

# AFAS



AFAS: African American Studies Librarians Section  
Association of College and Research Libraries - ALA

VOLUME 14, ISSUE 2

FALL 2007

ISSN 1076-8955

## In this Issue

Greetings from the Chair	Page 1
Past Chair Statement	Page 2
Nominating Committee	Page 2
New Members	Page 3
Recent Accomplishments	Page 3
Other AFAS News	Page 4
ALA News	Page 5
African American Resources	Page 5
Blockson Collection Names New Leader	Page 6
Abdul Alkalimat Joins GSLIS	Page 6
Call for Paper	Page 7
Scholar Asa Hilliard dies	Page 7
Xavier Remembers John T. Scott	Page 7
African American Research Center Celebrates 5 years	Page 8-9

## GREETINGS FROM THE CHAIR

Dear AFAS Members,

As 2007 comes to an end, we can be proud of the goals that AFAS has accomplished since June 2007. To date, the section has submitted a strong action plan, a target organization application and revamped our website. The AFAS action plan is an important document that helps promote our goals and values. It also provides a blueprint for incoming leadership and allows ACRL to understand the concerns specific to our section. The action plan for 2009 was spear-headed by Thomas Weissinger in partnership with the AFAS Executive Committee. The document we submitted to ACRL clearly expresses our commitment to cultivate relationships with large public research libraries and subject specialist at Historically Black Colleges & Universities (HBCU). The document further details our interest in increasing our membership and recruiting new and diverse talent to African American studies librarianship.

In June 2006, during ALA annual in New Orleans, the AFAS Executive Committee discussed a possible partnership to pursue with a learned society that promotes the discipline of African American studies. As a result of this dialogue, this summer the AFAS Executive Committee submitted a target organization application for the Association for the Study of African American Life & History (ASALH). As many of you know, ASALH is the premier black heritage learned society, founded by Dr. Carter G. Woodson in 1915 to promote, preserve, and disseminate information about African American history and culture. This application will be reviewed by the ACRL Council of Liaisons and the ACRL Board. The ACRL Council of Liaisons was formed in 1995 and "carries out a program of in-depth liaison activities with targeted professional organizations. The council works to the attention of non-library associations how library resources and services can contribute to their mission and goals."

In closing I'd like to bring your attention to our new website [www.afassection.org](http://www.afassection.org). I'd like to personally thank Harry Murphy for taking the initiative to update our website interface. Our new website includes a new section called the "Scholars Corner," this is a space for members to promote their scholarship as it relates to African American studies. Its creation is a collaborative effort between the Policy & Research Committee and the Publications Committee. We encourage members to submit lists of publications for inclusion. For more details regarding guidelines please visit the AFAS Scholars Corner page, <http://www.afassection.org/scholarship.html>. I'd also like to take this opportunity to say thank you to our AFAS newsletter editor, committee chairs, and committee volunteers; your service and commitment to AFAS are much appreciated.

Carmelita Pickett  
Chair 2007-2008  
African American Studies Librarian/Research Archivist  
Robert W. Woodruff Library  
Emory University  
Atlanta, GA 30322  
[cnpicke@emory.edu](mailto:cnpicke@emory.edu)

### PAST CHAIR STATEMENT—AKILAH NOSAKHERE

Assessment of my service as Chair of AFAS 2006-2007 leaves me feeling quite confident about the future:

- In 2006, the African American Studies Librarians' Section established momentum towards the fulfillment of ACRL strategic goals in the areas of the Profession, Higher Education and Research, by writing action plans to direct the work of the section in the coming year. The approval and funding of one action plan designed to strengthen ties with learned societies inspire and encourage all members to seek innovative ways to let our light shine.
- The 2007 re-design of the section brochure was a major challenge that included the solicitation of photographs and testimonials to include in the revision. Three intriguing images were selected for the cover. The top photo of large

carved masks is from a beautiful oceanside hotel in Grand Bassam, Ivory Coast. Ira Revels, former Chair of the Policy and Research and skilled graphic artist, reworked our AFAS logo and the photo at the base of the front cover is a scene from a captured East African slave ship. The testimonials from colleagues are on Adinkra symbols from the Akan tradition. Thanks to all who assisted in the redesign of our current brochure. It will be distributed at conferences of librarians and Africana studies professionals.

- Finally, the 2007 ALA workshop facilitated by well-known genealogist National Archives' researcher Reginald Washington clearly indicates a need for more interactive learning opportunities in the future, perhaps a pre-conference workshop. See *ACRL News* for a complete report of the program.

It has been a great pleasure and huge learning experience for me as Chair of ACRL- AFAS. I look forward to concentrating on specific projects as chair of the AFAS Policy and Research a Committee. In June, I passed the baton to Carmelita Pickett, who continued the momentum by unveiling an attractive website. Chair-Elect Thomas Weissinger is poised and ready to take the baton in 2008 and press forward taking AFAS to even greater heights by proposing a publication. Let's support our extraordinary leadership by volunteering to work with AFAS projects and doing our best work.

Thank you!  
Akilah Nosakhere  
Past Chair, 2006-2007

### AFAS NOMINATING COMMITTEE PRESENTS 2008 CANDIDATES

THE AFAS NOMINATING COMMITTEE IS PLEASED TO ANNOUNCE THE 2008 SLATE OF CANDIDATES:

#### **Vice Chair/Chair Elect- 2009-2010**

Harry Murphy

Vivian Fisher

#### **Secretary- 2009-2010**

Malaika Grant

#### **Member-at-Large- 2008-2010**

Aslaku Berhanu

Gennice W. King

AFAS continues to build on a strong foundation of devoted and qualified leadership. This year's slate of candidates illustrates that AFAS is stronger and more focused on its mission of service to scholars in the field of African American studies. As we thrive, the membership has to volunteer for committee work, be willing to serve in leadership positions, and support its leaders. We are off to a wonderful start for 2008. We have a slate of qualified individuals running for office. Now it is our turn as a membership to elect a Board of devoted and qualified leaders.

**Do your part and vote!**

On behalf of the Nominating Committee, I want to thank the candidates for volunteering to run for office. I also want to thank the Nominating Committee members Lisa Pillow and Myrtis Cochran for their efforts in developing the slate.

If you want to advance and sustain the work of AFAS, I encourage you to volunteer to serve your organization, run for office.

Best of luck to the 2008 AFAS Candidates!

Akilah Nosakhere

Chair, 2007 AFAS Nominating Committee

## WELCOME! KARIBU! EKABO!



We extend a very warm welcome to the following new AFAS members:

**Sampson Agyapong, Avery Clayton (son of Mamy A. Clayton),**

**Celia Daniel, Araba Dawson-Andoh, Janice Dunham, Khalilah Gambrell, Beverly Harris, Woodra Scott, Le Roi M. P. Smith, III, Jie Tian**

**Karibu!** means "Welcome!" in Swahili;

**Ekabo!** means "Welcome!" in the Yoruba language, spoken primarily in Nigeria, Benin, and Togo.

## RECENT ACCOMPLISHMENTS

### **Kathleen E. Bethel Honored**

Recently, African American Studies Librarian Kathleen E. Bethel has enjoyed a few accomplishments. She won the Department of African American Studies' Outstanding Affiliate Award for her service and commitment. She was elected to a three-year term on the Board of Directors for the Black Metropolis Research Consortium, an association of libraries, universities, and other archival institutions with major holdings of materials that document the African American and African diasporic experiences, with a specific focus on Chicago. In addition to this, biographical entries by Kathleen are published in *Notable Black American Men: Book II* (Thomson Gale, 2007). Kathleen was also surprised to learn recently of her inclusion in the 2006 and 2007 editions of *Who's Who in America* and the 2006-2007 edition of *Who's Who of American Women*.

Congratulations!

### **Allison M. Sutton Receives ALA Diversity Research Grant**

Allison M. Sutton was one of three recipients awarded an ALA Diversity Research Grant. Allison, AFAS Member-at-Large, is also an Assistant Professor and Psychology & Social Work Subject Specialist, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign Library. Allison's project, "Archival and Grey Literature Use Patterns in Library and Information Science Journal Articles with a Focus on the African American Experience (1986-2006)", highlights the importance of studying and tracking the trends of LIS scholars who are researching African American issues. This study seeks to answer questions and convey the importance of using a systematic approach to identify the use patterns for archival and grey literature type materials within a focused area of study. The project was submitted under this year's Research Topic 2- (Re)envisioning Multicultural Librarianship and Pedagogy.

Congratulations!

### About AFAS

Established as a section within the Association of College and Research Libraries of the American Library Association, AFAS is the outgrowth of a discussion group consisting of dynamic librarians with interest in and concern for African American studies and librarianship. Its circle of founding leaders include Clarence Chisholm, Stanton Biddle, Dori H. Clack, William Welburn, and others.

### Mission Statement

The mission of the African American Studies Librarians Section is to study librarianship and collection development as it progresses and relates to African American Studies collections; to conduct ongoing evaluation and discussion of research in African American Studies; to focus on resource sharing, archival materials, bibliographic control, retrospective collecting/purchasing, mechanized information, retrieval selection policies and procedures, oral history, and others as they relate to collection development and librarianship of African American Studies.

## OTHER AFAS NEWS AND ITEMS OF INTEREST

- **AFAS WIKI**

AFAS has joined 7 other ACRL sections in launching a Wiki. To directly access the AFAS Wiki use the following URL: <http://wikis.ala.org/acrl/index.php/AFAS>.

You can also access our Wiki from the ACRL Wiki main page: [http://wikis.ala.org/acrl/index.php/Main\\_Page](http://wikis.ala.org/acrl/index.php/Main_Page). A link will be added to the AFAS home page.

- **MONROE NATHAN WORK AWARD**

The Policy and Research Committee will resume the work required to establish the Monroe Nathan Work Outstanding African American Studies Resource Award. Those interested in building upon the efforts of the ad hoc committee lead by Lisa Pillow are invited to attend the meeting of the AFAS Policy and Research Committee at Midwinter in Philadelphia January 2008.



Courtesy of the Auburn Avenue Research Library on African American Culture and History Prentice Herman Polk Photograph Collection

- **NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR BLACK STUDIES CONFERENCE—MARCH 2008**

NCBS is accepting abstracts for papers and panels that explore the African World experience from an interdisciplinary global perspective. Of particular interest are those presentations that approach the discipline of Africana Studies using a multi-layered framework that incorporates various combinations of class, race, gender or womanist, Afro-Centric, cross-cultural, multi-cultural, postmodernist, postcolonial, comparative and diasporic perspectives. The 32nd National Council for Black Studies will take place from March 19-22, 2008 at the Renaissance Hotel West Peachtree Street in Atlanta, Georgia. Discounted Registration continues through February 1, 2008.

Visit the website for details: [http://www.ncbsonline.org/ncbs\\_national\\_conference](http://www.ncbsonline.org/ncbs_national_conference)

- **GRANT PROVIDES ACCESS TO AFRO-AMERICAN ARCHIVES**

The Johns Hopkins University has been awarded \$476,000 to collaborate with the Baltimore-based *Afro-American Newspapers* to open the 115-year-old newspaper company's historic archives to access by scholars and others. The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation-funded project will involve the university's [Center for Africana Studies](#) in the [Krieger School of Arts and Sciences](#) and the [Center for Educational Resources](#) at the [Sheridan Libraries](#)

- **LOC WEBCAST: SEGREGATED SCHOLARS**

Library of Congress webcast for Dr. Francille Rusan Wilson's Presentation on her book, *The Segregated Scholars: Black Social Scientists and the Creation of Black Labor Studies, 1890-1950*. This is one of several monthly booktalks sponsored by the Humanities and Social Sciences Division. Please feel free to distribute to other African American and Labor-related lists. LINK: [http://www.loc.gov/today/cyberlc/feature\\_wdesc.php?rec=4082](http://www.loc.gov/today/cyberlc/feature_wdesc.php?rec=4082)

Event date: 06/13/2007

Running time: 47 minutes

- **CALL FOR NOMINATIONS FOR AWARD**

Nominations are being accepted for the 2008 John Sessions Memorial Award given by the Reference and User Services Association (RUSA) of the American Library Association (ALA). Self nominations are welcomed. **The deadline is December 15, 2007.** The award was established in 1980 and is named in honor of John Sessions, former American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO) co-chair of the AFL-CIO/ALA Joint Committee on Library Service to Labor Groups. The plaque, supported by a donation from the AFL-CIO, is given to recognize a library or library system that has made a significant effort to work with the labor community and by doing so has brought recognition to the history and contribution of the labor movement to the development of the United States.

The 2008 award will presented at the RUSA Awards Reception during the ALA Annual Conference, June 26–July 2, 2008, in Anaheim, CA.

For more information, please contact the Sessions Committee Chairperson as soon as possible:

Jannie R. Cobb, Librarian  
301-431-5447  
[jcobb@nlc.edu](mailto:jcobb@nlc.edu)

## ALA EXECUTIVE BOARD ACTION AND DISCUSSION AT THE 2007 ALA ANNUAL CONFERENCE

LORIENE ROY - PRESIDENT

I wanted to update you on some of the actions and discussions of the Executive Board at Annual Conference. We welcomed new ALA Board Members Charles Kratz, Jr. and Larry Romans, Treasurer Rod Hersberger and President-elect Jim Rettig.

In commemoration of the 10th anniversary of the Spectrum Scholarship program, the Board approved the transfer of \$500,000 from the ALA Future Fund to the Spectrum Scholarship Fund. This transfer increases the funds available through the Spectrum family of funds to \$4.5 million.

These funds will result in the awarding of five additional Spectrum scholarships per year, beginning in June 2008, and brings the yearly total of awarded scholarships to a minimum of 30. It should be noted that this transfer is made possible in large part to the fact that the ALA Long-Term Investment (Endowment) fund recently surpassed the \$30 million mark.

The Board approved a recommendation from the 2007 Election Committee that the date of the announcements of the ALA Election results will now be the Friday before the first Monday in May. Formerly, the results were announced on the first Monday of May, but this has frequently coincided with ALA Library Legislative Day in Washington, DC, preventing the members of the Election Committee, which meets in Chicago, from participating, and also making the notification and announcement process more difficult.

The Board deferred action on other recommendations related to the ballot, and requested that the 2008 Election Committee, chaired by Nann Blaine Hilyard, prepare recommendations for

consideration by Council at the 2008 Midwinter Meeting.

Following approval of the Budgetary Ceilings by Council, the Board approved the FY 2008 budget. The Board approved Los Angeles as the site of the 2018 Midwinter Meeting, New Orleans as the site of the 2018 Annual Conference, Seattle as the site of the 2019 Midwinter Meeting and New York as the site of the 2019 Annual Conference. The Board also approved a change in the dates of the ACRL 2011 Conference in Philadelphia.

In Executive Session, the Board approved the appointment of a representative to the U.S. Committee of the Blue Shield. An official announcement will follow once the candidate has been notified and the nominee has accepted the appointment.

In addition, the Board heard and discussed reports from the Endowment Trustees, BARC, the Washington Office, Development Office and Graduated Dues Task Force, and saw a presentation on the new [ilovelibraries.org](http://ilovelibraries.org) advocacy web site. Meeting in executive session, the Board also heard an update on various confidential legal matters from ALA's Counsel.

The Board was joined by representatives from the Resource Description and Access (RDA) working group. The working group representatives described the evolution of RDA and answered questions about RDA and its implementation.

The Board reported on their liaison visits to various committees, divisions, round tables and affiliates. The Board Liaison program is designed to increase communication between the Board and these groups and provide the Board with an opportunity to better understand - and respond to - member issues and concerns.

### AFRICAN AMERICAN RESOURCES: PROQUEST BLACK HISTORICAL NEWSPAPERS

Four new titles have been added to the ProQuest Historical Newspapers collection in Summer 2007: *New York Amsterdam News*, *Pittsburgh Courier*, *Los Angeles Sentinel*, and *Atlanta Daily World*. Covering every major events to everyday life, these titles are invaluable research tools for studying American and African-American culture, history, politics, and art.

- **Atlanta Daily World (1931-2003)** The Atlanta Daily World had the first black White House correspondent and was the first black daily in the nation in the 20th century.
- **The Chicago Defender (1909-1975)** A leading African-American newspaper, with more than two-thirds of its readership outside Chicago.

- **Los Angeles Sentinel (1946-2005)** The oldest and largest black newspaper in the western United States and the largest African-American owned newspaper in the U.S.

- **New York Amsterdam News (1922-1993)** This leading Black newspaper of the 20th century reached its peak in the 1940s.

- **Pittsburgh Courier (1911-2002)\*** The *Courier* challenged the misrepresentation of African-Americans in the national media and advocated social reforms to advance the cause of civil rights.

An added advantage for libraries that already have the [ProQuest Black Studies Center](#) is that these titles will be made available on that platform with other content sets focused on the African-American experience.

## Temple Names New Leader for Blockson Afro-American Collection

By Ibram Rogers

Historian and archivist Dr. Diane Turner has been named as the successor to Charles L. Blockson, the legendary curator and founder of the Charles L. Blockson Afro-American Collection at Temple University who stepped down in December. Turner will officially succeed Blockson on Sept. 10 as the curator of one of the world's largest collections of materials on Black history and culture.

"Diane's deep understanding of the African-American experience, her professional record and her connections to local communities make her the ideal person to lead the Blockson Collection as it moves into a wonderful new home in Sullivan Hall this academic year," says Temple President Ann Weaver Hart. "I am grateful to Vice President for Student Affairs Theresa A. Powell, Charles Blockson and the rest of the search committee for bringing Diane, a Temple graduate, back to main campus."

Turner is currently a course director for the Bard College Clemente Course in the Humanities, a project director for the Oral History Project for Black Community in Woodbury, N.J., and teaches Black history at Camden County College. From 2002 to 2006, Turner served as

curator of collections and exhibitions for the African-American Museum in Philadelphia.

Turner is also the editor of the new book, *Feeding the Soul: Black Music, Black Thought*, an anthology of essays, personal narratives, interviews and poems that reveal the misconceptions in standard accounts of the evolution of Black music.

She earned her bachelor's in anthropology and art and a master's and doctorate in history, all from Temple. She says she's happy to be returning to her academic home.

Not only will the collection receive a new curator in the fall, but construction will also begin before the end of the year on a larger and more prominent space for the collection in Sullivan Hall — the building where it is currently stored. It is being housed in separate rooms totaling less than 2,000 square feet. But after construction is completed, the collection will be moved to a single, 3,000-square-foot room.

"The Blockson Collection's new home will be the kind of large, welcoming, open and well-lit space that the collection and the scholars who use it deserve," Hart says.



**Abdul Alkalimat Joins  
GSLIS Faculty**  
submitted by  
Thomas Weissinger

Abdul Alkalimat has been hired by the Graduate School of Library and Information Science (GSLIS) at the University of Illinois. Alkalimat joins the GSLIS faculty as professor in August 2007.

Alkalimat was most recently a professor of sociology and director of the Africana Studies program at the University of Toledo. He moderates the largest African-American Studies discussion list, H-Afro-Am, and created and edits Malcolm X: A Research Site as well as eBlack Studies. He is a member of the editorial boards of *Information,*

*Communication and Society;*  
*cy.Rev;* and *The Black Scholar.*

Alkalimat's research interests include: digital inequality, community informatics, and African American intellectual history. He is the director of the Digital Research Initiative of the National Council for Black Studies funded by the Ford Foundation. He will share a joint appointment with Illinois's African American Studies and Research Program.

Alkalimat earned his PhD in sociology from the University of

**CALL FOR PAPERS:**

SPECIAL EDITION OF JOURNAL OF PAN AFRICAN STUDIES

The Journal of Pan African Studies welcomes papers for a March 2008 special edition on the dynamics of Africology (Pan African, African American, Black, Afro-American, African Diaspora Studies) in academia, focused on: (but not limited to) its intellectual influences, theory-practice formation, challenges, nomenclature, research methods, and assumptions. We will also accept book reviews of recent and new publications within Africology (Pan African, African American, Black, Afro-American, African Diaspora Studies).

The selection criteria will involve: relevance to theme, clarity of paper, intellectual significance, and originality. Participants must send a 50 word abstract by September 2007, and their paper by December 2007 (the paper and abstract must include participant name, affiliation, paper title, and e-mail address) to the editor(s). The paper should not exceed 20 pages via MS word. Notification of acceptance will be provided at least 30 days after receipt of abstract/paper.

**About the Journal of Pan African Studies**

The Journal of Pan African Studies works to become a beacon of light in the sphere of African world community studies and research, grounded in an interdisciplinary open access scholarly peer-reviewed construct, simultaneously cognizant of the multilingualism of our audience, and the importance of universal access in cyberspace; regardless of geography, economic, social or cultural diversity.

For more information on the Journal of Pan African Studies, visit our website at: [www.jpnafrican.com](http://www.jpnafrican.com).

**Contact:**

**Itibari M. Zulu**  
 Editor, *The Journal of Pan African Studies*  
 E-mail: [jpnafrican@yahoo.com](mailto:jpnafrican@yahoo.com)

**Karanja Keita Carroll**  
 Guest Assistant Editor of *Special Edition*  
 Email: [carrollk@newpaltz.edu](mailto:carrollk@newpaltz.edu)

**A CELEBRATION OF LIFE: ASA GRANT HILLIARD, III  
 AKA NANA BAFFOUR AMAKWATIA, II**



African-centered educator, Asa G. Hilliard, III passed away in Egypt August 13 while leading a study tour with the organization Association for the Study of Classical African Civilizations (ASCAC). Dr. Hilliard, a founding member of ASCAC served as its first Vice President until his unexpected transition.

Dr. Hilliard's entire life was devoted to the inspiring educators to 'teach the children.' He strongly believed that all children are capable of achieving greatness and he every apologized for his

emphasis on African children. "Every Child can Learn" was his motto; and he often reminded educators that 'one must have love for a child in order to teach that child.'

The services, gifts and legacy of Dr. Hilliard has left indelible footprints on the over 50 organizations he has served over his 60 years as an educator. At the time of his death, Dr. Hilliard was the Fuller E. Calloway Professor of Urban Education at Georgia State University in Atlanta where he held joint appointments in the Department of Educational Policy Studies and the Department of Educational Psychology and Special Education.

Dr. Hilliard served on the faculty at San Francisco State University for eighteen years. During that time he was a Department Chair for two years, Dean of Education for eight years, and was consultant to the Peace Corps and Superintendent of Schools in Monrovia, Liberia for two years. He also participated in the development of several national assessment systems, such as proficiency assessment for professional educators, and developmental assessments of young children and infants. He has been active in forensic psychology, serving as an expert witness on the winning side in several landmark federal cases on test validity and bias.

Dr. Hilliard is the author of many publications related to Africana studies and education. He was active in the movement to include Africana studies in all public schools. Dr. Hilliard was laid to rest in Atlanta, Georgia on August 23, his 74th birthday.

**XAVIER MOURNS DEATH  
 OF JOHN T. SCOTT**

Xavier University of Louisiana held a special memorial service on Saturday morning, September 8, 2007, to mark the passing of one of its most illustrious alumni who was also a dedicated faculty member for four decades.

Longtime art professor John T. Scott (Class of '62) died in Houston, Texas on September 1 following a lengthy struggle to recuperate from double lung surgeries.

Scott's large, three-dimensional

public works can be found in a dozen locations in New Orleans, as well as in six other major cities (Atlanta, Birmingham, Boston, Houston, Nashville and Philadelphia). His other creations can be found in public and private collections throughout the country.

Often honored and celebrated, John T. Scott was bestowed "Genius" status in 1992 when the prestigious MacArthur Foundation Fellowship recognized him for his extraordinary originality and exceptional creativity. Scott continued to inspire Xavier art students until Hurricane Katrina

forced him to relocate to Houston.

John T. Scott had been on extended leave while recovering from double lung surgery. He taught at Xavier for more than 40 years. In addition to his XU degree, he also held a master's degree from Michigan State University.

At this year's Commencement ceremony in May 2007, Xavier bestowed an honorary degree upon Scott for those creative expressions in multiple art media that garnered him a national reputation and made him one of America's most highly-acclaimed contemporary artists.

## AFRICAN AMERICAN RESEARCH LIBRARY & CULTURAL CENTER OF BROWARD COUNTY CELEBRATES FIVE YEARS AS BUDGET CUTS LOOM

REPRINTED WITH PERMISSION FROM THE *BROWARD TIMES*

BY TRACY-ANN TAYLOR

Nearly five years ago, Samuel F. Morrison's dream of a state-of-the-art facility for research, life-long learning, community gatherings, cultural events and technology training became a reality.

Today, the African-American Research Library and Cultural Center is a testament to black pride, a symbol of the black experience, and a cause célèbre for members of the African Diaspora who in October will commemorate its fifth anniversary.

But as the festivities begin to gear up, looming budget cuts may soon cause the library to pare down or even eliminate some programs due to reductions in property taxes.

"The entire county has to reduce its resources by \$90 million because of the tax revolt," said Julie Hunter, a former African-American Research Library director who is now the associate director for public services in the Broward County library system. "If you say you have to reduce your taxes, you have to reduce your services. So what that does do is that we have to cut back; not just the African-American Library and Research Cultural Center but the entire Broward County library system."

Salaries take the hardest hit at the African-American library. The 2008 proposed budget calls for a nearly 10 percent salary cut, or \$150,000, from \$1,565,386.49 to \$1,415,386.49.

Staffers at the library are concerned that their jobs may soon be eliminated and that the library may have to rely more heavily on volunteers.

"There's a ten percent decrease that more than likely will affect staff and programming. Eighty-nine vacant positions [throughout the library

system] will not be filled, but at this time, no one knows for sure what's going to happen," said Tanya Simons-Oparah, outreach services director for the Broward library system.

Despite the looming cuts in a final budget that will be approved later this month, African-American Research Library Executive Director Alicia A. Antone promises not to decrease the number and quality of programs.

She said the library will continue to educate the community about the African heritage, culture and history, and remain a place to learn, change and grow.

"We're still at the grassroots stage of trying to see the direction that the library will go in the future," Antone said.

The AARLCC opened in 2002 after Morrison, the former director of the Broward County Library Division, envisioned a place where people would be able to research the history and heritage of African, African-American and Caribbean cultures. Since then, the AARLCC has displayed more than 38 major exhibits and offered over 184 programs.

Last year, the AARLCC marked its one-millionth visitor, welcomed the Tuskegee Airmen; and exhibited artifacts of the late Emmy-award winning Pompano Beach native Esther Rolle.

Celebrities such as actress Phylicia Rashad, who read excerpts of author Zora Neale Hurston's works; presidential hopeful Hillary Clinton, who addressed youngsters at the Hip Hop Get Out the Vote event, and Essence magazine's editorial director Susan L. Taylor; have made AARLCC a must-see stop when visiting Fort Lauderdale.

The library has grown from 75,000 to

more than 85,000 books, works of art, photos, manuscripts, artifacts and other documents on the history of Africa, African-Americans and the Caribbean.

Antone, who became the African-themed library's director in January, when Hunter was promoted, said that Morrison's vision incorporated four bridges extending across time and cultures that were the fundamentals of the library in serving the community:

1. The technological bridge would educate the public on new technological advances like computers.
2. The cultural bridge would connect us to our culture as well as others.
3. The historical bridge symbolizes our past, and
4. A geographical bridge connects the historical black community to the newly revitalized downtown Fort Lauderdale.

Throughout the years, the AARLCC has become an integral part of the community.

Other enhancements to the library include: more research materials that are accessible online; an expanded list of library events; additional programs such as the Young Archivists program and the Summer Art of Learning Team (SALT) program, which exposed teens to art and culture in the African Diaspora.

There is also a monthly video conference called "Building Bridges," taped for children who can't make it to the library.

Plus, there is the popular annual Pan-African Bookfest, which allows authors and artists to showcase their works. It continues to draw people to the library each year.

“Most of the enhancements came from community feedback,” Antone said. “It [the library] has been something the community has really taken to heart and made sure that every aspect of it just be excellent in terms of programming and activities,” she said.

The special collections department houses eight unpublished manuscripts by author Alex

Haley. There is also the Cato and Margaret Roach collection; the Dr. Niara Sudarkasa collection, the Osemwegie Ebohon Collection, the Rev. Maurice Dawkins collection and the Council of Elders collection, among others.

“It is unbelievable what goes on in that library. We want to continue to promote black people and the contributions they’ve made because it’s been long overlooked,” said Ellyn Walters, former president of the Friends of the African-American Research Library and Cultural Center, a major fundraiser for the library.

The AARLCC is one of four of its kind in the United States. The others are the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture in New York, The Auburn Avenue Research Library on African-American Culture and History in Atlanta, and the Blair-Caldwell African American Research Library in Denver.

Broward’s African-American Research Library is housed in a 60,000 square foot building at 2650 Sistrunk Boulevard, near Fort Lauderdale. It boasts a gift shop, a 30-square foot circular Harrambe room, a 300-seat state-of-the-art auditorium, a 5,000 square-foot museum, a 12-seat conference room, seminar rooms that hold up to 65 seats, and a computer training lab.

Anyone can go there to do research, check out books, magazines, videos, DVDs, CDs, and use the computers. The library offers youth and adult services and technological, educational, recreational and cultural programs such as dance classes and a literacy campaign.

Morrison’s vision has certainly come true, but it took a lot of work to get where it is today.

In 1995, the Broward County Commission donated what used to be vacant land at the southeast corner of Sistrunk Boulevard and NW 27th Avenue, as well as \$5 million to build a library there to replace the Von D. Mizell Library further east on Sistrunk.

But Morrison had more in mind than just another library. He wanted to build a major cultural and historical research center that would cost about \$14 million. Morrison spurred the community into grassroots efforts to raise the additional

money needed to make the dream a reality.

Walters, president of Friends of the Library for 21 years, organized committees for fundraising ventures. The group contacted churches, sororities, fraternities, organizations and clubs for donations. The committees held silent auctions and shows, and wrote grants. The Friends also raised money from their annual luncheon. The community effort brought in about \$600,000, Walters said.

“We made people aware of what this library was going to be like and I wanted them to see the vision that Mr. Morrison had,” Walters said.

Other contributions include \$1 million from the Huizenga family. The rest of the money was raised and donated by other organizations such as AutoNation, the Kresge Foundation, Publix Supermarkets Charities, Dianne and Michael Bienes and the South Florida Sun-Sentinel. Local developer Milton Jones and his wife gave \$50,000. Other local residents also bought donor bricks with their names embedded.

On October 26, 2002, the library finally opened in the heart of one of Broward’s historically black communities.

Motifs such as the Kente cloth paintings were created on the outside walls. Carved wooden figures lined the lobby, and African adinkra symbols were placed throughout the building. The library’s mission was adopted from the dwennimmen symbol, which portrays four rams’ horns that signify humility, strength, wisdom and learning.

World-renowned interior designer Cecil Hayes added her award-winning style to the finishing touches.

The first exhibit was the famous Hewitt collection, one of the most significant collections of Haitian art. Five years later, the AARLCC continues to exhibit art that portrays the black experience, and over 35,000 people visit the AARLCC each month, Antone said.

“People in the community are just still so proud of what they’ve done together to make it happen. It is really the library that has had direct community support,” Hunter said.

Despite the library’s budget reductions, the African-American community will most likely ensure that the AARLCC continues to be a place for those seeking knowledge of the African Diaspora.

“This library will continue to capture every bit of that and convey it to generations unborn,” Hunter said.

[Tracy-AnnTaylor@BrowardTimes.com](mailto:Tracy-AnnTaylor@BrowardTimes.com)

AFAS Newsletter  
c/o ACRL  
50 East Huron Street  
Chicago, IL 60611

Nonprofit Org.  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
American Library  
Association

---

### **AFAS Newsletter**

(ISSN 1076-8955) is published by the African American Studies Librarians' Section of the Association of College and Research Libraries, a division of the American Library Association, 50 East Huron Street, Chicago, IL 60611, 1-800-545-2433, ext. 2519.

©American Library Association, 2003.

### **Editor**

Rebecca Hankins, C.A.  
Africana Resources Curator/  
Librarian  
Texas A&M University  
MS5000  
College Station, TX 77840  
[rhankins@tamu.edu](mailto:rhankins@tamu.edu)

### The *AFAS Newsletter*

welcomes contributions from readers. Send articles, items of interest, and news to the editor, preferably in electronic format.

The *AFAS Newsletter* is sent to all AFAS members at no additional cost. Claims and address changes should be sent to the ALA address, Attention: Membership.

### **AFAS WEBSITE:**

[www.afassection.org](http://www.afassection.org)

### **AFAS OFFICERS 2007/2008**

Carmelita Pickett, Chair

Thomas Weissinger,  
Vice-Chair/Chair-Elect

Akilah S. Nosakhere,  
Past Chair

Sylvia Nyana, Secretary

Allison Sutton,  
Member-at-Large

Adam Burling,  
Staff liaison  
American Library Assn  
ACRL Division

Debbie L. Malone  
ACRL Board Liaison

### **Committee Chairs**

#### Membership

Allison M. Sutton

#### Conference Programming

Lisa Pillow

#### Cataloging Issues

Dorothy A. Washington

#### Nominating

Akilah Nosakhere

#### Policy and Research

Akilah Nosakhere

#### Publications

Harry Murphy

#### Awards (Ad Hoc)

Lisa Pillow