complaint with CFPB, it is assigned a case number and the company the complaint is filed against is required to respond within a specific time frame. The CFPB compiles complaint reporting data annually.

Policy areas where advocacy changes are needed are in areas of loan servicing and working toward securing bankruptcy. For loan servicing, two significant changes that we need to consider advocating for are modified application processing for income-driven plans when participating in PSLF. Only the income of the person working in public service should be used to calculate their repayment terms. If this change was implemented by modifying the income-driven repayment plan application form by adding a box to mark if the applicant is applying for PSLF, I believe it would help to minimize calculation errors involving married applicants with student loans.

The second change that we need to advocate for is working toward getting student loans bankruptcy protection. Currently student loans do not have bankruptcy protection.

This means that even if you went through a bankruptcy you would still have your student loan debt obligations. If you go into default on student loans, your tax returns and social security benefits can be taken to help settle your debt. The only way to get out of student loan debt burdens is to pay off the loans or die! Recently I was watching the PBS documentary "Slavery by

Another Name" and when I heard the definition of peonage from historian Pete Daniel, "peonage is debt servitude," this resonated with me, because student loan debt seems to be a new system of peonage where borrowers are working to pay the government on educational debt.

The PSLF program offers the potential to positively impact over 136,000 public library workers within the United States by offering economic relief from student loan debt. This number doesn't factor in staff at academic or other types of libraries. If we are able to help as many members of our profession successfully see PSLF through to fruition, then the struggle is worth it!

# **RESOURCES**

### FEDERAL STUDENT AID PUBLIC SERVICE LOAN FORGIVENESS - INFORMATION PAGE

https://studentaid.ed.gov/sa/repay-loans/forgiveness-cancellation/public-service

#### FEDERAL STUDENT AID REPAYMENT ESTIMATOR CALCULATOR

https://studentloans.gov/myDirectLoan/repaymentEstimator.action?\_ga=2.7068592.321992831.1501939675-217037598.1499991827

### FEDERAL STUDENT AID PUBLIC SERVICE EMPLOYMENT CERTIFICATION FORM

https://studentaid.ed.gov/sa/sites/default/files/public-service-employment-certification-form.pdf

#### FEDERAL STUDENT AID - FILE A COMPLAINT

https://feedback.studentaid.ed.gov/?\_ga=2.117054340.321992831.1501939675-217037598.1499991827

### FEDERAL STUDENT AID LOAN FORGIVENESS REPORTS

https://studentaid.ed.gov/sa/about/data-center/student/loan-forgiveness

### CONSUMER FINANCE PROTECTION BUREAU - SUBMIT A COMPLAINT

https://www.consumerfinance.gov/complaint/

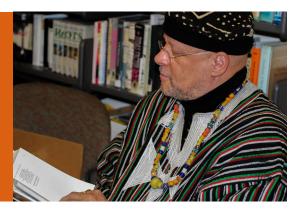
### STUDENT AID BILL OF RIGHTS FACT SHEET - MARCH 10 2015

https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2015/03/10/fact-sheet-student-aid-bill-rights-taking-actionensure-strong-consumer-

# The Dream Keepers...

by Andrew P. Jackson (Sekou Molefi Baako)

"Hold fast to dreams for when dreams die Hold fast to dreams for if dreams go Life is like a barren field frozen with snow." (DREAMS, LANGSTON HUGHES 1923)



Looking back, my life has been entangled with dreams and dream keepers, although I wasn't really aware of either until later in my adult life. This story takes shape in three phases, a migration neighborhood that became a vibrant family oriented Black activist community in the 1960's; that community's dream to establish and build lasting institutions; and lastly, an accidental activist who becomes part of both dreams that impact his adult life where he too becomes a dreamer and his dreams become reality.

# PART I: THE COMMUNITY

Home for this narrative is the Corona-East Elmhurst neighborhood in northwest Queens, New York. This one and two-family home neighborhood is in walking distance

to La Guardia Airport and Flushing Meadow-Corona Park-home of the 1939 and 1964 World's Fair, Shea Stadium (now Citi Field ) and the Arthur Ashe Tennis Stadium (home of the U.S. Tennis Open).

During the 1940's and 50's, Black families migrated from the South and Caribbean, as well as Harlem and the Bronx, to raise their children in Corona-East Elmhurst. The demographics include working class and middle class families, from doctors, lawyers, judges, teachers, business owners, civil service workers and government workers to those on public assistance. In addition to these families I was raised with, noted residents like Malcolm X and Dr. Betty Shabazz, former-U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder, Louis

and Lucille Armstrong, jazz greats Dizzy Gillespie, Jimmy Heath and Roy Eldridge and tap dancer Honi Coles made Corona-East Elmhurst their home as well.

Our families replaced Eastern European families who fled the neighborhood in the 1960's. During the "Civil Rights and Anti-Poverty Program" era of the 60's, local leaders formed community and political organizations that fostered a local power base. Families were also very active in churches with active youth programs. We were educated in local public schools where some of our parents, including my mother, were elementary and middle school teachers.

### **PART II: BUILDING INSTITUTIONS**

In addition to the East Elmhurst-Corona Civic Association, political clubs, Boy Scout and Girl Scout troops, dreams were fostered that later developed into community based institutions. One major creation emanated from our local playground. Activities and basketball summer league competition that attracted ball players from across the city led to the founding of ElmCor Youth and Adult Activities, Inc. a recreation and drug rehab program founded in the mid 60's that began as a storefront to a full recreation and drug rehab center with a senior center.

The second community dream, founded in the late 60's was the Langston Hughes Community Library and Cultural Center. The concept and mission for this library came out of the Anti-Poverty Programs and the minds of dedicated community

leaders. Fact finding research revealed Queens Library's central and branch locations offered no library materials or programs reflecting The Black Experience. The leader's response was to open a library in our neighborhood focused on housing the Black Heritage collection to serve Queens County, not just our neighborhood. However, they also wanted to manage and operate the library under the guidance of a board of directors under Queens Library. Unheard of at that time, but with available federal funding through the Library Services and Construction Act, Title I providing the funding and with New York State Education Department approval, a negotiated agreement resulted in a cooperative partnership that allowed the Library Action Committee of Corona-East Elmhurst, Inc. and the Queens Library to open the Langston Hughes Community Library and Cultural Center in April 1969.

Over the years, the Black Heritage Collection has grown to over 45,000 volumes of print and non-print materials, the largest non-academic collection in New York State. Since the early 1970's the library offers an after school homework assistance program for first to seventh graders; a cultural arts program featuring musical concerts and performances, artist exhibitions, workshops and literature programs, lectures, panels, and annual Langston Hughes, Kwanzaa, Juneteenth celebrations and a Literary Arts Festival. In addition to expanded programs and services, the Library has also offered decades of job opportunities. In 1990, Queens Library built a 24,000 sq. ft. modern building a few blocks from the storefront with an outdoor courtyard, children's room, research room, art gallery, conference room, public computers, self-service technology and a 175-seat performance auditorium to better serve the public.



### PART III: MERGED DREAMS

In the summer of 1980, new leadership came to Langston Hughes in the form of a young non-librarian from the neighborhood with business skills. Unfamiliar with the history of the library, he served four years in the U.S. Air Force followed by eight years with the City of New York in personnel administration while attending undergraduate classes in the evening. What began as a simple new management for the library grew into a thirty-six year journey of visibility, growth, expansion and extensive outreach. With an atypical management outlook, the new director grew as well, completing his bachelor degree and acquiring a MLS degree. The biggest transformation came from his introduction to Africana Culture at the library and Black history courses during his undergrad studies, and interaction with historians, educators, cultural leaders, artists and performers. It was here that the community's dream merged with dreams of my own.

By the mid 1980's, with acquired knowledge, a more global exposure of The Black Experience and intensive outreach and expanded library programming, Langston Hughes Library's visibility expanded beyond Queens County. Interaction expanded with invitations from elementary, middle and high schools, colleges, correctional centers, churches, other libraries, community youth groups, civic and political organizations and

government agencies for speaking engagements and lectures, poetry readings, read-ins and career days, Black history seminars and cultural offerings. Both the Library and I evolved over this period and I transformed into a more Africancentered man, given five African names by members of the African community as my reward. Sekou-Warrior, Molefi-He Keeps Tradition, Baako-First Born (of the Jackson Triplets), Bhekizizwe-Take Care of Your People, Orbai-Teacher.

Honored as an "Outstanding Alum" by my undergrad and graduate alma maters, York College (CUNY) and Queens College GSLIS (CUNY), I become an adjunct instructor at both institutions in 2001 and 2007. I teach undergraduate courses, The Cultural Diversity of Africa, Introduction to Black Studies and The Civil Rights Movement in America and graduate library science courses in The Library in a Multicultural Society and The Organization and Management of New York State Public Libraries. Students are exposed to the Langston Hughes Community Library as both a resource and unique model of a community-based public library with unique origins.

As a result of becoming an integral role in growing the community's dream into a greater institution, one of my dreams also came true. In 2001, I was invited by African merchants and craftsmen to travel to Ghana, West Africa to interact with

their crafts people and attend the bi-annual Panafest-the Pan African Historical Theater Festival, a major international African cultural event. I traveled to Accra, Tema, Kumasi, Cape Coast and Elmina, the Central Region and the Ashanti Region. I interacted with the local people and crafts people, vendors, visited schools and universities, libraries and villages, learning and growing and felt at home through it all. Throughout my trip, I was greeted with Akwaaba! (Welcome!)

My path in Librarianship has been non-traditional and somewhat unorthodox. I've met some of the most incredible people, traveled to places I might never have otherwise if not for my active role in our profession. I didn't start out to be a librarian, but I give all credit to The Creator for the path set out for me with love and appreciation. In 2014, after more than three decades at the helm at Langston Hughes, I experienced the tragic loss of two close colleagues and heads of Africancentered institutions, Nana Kimati Dinizulu of Aims of Modzawi and the center for the Akan people in Queens, and John Watusi Branch co-founder of The Afrikan Poetry Theatre, Inc., both in South Queens. Together, we offered ongoing Africana cultural events, lectures, activities, celebrations and opportunities for over 30 years. This loss led me to consider my retirement and prepare Queens Library and

the board and staff at Langston Hughes for my departure, transition and new leadership.

At the end of June 2016, my

retirement became official and in September 2016, I attended an incredible community celebration of my years of commitment and service planned by the Langston Hughes staff. People from all walks of my life and library career were in attendance. I'm not surprised often, but my staff really got me good. They sang my favorite song, The Impossible Dream and presented me with the most amazing retirement gift, round trip airfare to Accra, Ghana. My staff knew how special my first trip was for me, and that I talked about going back, but due to work and a full teaching schedule never made the time to do so. Now I had no excuse, I was retired and the fare was paid.

Through years of nurturing my community's dream, I was rewarded with making my own dream come true. Through a recent visit with friends in Akron, OH, I met Mwatabu Okantah, an associate professor of Pan-African Studies at Kent State University who was planning a student tour group to Ghana in 2017 and was invited to join them. With a group of ten students, two faculty and three community representatives, we traveled to Accra, Kumasi, Cape Coast, the village of Antonkwa, the Ashanti and Central Regions, East Lagon, visited local schools, University of Cape Coast, met with

graduate students at the University of Ghana, met Americans who now reside in Ghana, went to the rain forest and botanical garden and zwent to crafts, kente cloth and wood carving villages. Okantah's already planning a Ghana tour for 2019. I might make it home to Ghana once more.

We participated in ceremonies at Cape Coast, exited the "Door of No Return" and reentered the "Door of Return" signifying the completion of the cycle our ancestors never could. We stayed in with families in Antonkwa, received Ghanaian names in a rites of passage Ceremony. My Ghanaian names are Kwabena (Born of Tuesday) Annan (a tribute to Kofi Annan-former Secretary General of the United Nations who is from the Cape Coast Region). We stayed at Coconut Grove Resort on the Atlantic Ocean and visited the home of Dr. David Whitaker, a Kent State University professor who helped negotiate the relationship between the university and the elders of the village of Antonkwa and has built his own beachfront home in the Cape Coast region. Participating in open discussions we each shared our feelings about our experiences of "The Real Africa", revealing deep and unexpected emotions, areas of clarity and even untrue myths, shared newly acquired knowledge and daily exposure from interaction with the village elders, families and children.

Two of the most impassioned conversations took place at a beachfront Ghanaian restaurant in the Cape Coast Region, Mabel's Table. Mabel's husband is Kohain Nathahyah Halevi, an African American Rabbi now living in Ghana for over 20 years. Joined by another elder, formerly from Maryland, and now a "Queen Mother" in Ghana, each spoke of the experiences that led to their decisions to permanently relocate to Ghana. From their discussion, I learned both were also friends of Kimati and Watusi, who visited with the rabbi and Queen Mother at Mabel's Table on each of their visits to Ghana. It was Kimati's father who brought Queen Mother to Ghana for her first trip. Watusi brought tour groups to Ghana several times a year and Kimati visited Ghana on Akan business. When I shared my relationship with Kimati and Watusi, it created a special bond and connected my spirit with theirs here on African soil. This connection gave this second trip to Ghana greater personal meaning and significance. I was home again in Ghana and with my brothers once more.

"If you cannot dream the dream for yourself, do it for those who could dream, but could never make their dreams come true..." (Bernard Keller, Harvard 8/9/85)

Since the age of 33, I committed myself to serving my community through the betterment of programs and services at the Langston Hughes Community Library and Cultural Center. The decades I've spent in librarianship fulfilled me in ways I thought unimaginable. Through this profession, new doors of opportunity opened. Significant interaction with the Africana community and youth throughout New York City, membership and active participation in BCALA; serving on local, borough, city and statewide committees and boards; an invitation to serve on the National Advisory Board of the Children's Defense Fund Langston Hughes Library; co-chair of the Annual MLK Sunrise Celebration and on ALA's Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Task Force; advisor, reviewer and essayist for ABC-

CLIO, Inc., become an adjunct lecturer; mentoring and the golden opportunity to develop tomorrow's leaders; becoming the writer Dr. Josey knew I could be; serving as a library consultant and advisor, my appointment as a Queens Library Trustee upon retirement-their first librarian and former staff member. No, I didn't start out to be a librarian. Becoming a librarian wasn't even in my mind's eye, but is has been a rich and rewarding profession. I am so blessed The Creator chose this path for me. The opportunities to make a difference on so many levels, generated from that decision to accept a position at Langston Hughes. Incredible!!!

I am so grateful to my family, friends and community; my elders and my mentors; my library family and colleagues for your belief and faith in me. You trusted me in leadership positions and supported me. "I am because We are!" There are very few things that have given me more joy than being the non-traditional librarian I was molded to be. Thanks, E.J., your encouragement and belief in me made my Impossible Dream reality.

In closing, I leave these words for today's students and young librarians: Dare to Dream!





# Baggage Handling: Journey to NCAAL 2017

By Adrian King, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

During this year's American Library Association (ALA) conference in Chicago, BCALA convened a membership meeting. During this meeting, I was presented with the BCALA Smiley Student Travel Award. In my mind, this would be a simple announcement, after which I might smile and offer a friendly wave to my colleagues. Here's what happened in real life:

- 1. During her remarks, Gladys Smiley Bell read a part of my essay submission aloud. That had me in a surreal headspace.
- 2. Turns out her remarks were less announcement and more introduction as Gladys called me to the stage to say a few words.

#### WAIT...WHAT?

The short distance from the audience to the stage turned out to be a very long walk. Not horrific or tragic like "The Green Mile" long walk, but an unexpected and exciting "The Price is Right" long walk...there are rumors that I trotted...and instead of being greeted by a white-haired Bob Barker, I was embraced by the regally white-Afro-ed Gladys.

As I did then, I want to express my deep appreciation to the BCALA executive committee for the opportunity and the financial support. We all know the importance of professional development and networking in any industry, but it is especially important for graduate students like me deciding (again) who I will be when I grow up. Attending the meeting provided a preview of these benefits, facilitating connections of faces to names that I had only seen on the BCALA website or listserv.

The meeting began my "first-timer" journey-first time at an ALA conference, first time at a BCALA meeting, my first time in a long time not being on the conference planning side. I found myself doing a lot of wandering about. Turns out that's not a bad thing.

\* \* \*

I've had great experiences in the professional circles I've traveled in education and training, conference planning, and program management. I've worked in K-12 education,

adult education, higher education, nonprofits, government agencies, and for corporations. None of those experiences compare to the sense of purpose and at-homeness I now feel among information professionals, community educators, and cultural curators--especially those of color. I was beyond excited at the prospect of attending Culture Keepers X: 10th National Conference of African American Librarians.

Because I'm a planner (or would like to think so, anyway), I wanted to have time to consider and reconsider the workshops that I would attend. It was great to be able to access the preliminary program, both to have a glance at sessions and events and to finalize travel plans. The added value was the subsequent conference website (http://ncaal.bcala.org), which provided an overview of the full program, speaker bios, and a colorful layout of the types of sessions. It was interesting but not surprising that most of my chosen sessions were in the "Program" track: I am interested in how libraries engage customers and users around their aspirations, self-identified

issues, and community problems.

I experienced financial, physical, and emotional challenges as a part of my journey to the conference; as such, my immense gratitude for being able to participate extends beyond the generosity of BCALA.

Despite my numbers crunching, it was a financial struggle to attend the conference. Thankfully, in the 11th hour I received a matching travel award from my graduate program, the School of Information Sciences at University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. As if that wasn't enough to deal with, I became terribly sick a couple of days before my flight and thought I would not be able to attend. I took a day to rest and, although I was still not 100%, I prayed and moved forward and made my flight. The last and looming concern was more personal. My last visit to Atlanta was this past April, when my family gathered to funeralize and bury my mother. Though still dazed by the unfathomable loss, healing continued between sessions as I spent time with my local family.

But why offer such personal and private information in a note of gratitude and summary of my conference experience? Because those life challenges were a part of my conference experience. Nevertheless, conference participants were expert in their reception and handling of me

and my unknown stuff, much in the same way that we engage customers who also face realities of information miseducation, class assignments, desperate job searches, filling in gaps of genealogy, deficits in youth and adult basic education, the digital divide, needing primary-source research for a book-in-progress, hunger, homelessness, searching for themselves in stories, addiction, fear, injustice, anger, endless "How do I..."questions about anything and everything outside our purview—so much beyond-library-walls baggage.

When we do our jobs well, we remember our own life lessons and help others learn to carry and ultimately discard their baggage; we offer gathering spaces to educate and connect, to fortify hope and envision possibility.

That's what Culture Keepers X did for me. I visited stunning library spaces (and while there ate and drank well), connected or reconnected, and even partied a little. I met information experts and astute professionals, fellow iSchool graduate students and alumni who are doing stellar work in their fields, and even obtained impromptu mentoring during a coffee break. I spoke with authors and illustrators, learned about technological advancements in librarianship, chatted about other LIS graduate programs, and bought a few things. I learned about engaging readers through diverse books, Black librarians' significant and ongoing

contributions to the field, and how to "turn outward" to engage my community. I know that there are, in fact, Black male information professionals because I saw them with my very own black, male eyes.

But, alas, I could not shake hands with each attendee, make all of the events, or attend every session, so... handling our baggage like bosses, see

### \* \* \*

Adrian King is an MLIS student at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. He looks forward to, and is absolutely ecstatic about, completing the program in May 2018. Adrian's academic and research interests include community resilience, education and research needs of disadvantaged individuals, digital inclusion and user experience, highimpact partnerships, and program evaluation. He is also interested in broad and appropriate representation of Black men in written works. Adrian is learning and working to become an educational leader for an urban library or a community-based organization.







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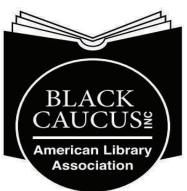




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