



BLACK METROPOLIS  
**BMRC**  
RESEARCH CONSORTIUM

# NEWS

## Letter from the Board Chair | Fellowship Program | Announcements

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### 2017 Black Metropolis Research Consortium Summer Short-Term Fellows Final Presentations

LaVerne Gray, a Ph.D. Candidate in the College of Communication and Information, School of Information Science at the University of Tennessee Knoxville will be speaking on a project titled, "In a Collective Voice: Uncovering Community-Based Information Environments of African-American Activist-Mothers in Chicago Public Housing, 1955-1970".



Ruby Mendenhall, Ph.D., Sociology and African American Studies at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign will be speaking on a project titled, "The Role of Architecture and Urban Planning in the Connection between Race, Space and Health in African American Communities in Chicago".

### Please join us for an evening of research & refreshments.

Through an international competition, the BMRC offers 1-month residential fellowships in the City of Chicago for its Summer Short-Term Fellowship Program. Generously funded by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation since 2009, the Summer Short-Term Fellowship Program has engaged scholars, artists, writers, and public historians from all around the world to better formulate new historical narratives of Chicago's past. The new, original research and art developed through this program is significant as it illuminates the national and international importance of Chicago's African American community.

May 30, 2017, 5:00 p.m.-7:00 p.m.

Chicago History Museum, Guild Room  
1601 N. Clark St., Chicago, Illinois 60614  
Register at [chicagobmrc.eventbrite.com](http://chicagobmrc.eventbrite.com)

Free and open to the public.



Join us on May 30, 2017 from 5:00pm-7:00pm for the first of several BMRC Summer Short-term Fellowship Final Presentations. This evening will feature LaVerne Gray and Ruby Mendenhall on subjects exploring race, space, health, and Chicago Public Housing. Free and open to the public, refreshments and light snacks provided. Register through [chicagobmrc.eventbrite.com](http://chicagobmrc.eventbrite.com).



## BMRC Member Institutions

**Bronzeville Historical Society,  
Chicago**

**Chicago History Museum,  
Research Center**

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

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

**Chicago State University, Archives  
and Special Collections**

**Dominican University - Rebecca  
Crown Library, Archives and  
Special Collection**

**Illinois Institute of Technology -  
IIT Archives, Paul V. Galvin Library**

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

**The Newberry Library**

**Northwestern University - Charles  
Deering McCormick Library of  
Special Collections & Melville J.  
Herskovits Library of African  
Studies**

**Rebuild Foundation**

**Roosevelt University - University  
Archives**

**Shorefront Legacy Center,  
Evanston**

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

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

## Letter from the Board Chair

We are excited to launch the 2017 Summer Short-term Fellowship Program for this year. Eleven scholars will be converging on Chicagoland repositories to do research on Design, Urban Design and Architecture and their impact on African American communities. Three former BMRC Fellows are hoping to continue the work they have accomplished here. Read more about our Fellows and their topics included in this newsletter.

As part of the Fellowship Program, BMRC will host multiple Final Presentations starting on May 30, 2017 to the end of July that are free and open to the public, with refreshments and snacks provided. We invite you to join us for these fun and informative events. All of the research discussed by our Fellows is new, unique, and often pertains to unknown pieces of Chicago's history. There is always something for anyone to learn about this city and its past. Stay tuned for further details on times and places for the next presentations via our social media channels and on the BMRC website!

We are proud to be a co-sponsor for the Digital Public Library of America (DPLA) Fest from April 20-21, 2017, hosted at the Harold Washington Library Center in Chicago. DPLAfest 2017 will bring together hundreds of people over two days of interactive workshops, hackathons and other collaborative activities, engaging discussions with community leaders and practitioners, fun events, and more. You may follow along on Twitter @dpla and @ChicagoBMRC.

Summer is always a busy time for the BMRC. We are also proud to participate in a forum on May 10, 2017 at the Evanston City Hall titled "Diversifying the Digital Historical Record: Integrating Community Archives in National Strategies for Access to Digital Cultural Heritage," a substantive series of forums organized by the Amistad Research Center at Tulane University, in collaboration with BMRC member Shorefront Legacy Center, the South Asian American Digital Archive, Mukurtu, and the Inland Empire Memories Project of the University of California-Riverside. The forums are sponsored by a grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services. The project website is [diversifyingthedigital.org](http://diversifyingthedigital.org).

Lastly, we hope to make an announcement soon regarding a new Executive Director. During this transition period, it is our priority to find the best individual to lead, while still maintaining a stable and effective organization.

Thank you for your continued support,

Steve Adams

BMRC Board Chair

## 2017 Summer Short-term Fellowship Program

To date, seventy-nine scholars, researchers, and artists have participated in the BMRC's Summer Short-term Fellowship program. The work produced by the former Fellows from research in the BMRC's member institution repositories over the last eight years has created much needed scholarship on Black life in Chicago. At the conclusion of the 2017 program, we plan to host a reunion of the former Fellows. The reunion will provide an excellent opportunity for Fellows to network within and across cohorts. This forum will enable former Fellows to update the BMRC and its member institutions on their on-going projects and how their time in Chicago acted as a catalyst for creating new scholarship.

The main subject area slated for 2017 is Design, Urban Design and Architecture. In 1937, Laszlo Moholy-Nagy, a Hungarian photographer as well as professor in the Bauhaus school, was recruited from Europe to found the New Bauhaus in Chicago, which would later become the School of Design and then the Institute of Design. We will invite researchers to investigate the lives and careers of African American designers working in Chicago and/or how modern design approaches, through architecture and urban design, affected African American communities in the City of Chicago.

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### Meet our Fellows!

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**William Adams**, a Ph.D. Candidate in American Studies at University of Kansas will be working on a project titled, "Windy City Heroines: Black Women's Activism During the Harold Washington Campaign in 1983" from June 1 to mid-July.



**LaVerne Gray**, a Ph.D. Candidate in the College of Communication and Information, School of Information Science at the University of Tennessee Knoxville will be working on a project titled, "In a Collective Voice: Uncovering Community-Based Information Environments of African-American Activists-Mothers in Chicago Public Housing, 1955-1970" from May 8-June 9.



**Nicholas Kryczka**, a Ph.D. Candidate in the Department of History at the University of Chicago will be working on a project titled, "Renewal by Choice: Schools, Space, and the Black Metropolis in Post-Civil Rights Chicago" from May-July 15.



**Ruby Mendenhall**, Ph.D., Sociology and African American Studies at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign will be working on a project titled, "The Role of Architecture and Urban Planning in the Connection between Race, Space and Health in African American Communities in Chicago" from May 1.



**Shannon Missick**, a Ph.D. Candidate in the Department of History at the University at Albany, State University of New York will be working on a topic titled, "The Evolution of a Desert: A History of Food Access in Chicago, 1950-1999" from May 18-June 23.



**Amani Morrison**, a Ph.D. Candidate in African American and African Diaspora Studies at the University of California, Berkeley will be working on a project titled, "Domestic Architecture and Spatial Performance in Great Migration Chicago" from June 1-June 30.



**Eric Peterson**, a Ph.D. Candidate in Architecture at the University of California, Berkeley will be working on a project titled, "Black Design and Housing Activism in 1960s Chicago" from June 1-July 15.



**Ashlie Sandoval**, a Ph.D. Candidate in Performance Studies at Northwestern University will be working on a project titled, "Staging Equity: The Evolution of Carceral Architecture in African American Communities in Chicago" from July 1-July 31.



**Dr. E. James West**, Teaching Fellow at University of Birmingham will be working on a project titled, "Black Media Architecture in Chicago" from July-August.



**Douglas Williams**, a Postdoctoral Research Associate in the College of Applied Health Science at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign will be working on a project titled, "Chiseling, Welding, and Painting: A Chicago Landscape's Casting of a Black Artist" from May 25-July 31.



**Sonja Williams**, a Professor/Assistant Chair at Howard University, Washington D.C. will be working on a project titled, "Affirmative Lives" from mid-July to mid-August.

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## ANNOUNCEMENTS & KUDOS

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### **AFRICAN-AMERICAN POLICE LEAGUE DOCUMENTS NOW ACCESSIBLE**

Congratulations to BMRC member Chicago History Museum for making available the documents of the African-American Police League, an organization formed to “work for high standards of police performances in black communities; to elevate the image of the black policeman to a position of dignity and respect, especially in the black communities; to work for total police reform; and to strive for improved relations between black and white policemen”. A significant portion of the papers of this group were recently opened for research after several decades of being under restricted access. You can read more about this collection at [chicagohistory.org/aapl/](http://chicagohistory.org/aapl/)

### **DINO ROBINSON PRESENTED KEY TO EVANSTON**

Congratulations to BMRC Board Member Dino Robinson, Production Manager at Northwestern University Press and Founder of Shorefront will be presented with the Key to the City by Evanston’s Mayor, Elizabeth Tisdahl for his work in the establishment of Shorefront and the Shorefront Legacy Center more than 20 years ago. The presentation will be held on Monday, April 24, 7pm at City Council and is open to the public.

### **DINO ROBINSON ADVISOR TO RADCLIFF INSTITUTE, HARVARD UNIVERSITY**

More congratulations to BMRC Board Member Dino Robinson who has been asked to serve as part of an advisory group at the Radcliff Institute, Harvard University, to help plan a 2018 workshop based on “Technology and Archival Processing”. The workshop will focus on collaborations between African American repositories and collections and well-resourced majority collections. The panels may focus on the state of research collections as a model of access rather than ownership applied to archival collections, and exposing hidden collections to advance scholarship.

### **BMRC CO-SPONSORS DPLA FEST**

We are proud to be a co-sponsor for the Digital Public Library of America (DPLA) Fest from April 20-21, 2017, hosted at the Harold Washington Library Center in Chicago. DPLAfest 2017 will bring together hundreds of people over two days of interactive workshops, hackathons and other collaborative activities, engaging discussions with community leaders and practitioners, fun events, and more. You may follow along on Twitter @dpla and @ChicagoBMRC.

### **DIVERSIFYING THE DIGITAL**

We are also proud to participate in a forum on May 10, 2017 at the Evanston City Hall regarding “Diversifying the Digital Historical Record: Integrating Community Archives in National Strategies for Access to Digital Cultural Heritage,” a substantive series of forums organized by the Amistad Research Center at Tulane University, in collaboration with BMRC member Shorefront Legacy Center, the South Asian American Digital Archive, Mukurtu, and the Inland Empire Memories Project of the University of California-Riverside. The forums are sponsored by a grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services. The project website is [diversifyingthedigital.org](http://diversifyingthedigital.org).

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## OTHER DEVELOPMENTS

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### **ARTISTS-IN-RESIDENCE COLLABORATION**

BMRC Project Manager/Archivist Anita Mechler collaborated for a second year with the University of Chicago's Center for the Study of Race, Politics, and Culture (CSRPC) on their Artists-in-Residence program. She met with two of the artists and CSRPC representatives to give them insight into BMRC member institutions and their collections as a way for the artists to connect with historical materials related to their subjects of interest. This residency program is open to Chicago-based artists who are underrepresented in the Chicago and national arts scenes and whose work explores issues of race, politics and culture.

### **CITY OF CHICAGO, YEAR OF PUBLIC ART PROJECT**

BMRC Project Manager/Archivist Anita Mechler is hoping to highlight the 2017 Summer Short-term Fellowship Program through her participation with the Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events (DCASE) "Year of Public Art 2017" (YOPA) along with other cultural institutions throughout Chicago. Stay tuned for forthcoming details!

### **UNIVERSITY INITIATIVES + GRASSROOTS ORGANIZING**

BMRC Project Manager/Archivist Anita Mechler was interviewed by Valerie Szwaya, a MSLS Candidate at UNC-Chapel Hill as part of a master's paper intended to analyze types of collaborations between traditional archival repositories and community groups in the United States. Ms. Mechler will share news of the paper once it is completed.

### **WOMEN OF COLOR IN LIBRARY & INFORMATION SCIENCE**

BMRC Project Manager/Archivist Anita Mechler was also interviewed as part of a research project to capture the many experiences of women of color working in the library and information science field which will be part of a chapter in *Pushing the Margins: Women of Color and Intersectionality in LIS*, a collection of papers and essays to be published by Library Juice Press focusing on expanding literature on diversity in librarianship by highlighting the lived experiences of those who are underrepresented in the profession using intersectionality as a framework.

### **MIDWEST AREA ARCHIVES CONFERENCE - OMAHA NEBRASKA, APRIL 5-8**

BMRC Project Manager/Archivist Anita Mechler presented on a panel titled, "Paths to Discovery: Programs Bringing African American Collections to Stakeholder Communities" during the Midwest Archives Conference (MAC) Annual Meeting. She spoke about all of BMRC's programs, past and present, with special attention to the Summer Short-term Fellowship Program. She will follow up her presentation at "Mini MAC" for the Chicago Area Archivists on May 3.

### **ARCHIE MOTLEY ARCHIVAL INTERNSHIP PROGRAM CONTINUES**

The Internship Subcommittee of the BMRC Board is currently reviewing applications for interns and an internship site for the Summer 2017 iteration of the Archie Motley Archival Internship Program. BMRC continues to collaborate with the Odyssey Scholarship Challenge at the University of Chicago, which is a comprehensive model for dismantling obstacles to education and careers for talented, hardworking students with financial need. Stay tuned for more information on the BMRC website.