



NEW YORK BLACK LIBRARIANS CAUCUS NEWSLETTER

THE NEW YORK BLACK LIBRARIANS CAUCUS (NYBLC) is a collection of professionals, who believe that they are the “culture keepers” of history, tradition and community. We represent the library community’s collective interests. The Caucus works to expand professional, economic and networking opportunities for librarians, library support staff, board of trustees, institutions and those that love libraries.

By joining the Caucus, you will be united with professional men and women, who together ignite

a powerful torch of strength, enthusiasm and imagination. NYBLC offers scholarships, books awards, and a host of services provided for Caucus members including programs, job listings, and so much more. You can benefit tremendously from the numerous executive offices, committees, presentations, and professional development workshops.

The CAUCUS needs your support and energetic involvement as we continue working to make progress in the library community. Together we will make a difference.

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PRESIDENT'S LETTER



Dana M. Sinclair
President, NYBLC
2019 - 2021

Dear Members,

In light of all of the issues that we are facing today, I am glad that we are able to come together in unity to continue our promotion of Black librarianship and our contributions to the field. It has been an eventful year. I would like to thank each and every member that has stepped up to continue the work of the caucus. With the arrival of my now ten month old baby girl it has been a whirlwind of activity and unexpected challenges on my part. The executive board has stepped in to take care of the inner workings of caucus business in my absence and I am eternally grateful.

With that said, there are some exciting things happening this summer and into the fall! With the introduction to our very first web series "Conversations from the Heart" we are utilizing technology to continue spreading the word about equality in the workplace and promoting diversity within our profession. As an organization we have an extremely important role to play here in New York as representation of Black librarians state wide. With the help of NYLA we have been able to broaden our reach and for the first time, have members from all over the state.

In the wake of all of the civil unrest as people become more and more aware of the inequalities and adversity that people of color continue to face in this country, communities are coming together. Citizens of this country are more dejected, incensed and motivated to effectuate change than ever before. Now is the time for us as a people to band together and rise above the iniquities we face and use our voices to fight against it. It is my hope that the caucus will be a platform to give a voice to those who need it. As we continue to raise money for our scholarship funds, inspire librarians new to the field and network with one another to provide insight and support as we navigate a field that historically lacks diversity and continues to be an issue today.

So cheers to the work we have done and the work we continue to do. Cheers as we strive for greatness!

Our History

In 1970 a group of Black Librarians met to address the problems resulting from widespread racism in their profession. The problems fell into two major categories: • Libraries in Black communities were most often inaccessible, had neglected facilities, and inadequate staffing and resources. It was increasingly evident that minority communities were being left behind in terms of access to the avalanche of information so indispensable in a rapidly changing technological society.

The Black Librarians' professional advancement was consistently blocked by blatant restrictions. The members of the group that met over 40 years ago decided to take collective action. They founded an organization and named it the Black Librarians' Caucus of Queens, since most of its members lived or worked in that borough. The problems that this group rallied around were so persuasive that librarians from the greater New York area soon joined the founding members. In 1975, the organization's name was changed to the New York Black Librarian's Caucus Inc.

Today, the Caucus is still a thriving, vital organization that strongly advocates for quality library services in all communities, broad professional opportunities for Black Librarians, bridging the Digital Divide and other important issues. Through the annual Donna Hoke Scholarship award, the Caucus assists at least two Black graduate students in pursuit of the master's degrees in library and information science.

Did You Know...

NYBLC Scholarship recipients who became NYBLC Presidents:

Madeline Ford (1991) President 2005 - 2007
Negla Ross-Parris (1992) President 1998 - 1999
Phyllis Hodges (1993) President 1999 - 2001
Margaret Gibson (2005) President 2009 - 2011

NYBLC members who became BCALA Presidents:

Stanton Biddle, 1994 - 1996
Andrew P. Jackson (Sekou Molefi Baako), 2004 - 2006
Richard E. Ashby, Jr., 2018 - 2020
Shauntee Burns-Simpson, 2020 - 2022 (Current President)

NYBLC Board Election 2020 Results

President
Emily Dowie

Votes: 21
100%

Vice President
Taina Evans

Votes: 20
100%

Recording Secretary
S. Michele Echols

Votes: 20
95.24%

Corresponding Secretary
Juanita James

Votes: 20
100%

Treasurer
Rebecca Rodd

Votes: 13
61.90%

Congratulations to the winners
of this year's election!!

Celebrating NYBLC's 50th Anniversary

We are excited to announce that NYBLC is being updated to coincide with the New York Black Librarians 50th Anniversary in 2020. It all began with the 35th Anniversary celebration in 2005, where a brief history summary was printed in the Jazz Brunch program. This will be added to the printing of NYBLC's history.

NYBLC Presidents, all twenty-two of them will be highlighted by decade, 1970s, 1980s, 1990s, 2000s, 2010s. Included are photographs, short biographies, and a timeline of accomplishments during their terms of office.

NYBLC has an illustrious history, members included Elected Officials, Administrators, Department Heads, School Library Leaders, and high-ranking members of their respective libraries. This information from librarians in the various Generations: Traditionalists or the Silent Generation (born 1945 and before) and the Baby Boomers (1946-1964) needs to be shared with Generation X (1965-1976), Millennials or GenY (1977-1995) and Generation Z/Centennials (1996-). Many of the issues former generations faced are still issues today with current generations in the library field.

We hope you are excited too!
Here is a sampling of what will be included.



50th Anniversary Gala Update



New York State government response to the pandemic (COVID-19) has created our “new normal”. In addition, as part of the New York Library Association we are following the 2020 NYLA annual conference/trade show update closely. NYLA will make a final determination on the format for the 2020 Annual Conference (In-person/virtual hybrid OR completely Virtual Online) on August 1, 2020. After this date, NYBLC will release our plans for hosting the 50th Anniversary Gala. Please stay tuned and visit our website for up-to-date information. https://www.nyla.org/nyla-2020-conference-trade-show-updates-and-decision-timeline/?menukey=trade_show

Michele Echols / Immediate Past President / Chair of the Gala committee

50th Anniversary Gala

The Gala’s invited guests include Library Directors, Librarians, Administrators, Library Advocates, staff, Elected Officials and other notable members of the New York library and educational community. The NYBLC is a non-profit 501(c)3 organization that has been a constant voice for diversity and library advocacy in the New York library community for almost 50 years. The goal of the Caucus is to provide financial support to graduate students of African American descent pursuing a master’s degree in Library and Information Science. The Hoke & Gethers-Mohammed Scholarship is our primary tool and, to date, over \$45,000 scholarships have been awarded!

This event will raise funds for the Hoke & Gethers-Mohammed Memorial Scholarship & Andrew P. Jackson Scholarship Award for Library Support Staff. The Gala will also include the naming of the 2020 NYBLC Distinguished Author Book Awards in the following categories Adult Author, YA Author and Children Author.

~Distinguished Author Award Winner ~

[Kwame Alexander](#)

Kwame is a poet, educator, and the New York Times Bestselling author of 32 books, including *THE UNDEFEATED*, illustrated by Kadir Nelson and *HOW TO READ A BOOK*, illustrated by Melissa Sweet

~ Young Adult Winner ~

[Khristi Lauren Adams](#)

Khristi is an author, speaker and ordained minister. Her new book, *Parable of the Brown Girl* will be released in February 2020. The book highlights the cultural/historical and spiritual truths that emerge from the lives of young black girls.

~ Children’s Book Winner ~

[Ama KariKari Yawson](#)

Ama is an author, attorney, educator and motivational speaker. In 2015, she created the folkloric character Kwanzaa Nana for her Kwanzaa series. Her first book picture book, *Sunne’s Gift*, is about a magical being (magbee) with spirally hair that grows toward the sun named Sunne.

Upcoming Virtual Event: Conversations from the Heart

The New York Black Librarians Caucus presents...

Conversations from
t h e h e a r t
a 6 part virtual series

Part 1: Code-switching
Friday, July 24
11:30am-1pm

Panelists: S. Michele Echols (NYBLC), Taina Evans (Brooklyn Public Library), Shakema Miller (Nassau Library System), and Peyton Powell (East Ramapo Central School District)



Conversations from the Heart series' dates:

- Part 2 - August 7, 2020**
- Part 3 - August 14, 2020**
- Part 4 - August 21, 2020**
- Part 5 - August 28, 2020**
- Part 6 - September 4, 2020**

Member Recognition

NYLA honoree:
Phyllis G. Mack



As the longest active & financial member of NYBLC, Ms. Mack was honored at NYLA 2019 for her years of exceptional professional service and steadfast commitment to NYBLC, NYLA, and the New York Library Community.

With a lengthy career as a New York Public Library librarian, Phyllis G. Mack, progressed in integral steps to higher positions with increased responsibility. After 39 years of service, she retired in 2002 as the Regional Librarian for Central Harlem. Her career was distinguished by special performance awards and excellent service to the community it served. Very active in her profession and the community, she earned a reputation of being reliable, businesslike, competent and fair-minded which led to her election to various leadership positions.

As a member of the American Library Association (for 25+ years now), she was selected to serve as a Spectrum Juror and was elected as an Executive Board member of its Black Caucus, serving two terms of office. She attended the first five National Conferences of African American Librarians and encouraged her colleagues to participate and attend. She was the Program Chair of the 3rd NCAAL and a member of the Published Proceedings Committee for three conferences. She is currently a member of the New York Library Association and joined the New York

Black Librarians Caucus shortly after it was established. An active member, she became President in its early years. As a result of her advocacy for libraries, she was appointed to Community Board #10 Manhattan and shortly thereafter was elected President. She was also appointed by the NYC Education Chancellor as a Trustee, Community Board #5. She was awarded a doctoral fellowship to attend Columbia University and has been listed in Marquis Who's Who in America for over 20 years. Ms. Mack holds a B. S. in Education, West Virginia State College, MLS, Pratt Institute, Advanced Certificate in Library Service, Columbia University.

As an undergraduate she worked in the college library at WVSU. Surrounded by African American librarians, she was encouraged to become a librarian.

While raising her two daughters, she was a member of numerous organizations devoted to children. She is the proud and doting grandmother of four grandchildren, and has kept very busy in her retirement years. She regularly attends exercise and dance classes which she thoroughly enjoys. An avid traveler, she has visited most of the United States and four conti-

nents. Genealogy intrigues her and she continues to unearth information about her maternal and paternal families.

A charter member of the North Manhattan Alumnae Chapter, Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., she served as an officer and chair of many committees. A Golden Life member, she is a Delta Dear with 58 years of public service.



Phyllis Mack
&
Sandra Michele Echols

Resolution honoring Phyllis G. Mack

Resolution Honoring Phyllis G. Mack, Retired Librarian

(Longest active and financial member of the NYBLC, a NYLA Roundtable)

Whereas, Phyllis G. Mack retired from the New York Public Library in 2002 after 39+ years of service in New York City; and

Whereas, she in her capacity as Regional Librarian for the Central Harlem region served with loyalty, honor and distinction and rendered faithful, conscientious and valuable service to the Harlem community; and

Whereas, Phyllis G. Mack mentored and trained many new librarians, several of whom have become leaders, directors in New York State and other library systems; and

Whereas, as a library advocate, she was appointed to the NYC Community Board and rose to become President; and

Whereas, she has been active in many professional and community organizations including ALA, BCALA, NYBLC, and NYLA; and

Whereas, she is an active and financial member of the NYBLC for over 40 years, serving as President 1981-1983, now a NYLA Roundtable; and

Whereas, she has been the recipient of numerous awards and honors and received resolutions acknowledging her work from each elected official in her area upon her retirement; and

Whereas, Phyllis G. Mack is documenting the history of the NYBLC (1970-2020) to be issued on its 50th Anniversary, therefore be it

Resolved, that the New York Library Association acknowledges and recognizes the many important contributions of Phyllis G. Mack to the New York library community and to the library profession; and be it further

Resolved, that the New York Library Association expresses deep appreciation to Phyllis G. Mack for her commitment to libraries and librarians in New York State.

2.26.2019



NYBLC @ NYLA 2019



Sitting: Stephanie Mack, Phyllis Mack, Sandra Michele Echols, Simone L. Yearwood,

Standing: Jeremy Johannesen, Nicholas Caldwell (Scholarship recipient)

NYLA Booth

Sandra Michele Echols, Phyllis Mack, Simone L. Yearwood



Michele Young Past President NYLA, Sandra Michele Echols, Simone L. Yearwood, Nicholas Caldwell, Jamia Williams, Phyllis Mack

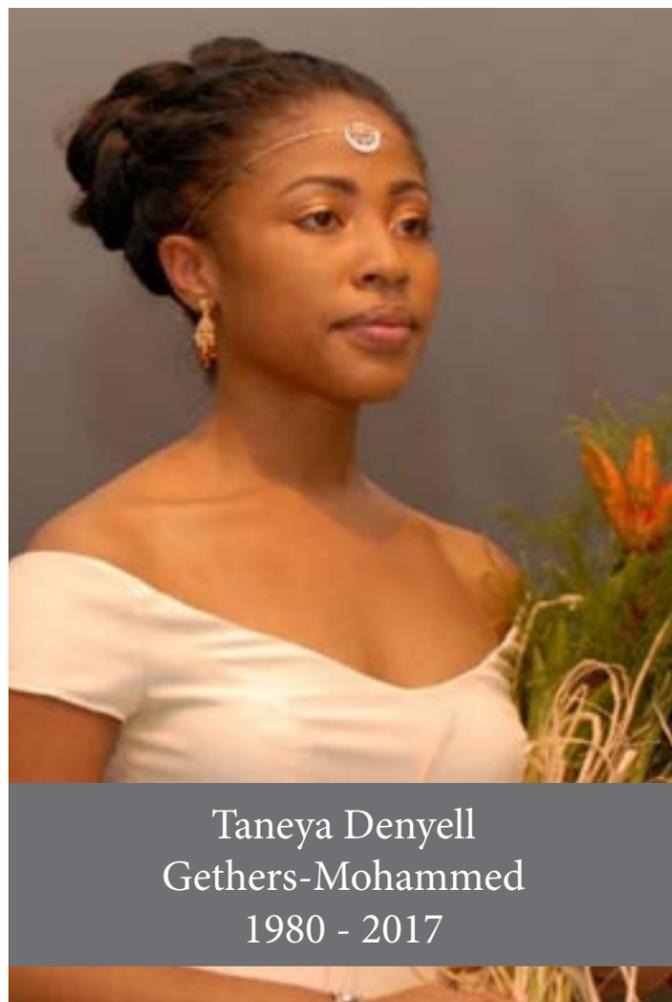
Celebrating the life of Dr. Lucille Cole Thomas



Dr. Lucille Cole Thomas passed away on June 15, 2019 at the age of 97 years. She was the second president of the New York Black Librarians Caucus and the first African American to serve as President of the New York Library Association and the New York City School Librarians Association, among other firsts.

She began her career at the Brooklyn Public Library and was elected to the Board of Trustees. BPL established the annual Librarian Award named the Dr. Lucille C. Thomas Award for excellence in Librarianship. She was a member of ALA since 1957 and served on ALA Council for 22 years, and on various committees and divisions. She received numerous professional awards and honors including the Honorary Membership from the American Library Association which is bestowed on individuals whose contributions are so outstanding that they are significant and lasting to the field of library science. We remember Dr. Lucille Cole Thomas as a trailblazer in the library field and honor her memory.

Scholarship renamed in honor of Taneya Gethers-Mohammed

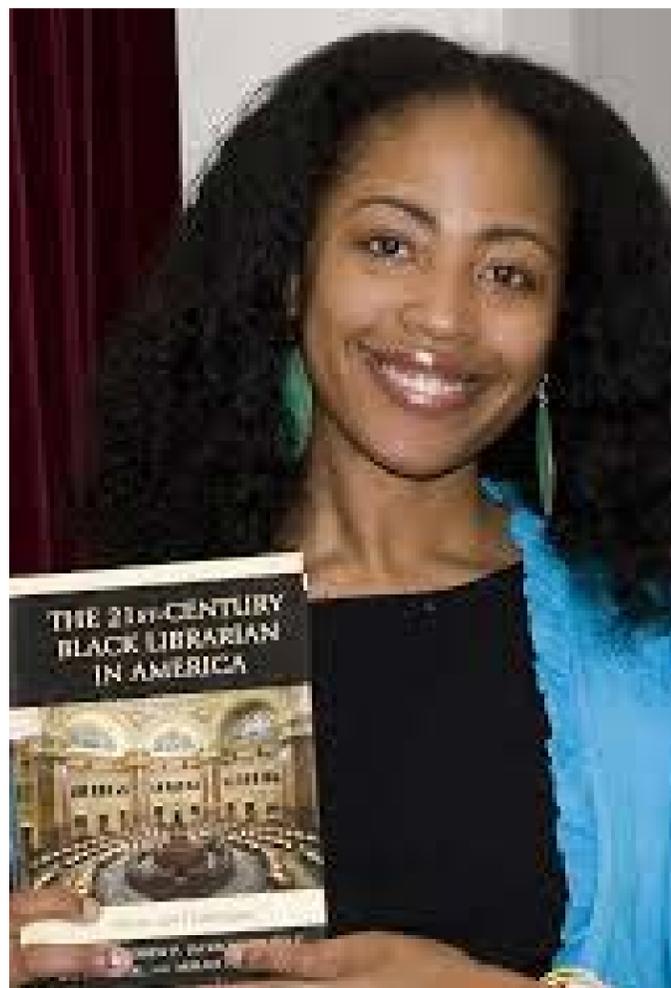


Taneya Denyell
Gethers-Mohammed
1980 - 2017

often worked with the children in her community, helping to promote a positive self-image amongst the youth. She was also a strong proponent for helping those in need, as she helped raise funds for survivors of the 2010 Haiti earthquake. Ms. Gethers-Mohammad made a difference in her Brooklyn community and within the library community.

NYBLC has renamed the Donna Hoke Scholarship to the **Hoke and Gethers-Mohammed Memorial Scholarship** to honor the life of Taneya Denyell Gethers-Mohammad.

Ms. Gethers-Mohammad worked as a librarian at the Brooklyn Public Library. Beloved by the community, Gethers-Mohammed often pushed for more funding for her library branch, Macon Library. She



Member Updates

~ New Position ~

Since receiving her MLS in 2018, **Jamia Williams** has continued to shine in Librarianship. Her former position as the Librarian and Diversity Fellow at the SUNY Upstate Medical University came to a close in fall 2019. Since then, she was offered and accepted a position as the Liaison Librarian at Edward G. Miner Library at the University of Rochester Medical Center. As a Medical Librarian, Williams is the liaison for many departments including Cardiology, General Medicine, Pharmacology and Internal Medicine.

~ Scholarship winner ~

Congrats to **Nicholas Caldwell!** NYLA/NYBLC Diversity and Inclusion Scholarship winner. Caldwell was awarded in November at the NYLA Conference. In addition to this accolade, Caldwell is also a Howard M. and Gladys B. Teeple Scholar and a 2019-2020 ALA Spectrum Scholar. Spectrum Scholarships are awarded to outstanding students of color pursuing graduate degrees in library and information studies.

~ Head of Faculty Senate ~

Congrats to **Simone L. Yearwood**, Queens College Libraries' Deputy Chief Librarian & Associate Professor, who was re-elected as Head of the Queens College Faculty Senate in May 2020. Ms. Yearwood's re-election follows her successful first year which began in May 2019. She is held in high esteem amongst the teaching faculty at Queens College; she continues to make strides at QC and throughout the CUNY Library community.

Scholarships

~ The Hoke & Gethers-Mohammed Memorial Scholarship ~

The Hoke & Gethers-Mohammed Memorial Scholarship was established by the New York Black Librarians' Caucus Inc. to encourage students of African descent to enter the field of librarianship. The fund was named in honor of a young librarian who was an active member of the New York Black Librarians' Caucus Inc. and other professional and civic organizations. Donna Hoke was deeply concerned about the issues confronting minority communities and was committed to bringing about positive change. Ms. Gether-Mohammed was a beacon in her Brooklyn community. As a librarian she focused on instilling confidence and encouraging the youth through literacy.

~ Andrew P. Jackson Support Staff Scholarship ~

This scholarship is offered in recognition of 36 years of dedicated service to the library profession by Andrew P. Jackson (Sekou Molefi Baako), Director-Emeritus at Queens Library's Langston Hughes Community Library and Cultural Center. Past President of the Black Caucus of the American Library Association, Inc. (2004-2006), Andrew is an Adjunct Instructor at the Graduate School of Library and Information Studies at Queens College (CUNY) and the Black Studies Program of the History & Philosophy Department at York College (CUNY). He is also a Library Consultant/Advisor.

The NYBLC, Inc. welcomes membership by any persons who work in the library profession, not solely MLS degreed librarians. This scholarship is created specifically for library support staff. The scholarship seeks to encourage library support staff to work towards and earn an undergraduate baccalaureate degree, in any discipline, from an accredited face-to-face or online academic program

To learn more about the NYBLC Scholarships, the application process and deadlines please visit www.thenyblc.org.

NYBLC Committees

Fundraising

The Fundraising Committee shall plan and implements activities to raise funds for the programs and general operations of the NYBLC. The committee shall also raise funds by soliciting individuals, businesses, and corporations.

Membership & Recruiting

The Membership and Recruiting Committee shall actively promote membership in the NYBLC. To establish general policies, programs, and procedures to secure new members; to be responsible for the implementation of these programs; to coordinate membership promotion activities, to make recommendations concerning membership dues; to prepare and maintain a Membership Directory; to welcome new members by recommending ways to acknowledge new members and to encourage participation in NYBLC activities.

Public Relations / Publicity

The Public Relations Committee shall orchestrate all aspects of organizing and disseminating information about the NYBLC events and activities to the community via the listserv, website, social networking platforms and other promotional materials.

By-Laws

The Constitution and Bylaws Committee shall be in charge of reviewing and updating the Bylaws and recommend needed changes to the Executive Board and membership.

Scholarship

The Scholarship Committee shall publicize the Donna Hoke Scholarship to potential candidates, library schools, etc. Evaluate the nominees for the scholarship and to select the recipients following established guidelines and coordinates the formal presentation of the scholarship award(s) at the Annual Luncheon Fundraiser. The committee also serves as a mentoring body to support the growth and development of scholarship recipients and applicants.

All members are encouraged to serve on NYBLC Committees. For more information please visit www.thenyblc.org and review our Committes page.

NYBLC Officers

Dana M. Sinclair
President

Rebecca Rodd
Recording Secretary

Phyllis Mack
Treasurer

Sandra Michele Echols
Immediate Past President

Save the Date

Conversations from the Heart
Part 1: Code-switching
Friday, July 24, 2020
11:30am - 1pm
Virtual*

NYLA Annual Conference & Trade Show
Friday, November 6, 2020 -
Saturday, November 7, 2020
Venue: TBA

NYBLC's 50th Anniversary Gala
Saturday, November 14, 2020
Venue: TBA

BCALA
11th National Conference of African American
Libraries (NCAAL XI) - POSTPONED to
Wednesday, July 28, 2021 - Sunday, August 1, 2021
Tulsa, Oklahoma

Interested in becoming a member or
renewing your membership? Follow the
steps below:

1. Go to: www.nyla.org.
2. Join/Renew with NYLA.
3. Add NYBLC Roundtable
to your membership!

2020 Caucus General Meetings

Saturday, June 27, 2020
11am - 1pm
Virtual

Saturday, August 15, 2020
11am - 1pm
Virtual

Saturday, October 17, 2020
11pm - 1pm
Virtual

Contact Us

New York Black Librarians Caucus Inc.
6021 State Farm Rd
Guilderland, NY 12084
NYBLCroundtable@gmail.com

Visit Our Website:
www.thenybhc.org