

AVERY

FALL 2016

MESSENGER



Avery graduate with her diploma, c.1886

BLACK WOMEN: FORGING EXCELLENCE

TRIBUTE TO DRS. CONSEULA FRANCIS AND IDA J. SPRUILL

AVERY: THE SPIRIT THAT WOULD NOT DIE

AVERY: SPRINGBOARD OF ACTIVISM

Avery Archives News • Public History Initiatives





AVERY RESEARCH CENTER

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

DR. PATRICIA WILLIAMS LESSANE

Dear Friends,

This past winter and spring took a deep toll on us. The country mourned the losses of several African-American greats: Maurice White of Earth, Wind & Fire; Natalie Cole; Prince; and, most recently, Muhammad Ali. The Avery Research Center staff and I convened in the administrative office, discussing each of these icons and celebrating their genius while being engulfed by shock and sadness. However, we also experienced personal and professional losses with the passings of our beloved intellectual and trailblazing colleagues: Dr. Ida Spruill of Medical University of South Carolina and Dr. Conseula Francis here at the College of Charleston.

To say Dr. Spruill's and Dr. Francis's deaths have left us collectively wounded is an understatement. Their losses leave deep voids in Charleston's higher education community. Each woman—a scholar in her own right—enacted the adage of “lifting as we climb” by serving as models for scholastic excellence and scholar activism, and by being accessible, caring, and encouraging to the students they taught. Their work, Dr. Spruill's nursing and public health and Dr. Francis's scholarship in Black women's literature, underscored their understandings of race, class, and gender intersectionalities in Black women's lives and how they collectively influence, impact, and even impede Black women's ability to live full, holistic lives. For Dr. Spruill, finding ways to teach Black women how to heal and therefore by extension the Black community was a life's mission and labor of love. For Dr. Francis, examining romance novels and graphic novels by and about Black women reinforced the notion that Black women experiencing and expressing love, desire, and whimsy are birthrights. In these ways, both women encourage us to live our Black lives fully, fearlessly, and unapologetically.

This *Avery Messenger* is dedicated to both women whose legacies and love empower me and give me license to continue to speak truth to power. Moreover, their lives and the robust body of scholarship and research they leave behind imbue the growing canon of Black feminist criticism with their unique intellectual genius. Today, they walk among our great ancestors who have taught us so much about what it means to be Black, a Black woman, a Black scholar, and ultimately, to be free....Ida Spruill, Conseula Francis, Helen Phillips, Toni Cade Bambara, Audre Lorde, Gwendolyn Brooks, Anna Julia Cooper, Maria Stewart....we remember. We remember. We remember.

pwl



AVERY INSTITUTE

PRESIDENT

JOHN BUNCUM

Greetings to our valued contributors, members, and friends. It is hard to believe we are halfway through the year. By the time you read this, we will have held our annual meeting already; however, I hope I had the opportunity to see many of you there.

We spent the year 2015 celebrating Avery Institute's 150th anniversary. As a result of your contributions, the Avery Institute Board was able to donate monies to help the Avery Research Center reach its fundraising goal for this sesquicentennial celebration. This year marks the 150th anniversary of Avery's sister school Laing, which had been started east of the Cooper River in Mount Pleasant, SC. Laing School is the second-oldest formal school for African Americans in the Charleston area, having been founded in January 1866 following the Avery Institute's establishment in 1865. Many of our board members attended Laing's sesquicentennial and we would like to thank Laing Middle School students for inviting us to their celebration. Many of these students have spent time over at the Avery Research Center learning about the rich history of both Avery Institute and Laing. Thanks also to Laing's administrators and faculty for recognizing, educating, and sending their students to the Avery Research Center to gain this knowledge.

In 2016, we continue to build developing partnerships with other archival centers and institutions. So far this year, we have been able to partner the Avery Research Center with Rev. Dr. Hugh Page of Notre Dame University. Thanks to board member Rick Gutowski and the Notre Dame Club of Charleston for making Rev. Dr. Page's visit and presentation possible.

We also continue to promote the Avery Research Center's efforts to add collections from local donors to its archival holdings. We anticipate announcing the addition of a prominent collection soon.

Finally, I am pleased to report the Avery Institute Board was awarded a contract to produce this year's edition of *The South Carolina Black History Bugle* magazine for the South Carolina Department of Education. *The South Carolina Black History Bugle* is an educational magazine and resource for fifth-grade students. Special thanks to Dr. Patricia Williams Lessane, her staff, and contributors for the work they have done to put this magazine together in their spare time.

AVERY ARCHIVES NEWS

RECENTLY PROCESSED

LUCILLE SIMMONS WHIPPER PAPERS, circa 1900-2016
(AMN 1146) 80.02 linear feet (185 archival boxes)

Lucille Simmons Whipper (1928-) has been an educator, guidance counselor, academic administrator, and a community and religious leader. She is also the first African-American woman to serve in the South Carolina House of Representatives for Charleston's District 109 (1986-1996). Whipper's activism began with her graduating class at Avery Institute in an attempt to desegregate the College of Charleston in 1944. Early in her industrious career, Whipper taught in several Charleston public schools; was an academic director at Burke High School; and served as a trustee on the Charleston County School District 20 Constituent Board. Decades later, she entered politics and was instrumental in working with the State of South Carolina and the College of Charleston to secure the former Avery Institute site to establish the Avery Research Center for African American History and Culture.

Whipper's extensive collection contains twelve (12) series (with numerous subseries) that highlight her academic and political careers; her religious, civic, and social affiliations; and personal and family papers. The "Political Career" series holds the majority of documents (including correspondence, legislative bills, and reports). The second largest series is Whipper's "Religious Affiliations and Organizations," which details her association with the Baptist Church (National Baptist Convention, USA) and in particular, the Woman's Baptist Educational and Missionary Convention (WBEMC) of South Carolina, of which Whipper was state president (2004-2009).

The remaining series hold various documents and materials, including oral history transcripts and essays about Whipper; writing and speech transcripts by Whipper; and tributes, honors, photographs, audio-visual recordings, and political ephemera.

The collection is available to researchers at the Avery Research Center. The online finding aid is forthcoming.

Recently Processed and Acquisitions reported by Georgette Mayo (Avery Research Center)

DIGITIZATION PROJECT

The Avery Research Center for African American History and Culture and the Lowcountry Digital Library (LCDL) were awarded grant funding from the National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC) to digitize portions of archival collections highlighting civil rights activism in Charleston, South Carolina and the surrounding Lowcountry. Throughout the eighteen-month digitization period, a total of sixteen archival collections of highly esteemed individuals and organizations will be sequentially uploaded to the LCDL (lcdl.library.cofc.edu).

The collections to be digitized are as follows:

Septima P. Clark; Bernice Robinson; Esau Jenkins; Cleveland Sellers; J. Arthur Brown; The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP); Bill Saunders; Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA); Book Lovers Club; Ruby Cornwell; Reverend John T. Enwright; Phillis Wheatley; Isaiah Bennett; Millicent Brown; Eugene Hunt; and Anna D. Kelly.

So far, the collections that have been digitized and made available online are Septima P. Clark ("Septima P. Clark Papers, circa 1910-1990") and Bernice Robinson ("Bernice Robinson Papers, 1920-1989"). The digitized portions of these two collections consist of materials created and accumulated by Clark and Robinson, including correspondence, essays, meeting minutes, pamphlets, periodicals, photographs, printed matter, and speeches. Records accumulated by Clark and Robinson feature documentation created by individuals such as Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.; Rosa Parks; Dorothy Cotton; Jesse Jackson; Andrew Young; and Hosea Williams, as well as organizations including the Highlander Folk School, NAACP, Penn Community Center, and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC).

Reported by Sam Sfirri (Addlestone Library) and Barrye Brown (Avery Research Center)

ACQUISITIONS

Mr. Joseph T. Holleman, Jr.—Charleston, SC

Four (4) original documents (letter dated 18 November 1870; two (2) Probate Court Letters of Testamentary dated 1888; and one (1) Probate Court Certificate of Executorship dated 1877) pertaining to Macon B. Allen, Probate Judge for Charleston County, SC. Born in Indiana, Allen later moved to Maine and there became the first licensed African-American attorney in the United States. He then moved to Charleston after the Civil War and, with William J. Whipper and Robert Brown Elliot, established the first Black law firm in the United States in 1868. In 1874, Allen was elected Criminal Court Judge in Charleston, thus becoming the first African American with a major judicial position at the municipal level. He served from 1876 to 1878 as Charleston County Probate Judge.



Handwritten letter from the law offices of William J. Whipper, Robert B. Elliot, and Macon B. Allen, located at 91 Broad Street. Letter dated November 18, 1870.

The Estate of Keith F. Otterbein; Charlotte L. Otterbein, Executor—Williamsville, NY

Seventy (70) of various books, journals, and magazines pertaining to the Bahama Islands; Key West, Florida; and anthropology. Also includes an incomplete collection of *The New Encyclopedia of Southern Culture*.

Ms. Jacqueline Hill—Aiken, SC

Three (3) self-published art quilt books by Ms. Jackie Hill: *Perception and Patchwork*, 2005; *Tragedy, Transformation, Triumph*, 2008; *American History Poems*, 2009

Ms. Pauline Caffey—Charleston, SC

Six (6) items from Ms. Caffey's mother, Daisy Aleithia DeCosta Caffey, including diplomas from Avery Institute and Allen University, and awards from Burke High School (1957) and Delta Sigma Theta Sorority (1974).

PUBLIC HISTORY INITIATIVES

by Mary Battle, PhD

RACE AND SOCIAL JUSTICE INITIATIVE

In late June 2015, the Avery Research Center, Addlestone Library, African American Studies, and Lowcountry Digital History Initiative (LDHI) at the College of Charleston received a major grant from Google to launch the Race and Social Justice Initiative (RSJI) in response to tragic events in the Charleston area, including the shooting death of Walter Scott by a police officer in April 2015 and the mass shooting at Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church in June 2015. With this support, the RSJI team has worked with numerous partners to facilitate public events, exhibitions, and various projects that promote awareness of the history and ongoing struggles of racial injustice in Charleston, South Carolina and throughout the United States.

At the one-year anniversary of RSJI's launch, the project team is pleased to report a number of milestones for the RSJI's mission, including major public presentations by education advocate Marian Wright Edelman and social justice lawyer Bryan Stevenson in March 2016. DVDs of these presentations are available for viewing at the Avery Research Center. In addition, the RSJI team worked with numerous collaborative partners, including the Charleston County Public Library, to distribute books and promote literacy efforts connected to the speakers. In May 2016, LDHI also released "A Tribute to the Mother Emanuel Church" (<http://ldhi.library.cofc.edu/exhibits/show/mother-emanuel-tribute>). This online exhibition documents local, statewide, and national responses to the tragic mass shooting at Emanuel AME Church in June 2015. Through photographs from a range of sources, this digital project reveals an overwhelming outpouring of emotion and grief for the victims, survivors, and their families. It also highlights powerful efforts in the weeks and months following the shooting to address racial injustice and violence. This tribute was co-curated by LDHI, the Avery Research Center, and Lowcountry Africana in partnership with the Emanuel AME Church.

On October 18, 2016, RSJI looks forward to hosting journalist and award-winning author Ta-Nehisi Coates at the College of Charleston. RSJI is also in the process of developing a racial disparities report for the city of Charleston for release to the public in Fall 2016. This report will serve as an invaluable resource for policymakers and advocates in addressing local race and social justice issues.

The success of these RSJI events and projects relies on a collaborative network of partners. In the future, RSJI hopes to expand on these networks to establish programs that support lasting change for race and social justice in the Charleston area. RSJI also relies on a strong project team, and we are greatly saddened by the loss of essential collaborator Dr. Conseula Francis, who was a tireless advocate for RSJI's mission. She will be dearly missed by many. For more information about RSJI, please visit: <http://go.cofc.edu/rsji>

THE LOWCOUNTRY DIGITAL HISTORY INITIATIVE

LDHI is pleased to announce the launch of four new online exhibitions in 2015-2016! Through partnerships with the Avery Research Center and the Carolina Lowcountry and Atlantic World Program (CLAW), LDHI's mission is to facilitate projects that highlight underrepresented race, class, gender, and labor histories within the Lowcountry region and in historically interconnected Atlantic World sites.

<http://ldhi.library.cofc.edu/>

*A TRIBUTE TO THE MOTHER EMANUEL CHURCH

<http://ldhi.library.cofc.edu/exhibits/show/mother-emanuel-tribute>

Project Partners: Co-curated by Lowcountry Africana, the Lowcountry Digital History Initiative, and the College of Charleston's Avery Research Center for African American History and Culture in partnership with Emanuel AME Church.

This online tribute documents local, statewide, and national responses to the tragic mass shooting at Emanuel AME Church, also known as Mother Emanuel, on June 17, 2015 in Charleston, South Carolina.

*AVERY: THE SPIRIT THAT WOULD NOT DIE, 1865-2015

<http://ldhi.library.cofc.edu/exhibits/show/avery>

Project Partners: The College of Charleston's Avery Research Center for African American History and Culture

2015 marked the 150th anniversary of Avery Normal Institute's founding and the 30th anniversary of the Avery Research Center's establishment at the College of Charleston. This online exhibition explores over one hundred fifty years of Avery history—from its origins as a school for Black Charlestonians starting in 1865 to its current form as a center for promoting the history and culture of the African diaspora with an emphasis on Charleston and the South Carolina Lowcountry.

*CHARLESTON'S COTTON FACTORY, 1880-1900

<http://ldhi.library.cofc.edu/exhibits/show/charlestons-cotton-factory>

Project Author: Susan Millar Williams, Trident Technical College

This exhibition traces the history of the cotton factory in Charleston, South Carolina from 1880 to 1900 and examines how mill workers—Black and white, male and female—struggled for better working conditions in the contentious political, social, and economic contexts of the late nineteenth century.

*LIVERPOOL'S ABERCROMBY SQUARE AND THE CONFEDERACY DURING THE US CIVIL WAR

<http://ldhi.library.cofc.edu/exhibits/show/liverpools-abercromby-square>

Project Authors: Christopher Williams, Jim Powell, and Joseph Kelly—University of Liverpool

This exhibition explores connections between the US South and Great Britain during the American Civil War, particularly through trading activities led by a group of influential businessmen who lived in Liverpool's Abercromby Square.

CALL FOR PROPOSALS

The Avery Research Center is pleased to announce a Call for Proposals for the 2017 conference "Transforming Public History from Charleston to the Atlantic World" from June 15, 2017 to June 17, 2017.

For more information, please see: <http://claw.cofc.edu/conferences/>

Hosted by: The Avery Research Center for African American History and Culture, Addlestone Library, and the Carolina Lowcountry and Atlantic World Program at the College of Charleston

by Patricia Williams Lessane, PhD

For well over two centuries, African-American women have shouldered the concerns of the community, forging “a way out of no way” for their families while pursuing their personal dreams. Many of these women—scholars, teachers, mothers, wives, healers, artists, and activists—were also faith walkers, believing their hard work, coupled with God’s grace, would see them through social and professional obstacles and ultimately bring their dreams to fruition.

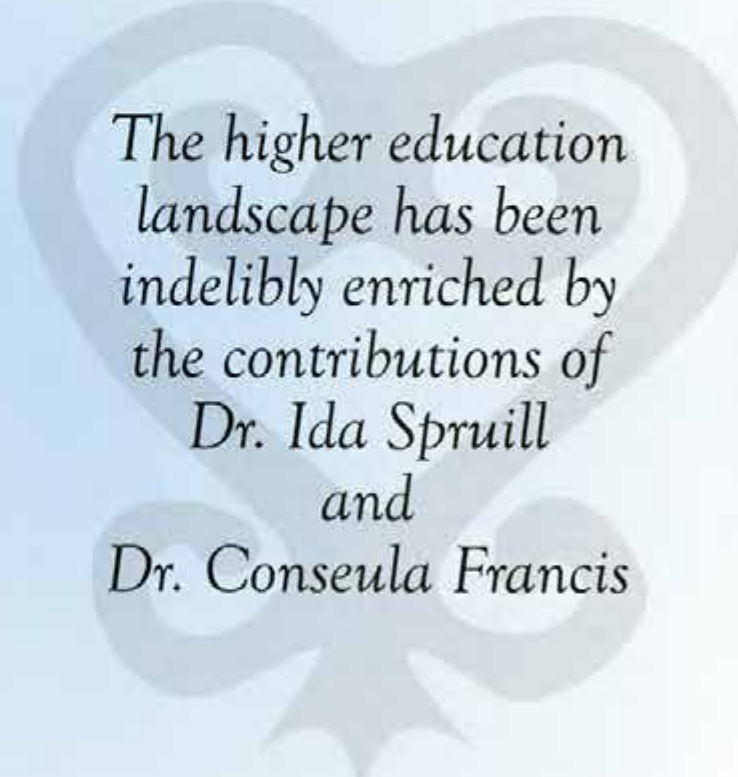
TRAILBLAZERS

These dreams were not wholly their own. The work of early African-American scholar-activists attests to this. Trailblazers such as Maria Stewart, Anna Julia Cooper, and Frances Ellen Watkins Harper set the stage for the rich scholar-activist legacies seen today. The twentieth century also gave birth to some of our most recognized African-American women scholars and artists, including Frances Beal, Angela Davis, Toni Cade Bambara, Alice Walker, Audre Lorde, and Nina Simone. The canon of work by these iconic women not only strengthened the collective voices of Black women, but it also boldly and courageously demanded the Black woman’s seat at opportunity’s table. Their scholarship and artistic contributions inform our understanding of the intersectionality of race, gender, and class in Black women’s lives as well as the historical systemic barriers African Americans consistently confront in the classroom, the boardroom, and, far too often, the courtroom. Further, the growing epistemologies of Black/Africana/Diasporic/African-American Studies attest to the intellectual and activist contributions of African-American women.

***Here in Charleston,
we know this first hand.***

UNAPOLOGETICALLY EXCELLENT

The higher education landscape has been indelibly enriched by the contributions of Dr. Ida Spruill and Dr. Conseula Francis, two dynamic, unapologetically Black women scholars. We lost both of these women this spring and the academic communities of Medical University of South Carolina (MUSC) and the College of Charleston, as well as the African-American community at large were sent reeling. Each woman, a scholar in her own right, nurtured the minds and touched the hearts of the students they taught and those they called friend.



*The higher education
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I am blessed enough to have called both women “friend.” Their losses remind me of the fragility of life as well as the heavy crosses Black women carry every day. They are bitter and austere legacies passed down to us from our mothers and their mothers, from Black women teachers, professors, artists, and activists who influence our lives and inform the scholar-activism done in classrooms at institutions of higher learning.



(l-r) Dr. Patricia Williams Lessane and Dr. Conseula Francis at the Daughters of the Dust Conference, Avery Research Center, September 2011

Ida, Conseula, and I were definitely comrades in arms. We discussed our children, our work, our trials, and our commitment to training our students—especially African-American students—to think globally, critically, and intuitively about their educational and professional goals. We confided in one another when patriarchy and racism wreaked havoc on our campuses or in our private lives. Most importantly, we recognized we would help and support each other as we traversed this exclusive club of the academe.

Each was the epitome of Black Excellence. Dr. Spruill's work with Project Sugar melded public health and medicine with her cultural knowledge, which then resulted in positive changes in quality of life for African Americans living on Johns Island. Dr. Francis's work on the monumental life and genius of James Baldwin, along with her scholarship on Black women's romance novels, inform our understanding of one of the most important literary and political figures of the twentieth century as well as what desire looks and feels like for Black women, whose needs are often the last to be met.

REMEMBRANCE

I think about Ida and Conseula often and wonder how their work could be finished—such brilliant minds gone too soon, such caring hearts that are missed by so many. I mourn them both. I miss them because they were my sisters.

WE REMEMBER...

Dr. Ida Johnson Spruill

by Debbie Chatman Bryant, Gaynelle S. Magwood, and Tiffany H. Williams



Our colleague, DR. IDA JOHNSON SPRUILL, is remembered as a friend, mother, grandmother, scientist, mentor, and community activist. Her kindness, compassion, determination, and respect exemplified her love for humanity, impacting the

countless lives of those around her. Dr. Spruill courageously and unapologetically fought to realize her vision for social justice and equal access to healthcare so all could reap the benefits of improved and equalized health outcomes. As an activist, she spoke for people whose voices were often unheard. She also worked to raise consciousness regarding the value of public service. Dr. Spruill's unwavering commitment to community activism helped to bring down walls and expanded boundaries, reaching across relationships, cultures, geographic regions, and networks.

As a trusted friend and leader who understood the ramifications of social and economic injustices, Dr. Spruill passionately and compassionately articulated healthcare priorities for disadvantaged communities. As a mentor and colleague, she was gifted in encouraging others to seek answers to soul-searching questions. Conversations with her kindled many "ah-ha!" moments that made us contemplate that age-old question: "Am I my brother's keeper?"

Students, colleagues, friends, and even strangers were drawn to Dr. Spruill's fervent spirit and unconditional love for people. She was fully mindful and thankful for each and every moment given, acknowledging what a gift it was to be present with the people she loved. Although we miss her greatly, we will remember and honor her abiding commitment to always do the right thing.

Debbie Chatman Bryant, Gaynelle S. Magwood, and Tiffany H. Williams were Dr. Spruill's friends and colleagues in the College of Nursing, Medical University of South Carolina (MUSC).

CLAIRE CURTIS REMEMBERS

Octavia Butler, the author of many award-winning science fiction novels who died in her prime, was one of Dr. Conseula Francis's favorite authors to read, teach, and discuss. In Butler's *Parable* series, a group of people strive to live under the principles of Earthseed, which was the worldview of the main character Lauren Oya Olamina. Part of Earthseed is the Destiny—the eventual colonization of space—described as “important for the lessons it forces us to learn while we’re here on Earth, for the people it encourages us to become.” (Octavia Butler, *Parable of the Talents*, 270) This description of the Destiny captures not only what Conseula Francis valued about Butler’s novels as underappreciated representations of the African-American literature tradition, but it also captures Conseula’s own motivation for the work she did. We all need the big project, and we need that project to help us make sense of the world in which we live.

Like Olamina, Conseula was a sense maker. A book about the radical possibilities found in Black romance novels was the most recent project on which she had been working, and it was driven by her desire to make sense of the world. Focusing on stories that explore varieties of Black female pleasure (ranging from the sensual ones of romance or the platonic ones of friendship to the personal ones of professional achievements or even private ones for her alone) meant understanding the full range of Black womanhood. Conseula wanted teachers of African-American literature to include Black romance as part of a scholarship that so often merely focused on Black women as “the mules of the world.” Conseula saw Black romance as an example of a “narrative of pleasure” that would disrupt the controlling and confining force of “narratives of despair.” Conseula sought to make sense of the world by focusing on those stories that might cause us to rethink the shape of our world, whether they were found in comics, science fiction, or romance.

CONSEULA FRANCIS, PhD



SAVANNAH FRIERSON REMEMBERS

Dr. Conseula Francis was a champion of the romance genre, particularly Black romance, and especially of the right for Black women to feel love and all the pleasures that come with it without shame, negotiation, or excuse. For her to do this in academia—an institution that is usually insidiously hostile to genre literature and Black women—with the level of success and gravity as she had done was incredibly refreshing and exciting for me, a Black woman author who writes romance and women’s fiction featuring Black women protagonists. The last personal interaction I had had with Dr. Francis was a few months ago at a talk she gave about Black women and romance. There was only a handful of people there, and I was the only other Black person in the room besides Dr. Francis. I was happily her Amen Corner since everyone else had little grounding in what she had been discussing. To hear Dr. Francis reference so many fantastic authors I had read or knew personally, including myself!, was a point of pride not just for me, but for all Black women who give voice and space for Black women to be loved, cherished, adored, and pleased as well as for all of the women who choose to occupy that space with the fullness of themselves and the freedom from their undeserved guilt. To listen to her discuss how romance interacts with, wrestles with, and contends with social status quos that have actual ramifications of how Black women live everyday lives, and that these novels are not simply an “escape” but are in many ways a blueprint for how Black women can pursue and live their fullest selves, was empowering for me because she had articulated a subconscious drive I have had for why I even write what I write in the first place.

I think about the outpouring of love and support Dr. Francis’s family had received at her memorial, and several of us wondered if she had known how beloved she was and how keenly her loss would be felt—not just at the College of Charleston, but in the Black romance world too. Dr. Francis had been pursuing her passion platform, articulating and elevating heart matters that were often too dense and difficult to explain in accessible language. She was the example I had needed to believe I could do the same.

KIM ODOM REMEMBERS

Dr. Consuela Francis designed and coordinated a book club focused on African-American writers in 2011 at the request of Cynthia Graham Hurd, who had been managing the John L. Dart Library at the time. The collaboration grew out of relationships developed during the planning of the library's One Book program. After working together to promote discussions of *Daughters of the Dust* by Julie Dash and *The Known World* by Edward P. Jones, it was clear the community was interested in continuing such engaging discussions. The program was called "Dart after Dark Book Circle" and meetings were held after the library closed so people who worked could participate. Dr. Francis, who selected the books, provided overviews of them. Dr. Francis (who skillfully guided the resulting discussions) eventually received a grant from the National Council for Black Studies to enhance the outreach by providing copies of the books and snacks for participants. Yet even when the grant ended, Dr. Francis remained committed to working with the library and continued to lead discussions. At any given session, one would find retired teachers, carpenters, firefighters, grandmothers, veterans—readers of all colors and walks of life. The mix of native Charlestonians and transplants who now made the Lowcountry home spiced up the conversations.

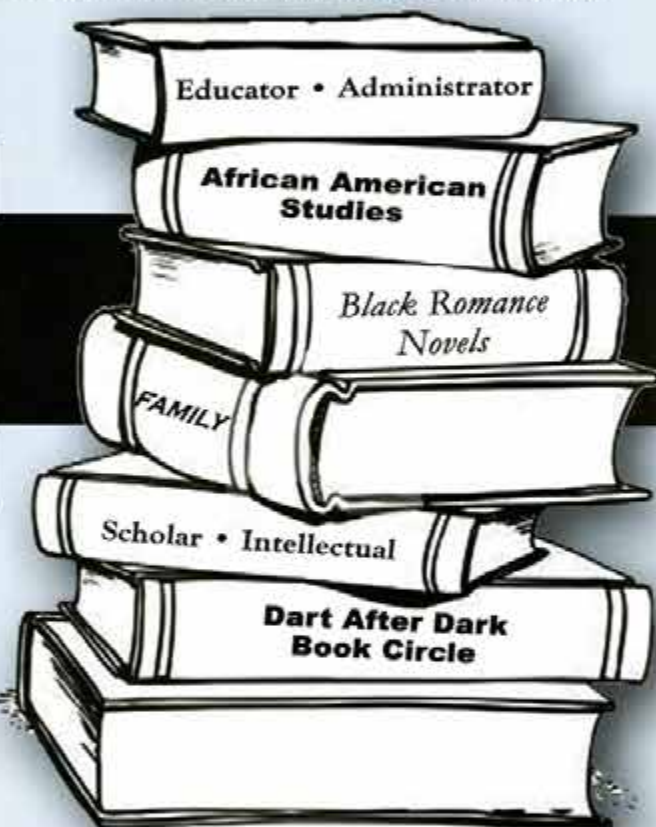
For Dr. Francis, it was another opportunity to transform infrequent or nonreaders into dedicated and confident ones. It seemed it was one of her life's missions. She introduced us to Touré, Wes Moore, and Michelle Alexander. Together, we explored historical fiction, romance, and the stories of her beloved Octavia Butler. Dr. Francis guided us through the complexities of Blackness as manifested in the works of Dolen Perkins-Valdez, James Baldwin, and Danielle McGuire.



She listened to what we had to say and never made us feel inadequate while participating in the discussions, for none of us had the level of knowledge, credentials, understanding, or joy in these works that she did. If the lights had gone out, she could have lit up the room with her exuberant responses to the books she shared. Dr. Francis loved literature and would not rest until others showed signs of loving it too.

If all of those attributes were not enough, Dr. Francis was a much-beloved and respected mother, wife, friend, and academic. She was also an inspiring teacher. She did not mind sharing stories from her life and building relationships with the readers in the Circle. She was open, which permitted us to be open. The last discussion Dr. Francis attended was in honor of the late Cynthia Graham Hurd. At my request, she led a discussion of *The Measure of Our Success* by Marian Wright Edelman. Despite her busy schedule and changing role at the College of Charleston, she continued to make herself available to serve our community as much as possible. She was instrumental in arranging a lecture by Edelman as a part of the Race and Social Justice Initiative. Her extraordinary combination of intellect, wit, kindness, and fierce moral integrity will never be forgotten by those who attended the Dart after Dark Book Circle. She was a missionary for African-American literature and we loved her ministry.

Claire Curtis, PhD is Professor and Associate Chair in the Department of Political Science at the College of Charleston, Charleston, SC. Savannah Frierson is author of ten women's fiction and romance novels. She is the Administrative Assistant at the Avery Research Center College of Charleston, Charleston, SC. Kim Odom is Branch Manager of John L. Dart Library, Charleston County Public Library, Charleston, SC.



AVERY: Springboard of Activism

by Jon Hale, PhD

The storied past of Avery is a microcosm of the history of education in the American South. As much as it says about Charleston, the history of this former school and current research center also reveals a broader narrative about the regional struggle for quality education and for the protection of freedoms promised to African Americans after the Civil War. Avery was one of numerous academic institutions that redefined the Southern landscape during Reconstruction and established the foundation for the Southern Civil Rights Movement.

Local Black Charlestonians worked with the American Missionary Association (AMA) as they established a school in Charleston in 1865. A network of African Americans supported the school, which became known as the Avery Normal Institute by 1868. This cohort of leaders shaped the implementation of a new educational system across the South following the Civil War. With ruined state and local economy and, later, crippling discriminatory and unequal funding based on race, Black communities had to raise the capital necessary to construct and maintain a school system.

Avery made a profound and symbolic impact on the region. Located in the city that fired the first shots of the Civil War, the Avery Normal Institute was one of the first schools in Charleston and the Lowcountry to provide formal education to the Black community. The school offered a Western classical liberal arts and college preparatory curriculum, which designated the school as a premier institution. Avery also grew to serve as a "normal" school, devoted to training educators that would then serve the Lowcountry.

Francis Cardozo, one of the early principals at Avery, is representative of the strong leadership at Black Southern schools during Reconstruction. Recently enfranchised voters elected Cardozo to the South Carolina Constitutional Convention, at which he helped draft legislation for the state's first system of public education. He served as the president of the Union League, an organization committed to ensuring Republican victories in elections; was elected as the Palmetto State's first Black Secretary of State; and received an appointment to work for the United States Treasury Department. Like many Southern Black politicians during Reconstruction, Cardozo also continued to lead educational endeavors. After leaving Avery in 1868, he returned to education in the 1880s to serve as principal of Paul Laurence Dunbar High School in Washington, DC, one of the nation's premier Black college preparatory schools.

Civic and political leaders like Cardozo served in similar capacities across the South. John Roy Lynch of Mississippi, George W. Trenholm of Alabama, Robert R. Moton of Virginia, J. M. Frazier of Louisiana, and others constituted

a network of organizers that worked at the local and state level to build systems of education. They employed any means necessary to construct schools in their communities by raising money, donating time and labor, and applying for grants from white and religious philanthropists. For this group of organizers, public education was the first line of defense in protecting recently earned freedom and expanding access to institutions long closed to communities of color.

Women guided the trajectory of Black education by teaching and implementing quality instruction in the schools. The educators trained at Avery were consummate professionals who dedicated their lives to the craft of teaching. Lois Simms, valedictorian of the Avery's 1937 graduating class, completed graduate studies at Howard University and Syracuse University. Simms was part of a Southern network of Black educators who not only raised critical questions, but also instilled racial pride and fortitude through pedagogy. She incorporated the Western classics into her curriculum while teaching the great works of Black writers as well. Simms also possessed a critical consciousness as she dutifully studied the funding disparities inherent in segregated education. She toiled diligently to prepare her students to successfully compete in an unfair society.

Avery also illustrates the direct connection between education and civil rights activism. In 1919, two Avery graduates—Edwin Harleston, president of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People's (NAACP) Charleston branch and Septima Clark, a local educator and NAACP member—successfully campaigned to overturn a city ordinance that mandated only white teachers could hold coveted teaching positions for all Black and white public schools in Charleston. And although Charleston was one of the last cities to do so, local Black Charlestonians joined the movement to overturn Jim Crow teaching laws that prevented access to jobs and equal pay. In the process, these advocates strengthened the NAACP and its central place in the local civil rights movement. The connection forged between the NAACP and local teachers remained strong even as the Charleston County School District fired teachers like Septima Clark in the 1950s because they refused to revoke their membership with the NAACP.

Avery students were active in the civil rights movement as well. After taking a course titled "Problems in Democracy" and working with a returning war veteran and Avery graduate John Wrighten, thirty-two students examined the policies behind segregation and decided to address them in 1944. They wrote letters to the all-white College of Charleston, a segregated institution just blocks away from Avery in an appeal for integration.

The College opted to remain segregated but offered scholarships for Avery students to historically Black colleges instead. The school did not effectively begin integration until the late 1960s.

Nevertheless, Averyites were not alone in the long struggle for quality education. African-American students across the South shared the same desire to challenge segregation and institutional discrimination. Students at R. R. Moton High School in Prince Edward County, Virginia launched a boycott that led to one of the five court cases behind the *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) decision. Claudette Colvin, a student at Booker T. Washington High School in Montgomery, Alabama, shaped the early stages of the Montgomery Bus Boycott in 1955 when she refused to give up her seat on a bus to a white patron nine months before Rosa Parks. Over five hundred high school students from Jim Hill and Lanier High School in Jackson, Mississippi walked out of their schools to demand better facilities in 1963 just months prior to the state's voter registration campaign, a campaign that became the largest in the history of the movement. Once these students were politicized and immersed in the civil rights movement at a formative age, many of these young

activists became local leaders in the movement and were the first to desegregate schools, to assume civil rights leadership positions in their communities, and to continue an agenda of educational, civic, and political reform during the era of desegregation.

Over one hundred fifty years after the founding of Avery, the institution remains a premier archival repository, museum, and programming space in the Southern landscape devoted to education through preserving and promoting African-American history in the Lowcountry and throughout the African Diaspora. As we move beyond the sesquicentennial anniversary, it is imperative to see Avery not only as a local institution, but also as part of the American fabric that defines education and citizenship. As such, the work of Avery remains essential to the ongoing struggle for a quality education.

Dr. Jon Hale is Assistant Professor in the College of Charleston's Department of Teacher Education. Dr. Hale's research examines the history of American education during the Civil Rights Movement. It specifically examines the history of student and teacher activism and grassroots educational reform.

EXHIBITION UPDATE-AVERY: THE SPIRIT THAT WOULD NOT DIE, 1865-2015



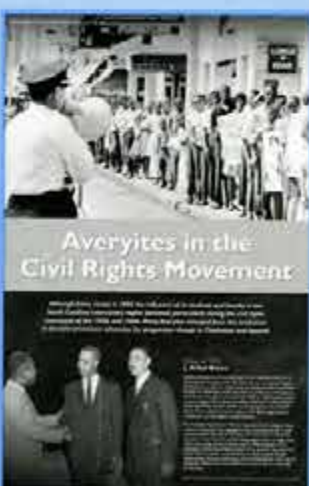
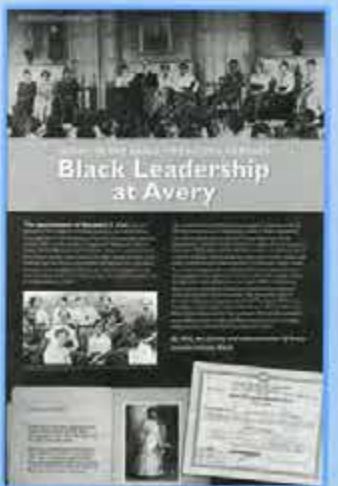
Avery: The Spirit That Would Not Die

The Avery Research Center is pleased to announce the opening of our updated permanent exhibition, *Avery: The Spirit That Would Not Die, 1865-2015*. Professors Lee Drago and Eugene Hunt at the College of Charleston curated the original permanent exhibition with the same name in 1981. Public Historian Mary Battle and Museum Curator Curtis J. Franks co-curated the project with special assistance from Avery Research Center graduate student assistant Leah Worthington. Various scholars, graduate students, and Avery Research Center faculty and staff also collaborated on the update.

The current permanent exhibition explores over one hundred fifty years of Avery history—from its origins as a school for Black Charlestonians starting in 1865 to its current form as a center for promoting the history and culture of the African diaspora with an emphasis on Charleston and the South Carolina Lowcountry. The update includes many materials and information from the original exhibition and new text panels. In addition, the Lowcountry Digital History Initiative (LDHI) launched an online exhibition as a companion to the physical installation in the Avery Research Center building in May 2016.

(<http://ldhi.library.cofc.edu/exhibits/show/avery>).

This exhibition is funded by The Avery Institute for Afro-American History and Culture and SunTrust Bank.



Avery: The Spirit That Would Not Die, 1865-2015 features eighteen color panels on display in Avery Research Center's Nineteenth-Century Classroom.

Top Image: The exhibit's lead panel shows a sketch of the Avery Normal Institute c. 1878.

Bottom: (l-r) Panel: "Avery in the Early Twentieth Century: Black Leadership at Avery" has images of Principal Benjamin Cox addressing the Avery Student body, the 1915 Avery Black faculty and administration, and a graduation photo and diploma of Lucille Turner McCottry (Avery Class 1907); "Averyites in the Civil Rights Movement" has photo of a Charleston Movement Protest c. 1960s and highlights J. Arthur Brown's (Avery Class 1932) work with the NAACP and his desegregation efforts; "Averyites in the Civil Rights Movement" showcases Septima Poinsette Clark and her activism with Highlander Folk School and the Johns Island Citizenship School project. An image of Esau Jenkins is also featured on this panel.

AVERY RESEARCH CENTER FALL PROGRAMS 2016

Here are highlights of the Avery Research Center's Fall 2016 programs.
Visit <http://avery.cofc.edu> for a full listing and description of upcoming programs.
Also, visit the Avery Research Center's Facebook page.

SEPTEMBER

- 7 Brown Bag Series:** "Interpreting African-American History at McLeod Plantation," Shawn Halifax, Charleston County Park & Recreation Commission, Avery Research Center, Noon-1:15 p.m. The Charleston County Park & Recreation Commission (CCPRC) recently opened McLeod Plantation Historic Site in April 2015 as Charleston's newest presentation of a Southern plantation. The site has boldly set its focus on telling stories of the majority of people who lived there from 1851 to 1990—the stories of the enslaved, the freed people, and their descendants.
- 21 Brown Bag Series:** SCETV's *Between the Waters: A Virtual Tour of Hobcaw Barony*, Betsy Newman, Patrick Hayes, and Kelly Hogan, Noon-1:15 p.m., Avery Research Center. "Between the Waters" is SCETV's new interactive website, an immersive digital journey that introduces the historic South Carolina coastal estate Hobcaw Barony to a worldwide audience.
- 22 Lecture and Book Signing:** "The Freedom Schools: A History of Student Activism in the Mississippi Civil Rights Movement," Dr. Jon Hale, College of Charleston, Avery Research Center, 6:00 p.m. In this presentation, Dr. Jon N. Hale will discuss his recent publication, *The Freedom Schools: A History of Student Activism in the Mississippi Civil Rights Movement* (Columbia University Press, 2016).

OCTOBER

- 18 Race and Social Justice Initiative Lecture:** "A Deeper Black: Race in America," Ta-Nehisi Coates, Journalist and Author, TD Arena, 301 Meeting Street, Charleston, 6:30 p.m. Cosponsored by the College of Charleston's Race and Social Justice Initiative funded by Google, Charleston County Public Library, South Carolina Humanities, the SC Community Loan Fund, SunTrust Bank, the Avery Institute, and the Sophia Institute. Free and open to the public.



A former *Village Voice* writer, Coates is the Journalist in Residence at the School of Journalism at CUNY. He was previously the Martin Luther King Visiting Associate Professor at MIT and has been awarded the Hillman Prize for Opinion and Analysis Journalism. He is also a winner of a 2015 MacArthur Fellowship.

- 26 Brown Bag Series:** "Untold Stories: Enslaved People in the Home of the Grimke Family," Louise W. Knight, Northwestern University, Avery Research Center, Noon-1:15 p.m. In this presentation, Louise Knight will discuss her research on eight of the enslaved people who worked in the home of the Grimke family—Dinah, Stephen, George, Bess, Betsy, Diana, and two unnamed people.

NOVEMBER

- 2 Brown Bag Series:** "The Path Not Taken—The Lost Promise of the South Carolina Constitutional Convention of 1868," Damon Fordham, MA, Historian, Avery Research Center, Noon-1:15 p.m. In this presentation, author and historian Damon L. Fordham discusses his research on the South Carolina Constitutional Convention of 1868, which took place in Charleston from January to April of that year. This convention, which was attended by seventy-six Black people and forty-three White people, nearly changed the course of American history.
- 10 Roundtable Presentation:** "Charleston Syllabus: Readings on Race, Racism, and Racial Violence," Chad Williams, Associate Professor and the Chair of African and Afro-American Studies at Brandeis University; Kidada E. Williams, Associate Professor of History at Wayne State University; and Keisha N. Blain, Assistant Professor of History at the University of Iowa. Avery Research Center, 6:00 p.m.

EVERY **INSTITUTE** **MEMBERSHIP** **NEWS**



Tony Bell,
Membership
Chairman

Greetings!

We would like to thank you for your continued support. Remember that your support of the Avery Institute Board ensures that we can continue to supplement the Avery Research Center

The membership committee is busy updating member information on our respective lists. We want to ensure that members receive all pertinent information.

If you haven't renewed your membership yet, consider completing it by the end of the 2016. Remember, it is tax deductible!

Thanks again for helping us to ensure that the Avery Research Center remains the community jewel and national treasure it is.

Also, remember to visit us online at: www.averyinstitute.us to see photo galleries of past events.



EVERY PROFILE

Born in Charleston, South Carolina, **Shirley Randall Eaton** (Avery Class 1953) grew up on Tradd Street and attended the Avery School. Considering her parents, her aunt Martha B. Cook, and her teacher Mrs. Cynthia McCottry-Smith as mentors, Eaton graduated from Avery in 1953 and began a lifelong pursuit of education and a dedication to healthcare.



Randall Eaton has degrees from Roper School of Nursing in Charleston, Wayne Dental School in Chicago, Norwalk Community College in Norwalk, CT; and a Master of Science in Public Health from Charter Oak College in New Britain, CT. She worked in nursing, dentistry, and other areas of healthcare for over forty-five years.

In addition to her commitment to education and healthcare, Randall Eaton is also dedicated to her faith. She and her daughter integrated First Scots Presbyterian Church in 1982, and Randall Eaton was chosen as a delegate to the Presbytery in Columbus, GA to integrate other Presbyterian churches on behalf of the Presbytery General Assembly.

Now retired, Randall Eaton enjoys spending time with her loved ones, including her son Everett and her daughter Eran. Shirley Randall Eaton is a testament of the strong foundation of an Avery education.

MUSEUM NEWS

The Avery Research Center for African American History and Culture will be the venue for the Fourth Annual Colour of Music: Black Classical Musicians Festival's Chamber Music Series. The performances will be in the McKinley Washington Auditorium in October 2016.

Additionally, the Avery Research Center staff, under the leadership of curator Curtis J. Franks, will curate an exhibition from Avery Research Center's archival holdings on the contributions of African-descended South Carolinians to classical music. Tentatively titled *The Ascension: Black Classical Music in the Lowcountry*, the exhibition will feature materials from the collections of D. Jack Moses, a graduate of Columbia University and The Juilliard School; Henry Harleston Fleming, a composer, arranger, and professor; and William Lawrence, a graduate of the New England Conservatory of Music; as well as J. Donovan Moore, J. Michael Graves, and William Saxton Wilson, who was a local printer and violinist.

The exhibition will open to the public on Thursday, October 13, 2016 and will remain on view through February 2017.

by Curtis J. Franks



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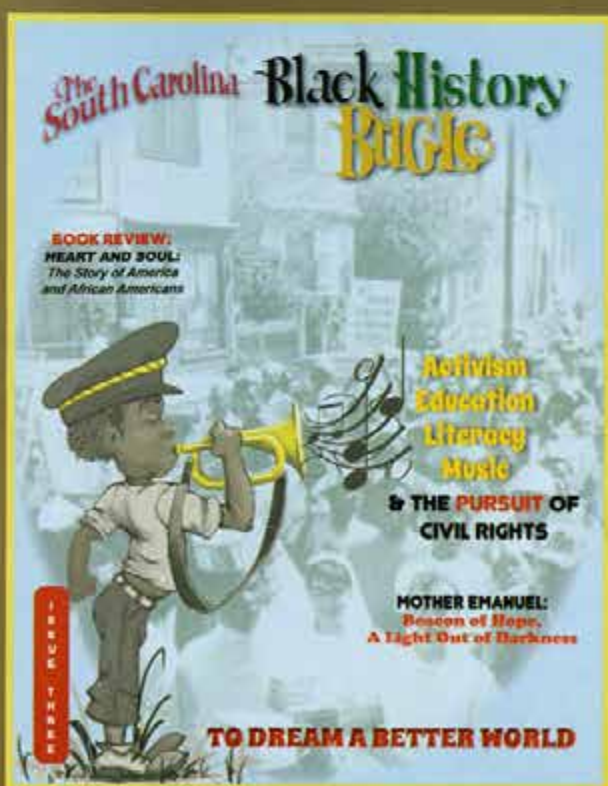
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The Phillis Wheatley Literary and Social Club Reading Room is open to the public year-round, Monday through Friday, between the hours of 10:00 AM to 12:30 PM and 1:30 PM to 5:00 PM except on College of Charleston holidays and winter break. To contact the Reading Room, call 843.953.7608.

Visit <http://avery.cofc.edu> for more information.

The South Carolina Black History Bugle, Issue No. 3
is an educational magazine and resource for fifth-grade students.
It was developed by the Avery Institute of Afro-American History and
Culture for the South Carolina Department of Education.



Theme: Civil Rights

Educators may e-mail our
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