UNC ASHEVILLE PRESENTS

“YESTERDAY, TODAY AND TOMORROW”

The Fourth Annual African Americans in Western North Carolina and Southern Appalachia Conference

October 19-21, 2017
FOURTH ANNUAL
African Americans in Western North Carolina and Southern Appalachia Conference
Presented by UNC Asheville

OCTOBER 19-21, 2017

Front cover photos:

Yesterday: Stephens Lee High School
Today: Black Love, Black Joy, Black Healing Day
Tomorrow: Word on the Street
Thursday, Oct. 19
6:30 - 8:30 p.m.
YMI Cultural Center - 39 Market Street, Asheville

Opening Reception

Shirley Whitesides
Special Presentation for Community Service

Judge Yvonne Mims Evans
Jesse and Julia Ray Lecture Series Keynote

Catering by Cooking with Comedy Catering

Friday, Oct. 20
9 a.m. to 6 p.m.
Wilma M. Sherrill Center, Ingles Mountain View Room,
UNC Asheville campus

Remarks - 9:15 a.m.

Senator Terry Van Duyn

Morning Panel — 9:30 - 11:30 a.m.

Rebekah Turnmire
“worthy to be classed”: Slavery and its Legacy
in Grayson County, Virginia

Sheri Parks, Ph.D.
To Home on an Angry Wind: Family Stories, Cultural Trauma and
the Female Slaves of John Hazzard Carson

Bruce W. Cahoon
Unholy Alliance: The Religious Politics of Slavery
Early Afternoon Panel — 1 - 3:00 p.m.

Jillean McCommons  
_Recovering the Lives of Black Banjo Players in the Mountain South: The Case of John Homer Walker_

William Isom II  
_Blacks in Appalachia & Public Media_

Marie Cochran  
_Affrilachia: Race, Place and Resilience_

Late Afternoon Panel — 3 - 4:45 p.m.

The Race, Church, and Theological Practices  
_Collaborative Inquiry Team_

_Topographies of the Black Sacred_

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Reception 5 - 6 p.m.

_Music by the Delta House Jazz Band_

_Catering by the Ettison Group_
Saturday, Oct. 21
9 a.m. - 5 p.m.
Wilma M. Sherrill Center, UNC Asheville campus

Morning Panel #1 - 9:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.
Ingles Mountain View Room
Moderator: Darin Waters, Ph.D.

Sekou Coleman, Diane Tower-Jones, and Keynon Lake
Beneath the Veneer: Documentary Update

Nicole Townsend
A vision for Black lives: Examining the possibility of applying the platform for Black lives in Asheville

Morning Panel #2 - 9:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.
Sherrill Center Room 411

Dwight Mullen, Ph.D. and former students
State of Black Asheville Student Roundtable 1:
Ten Years Ago and Now

State of Black Asheville Student Roundtable 2:
SOBA as We Knew It
■ Early Afternoon Panel - 1 - 3:00 pm
Ingles Mountain View Room
Moderator: Al Whitesides

Community Resilience
- Je’Wana Grier-McEachin, ABIPA
- Shuvonda Harper, My Community Matters
- Tamiko Ambrose Murray, Word on the Street
- Andrea Golden, Emma Community Ownership
- Sophie Dixon, Pearson Plan/Shiloh Community
- Libby Kyles, YTL Training Program

■ Late Afternoon Panel #1 - 3:15 - 4:45 p.m.
Sherrill Center Room 411

Justin Edge, Latoya Gardner, Savi Horne, and William Isom II
Community Economic Development: History of CED with
a focus on strategies and Tools

■ Late Afternoon Panel #2 - 3:15 - 4:45 p.m.
Ingles Mountain View Room
Moderator: Dwight Mullen, Ph.D.

James Steele, Zaphon Wilson, and Jarvis Hall
State of Black North Carolina

■ CoThinkk Awards Night - 7 - 11:00 p.m.
The Collider - 1 Haywood Street

CoThinkk Awards Night
Reserve tickets at cothinkk.org
Darin Waters

Darin J. Waters is an assistant professor of history and special assistant to the chancellor for outreach and engagement at UNC Asheville where he teaches courses in American history, North Carolina history, Appalachian history, African American and Latin American history. He also specializes in the history of race relations in both the United States and Latin America.

Waters is the co-host of *The Waters and Harvey Show* on Blue Ridge Public Radio. He currently serves as a member of The North Carolina Historic Markers Commission, the board of the National Blue Ridge Heritage Area, the board of the Thomas Wolfe Memorial of Historic Asheville, and the North Carolina Civil War History Center. Waters received his doctorate from The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Find out more about his work at darinwaters.com.

Mary K. Grant

Mary K. Grant was appointed in August 2014 as the seventh chancellor of UNC Asheville, after serving for 12 years as president of Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts (MCLA). During her first two years, she established UNC Asheville as a center for creativity, innovation, and excellence in the public liberal arts, bringing the community to the table for events such as the annual farm-to-table dinner on the Quad, and expanding access to higher education while increasing enrollment in North Carolina’s public liberal arts university.

Chancellor Grant is a leader in public higher education, having served as chair of the Council of Public Liberal Arts Colleges (COPLAC), where she directed a planning effort that culminated in bringing the COPLAC executive office to Asheville. She currently serves as president of the Big South Conference Council of Chief Executive Officers, as vice chair of the board for National Campus Compact, as a director of the Asheville Chamber of Commerce, and a trustee of the Norman Rockwell Museum.
Dwight Mullen

Dwight Mullen is a professor of political science and 33-year veteran of UNC Asheville’s faculty. The 2014 recipient of the UNC Board of Governors Excellence in Teaching Award, he has participated in reading groups at the Burton Street Recreation Center, involved students in his research for the annual “State of Black Asheville” conference, commented on radio and written opinion pieces in area newspapers, volunteered in public schools, and served on numerous local boards.

Mullen also has served as a Fulbright Senior Scholar in Malawi, and he is a specialist in American politics and African-American political thought. He earned master’s and doctoral degrees in political science from Atlanta University and received a bachelor’s degree in history and political science from Loma Linda University.

Tracey Greene-Washington

Tracey Greene-Washington is the co-founder of CoThinkk, a giving circle comprised of African-American and Latinx members that are committed to improving the economic mobility, leadership development, and education narrative of communities of color in Western North Carolina. In addition to this role, she is the director of special initiatives at the Kate B. Reynolds Charitable Trust. Prior to joining the Trust, Tracey served as the program officer for community economic development at Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation and was instrumental in creating a strategy to address the statewide racial and gender wealth gap in North Carolina.

A native of Asheville, Greene-Washington serves as the board chair for the Center for Leadership Innovation and is the former vice chair for the Southern Rural Development Initiative. She holds a bachelor’s degree in social work from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro and a master’s degree in social work from the University of South Carolina.
Shirley Whitesides

When it comes to working in the community, Shirley Walker Whitesides has more than a few things in common with the students she’s helping. Growing up in the ’50s in the Eastern North Carolina town of Rocky Mount, Whitesides endured the injustices of the Jim Crow South — from witnessing burning crosses in a neighbor’s yard to the everyday insults of being forced to use separate water fountains and sit at the back of the bus. When Martin Luther King Jr. spoke at her high school on November 27, 1962, the civil rights leader delivered a speech with the refrain, “I have a dream,” that inspired her to use her talent to help others.

Buoyed by her family’s strong foundation and her own hard work, Whitesides went on to earn a degree in arts education at NC Central University. While attending college, she recalls participating in student civil-rights protests, including two that turned into riots in downtown Durham, NC. College is also where she met her husband, Al Whitesides Jr., now a retired banker and current Buncombe County Commissioner, who himself was active in the civil-rights movement. After college she spent 34 years teaching visual arts for Asheville City Schools, as well as helping to raise two daughters, Sherry Whitesides Poole and Kimberly Wilson; and three grandsons, Erik, Patrick, and Adrian. She went on to earn her master’s degree in middle-grade education with a concentration in art from Western Carolina University.

Now that she has retired from teaching, Whitesides serves as president and one of the founding members of Delta House Life Development of Asheville, Inc. The organization runs a community learning center that provides after-school programming to about 200 students at seven sites around the city. The LEAAP (Learning through Expanded Academics and the Arts Program) for Success program stresses academics and enrichment. Students engage in enrichment activities including art, dance, jazz band, drumming, music, theater, STEM, and fitness activities.
The Honorable Yvonne Mims Evans

The Honorable Yvonne Mims Evans is a North Carolina Superior Court Judge for the 26th Judicial District of the Seventh Division of the Superior Court, serving Mecklenburg County in North Carolina. Former Governor Mike Easley appointed her to the judicial bench in 2003. She was re-elected in 2012 and her current term expires in 2020.

In 1973, Judge Evans received her Bachelor of Arts in U. S. Studies from Wellesley College in Massachusetts. She completed her Juris Doctorate at Duke University in Durham, N.C. in 1976. After law school, Evans joined the prestigious legal team of Ferguson and Stein and specialized in domestic cases, workers’ compensation cases, and education cases for members of the North Carolina Association of Educators.

A native of Hendersonville, Judge Evans has and continues to be an active member of her community, serving on numerous local, state and national boards and commissions. Among these are the United Way Adult & Child Protection Council, the Mecklenburg County Teen Court Advisory Board, the Foundation of the Carolinas, and Teen Health Connection Medical Advisory Board.

Phyllis Utley

Phyllis Utley is a graduate of Dartmouth College with a bachelor’s degree in economics and graduate coursework at the Tuck School of Business, Clemson University, and the College of Charleston. She is a member of the Asheville Buncombe African American Heritage Commission. She has over a decade of experience at the local, state and national levels in public policy, advocacy, higher education and racial equity training. She is a FaciliEduTainer focused on experiential learning and popular education and serves on the Board for the Center for Diversity Education at UNC Asheville.
The Jesse and Julia Ray Lecture Series

The Jesse and Julia Ray Lecture Series is designed to promote awareness and appreciation of not only the larger African American experience in the United States, but also of the particular experiences of African Americans in Western North Carolina and Southern Appalachia. Throughout their lives, Jesse and Julia Ray, both prominent and active members in their local community, exhibited a commitment to the betterment of people’s lives through the elimination of racial discrimination, and the opening of political, economic, and educational opportunities for all people.

Jesse G. Ray Sr. knew at an early age he wanted to work in funeral service. In 1932, at the age of 21, he was one of seven African Americans in a class of 47 to graduate from Worsham College of Mortuary Science, Chicago, Ill. He began his career with McCoy Funeral Home on Eagle St. He lived in the YMI, which was the basis for his later interest in preserving the historic YMI building and serving as chair of the board of directors of the YMI Cultural Center.

Jesse and his wife, Julia Greenlee Ray, established the Jesse Ray Funeral Home in 1938, and Julia, a centenarian, is currently licensed as a funeral director. Julia was active in the social and educational changes of the 1960s and 70s. She was a member of a core group of women who shepherded the merger of the black and white YWCAs to one facility. She was appointed as the first African American on the Board of Directors of Memorial Mission Hospital and later to the Board of Trustees of UNC Asheville. She retired from full-time funeral directing in 1977, and Jesse Jr. now manages the business. Jesse Sr. died in 1994.

This lecture is part of a long-term initiative to increase the national and international profile of UNC Asheville as it relates to African American history. Moreover, the lecture institutionalizes the study of the African American experience in Asheville, Western North Carolina, and Southern Appalachia at the university by bringing distinguished scholars in the fields of African American Studies and Appalachian Studies to campus on an annual basis.

The Jesse and Julia Ray Lecture Series is hosted by the Department of History at UNC Asheville.
FRIDAY PANELISTS

Rebekah Turnmire
George Washington University

Sheri Parks, Ph.D.
University of Maryland at College Park

Bruce W. Cahoon
UNC Asheville

Jillean McCommons
University of Kentucky

William Isom II
East Tennessee PBS

Marie Cochran
Affrilachian Artist Project

Read panelists’ bios at aawnc.unca.edu
The Race, Church, and Theological Practices
Collaborative Inquiry Team

J. Kameron Carter - Duke University
Donyelle McCray - Yale Divinity School
Mark Ramsey - Macedonian Ministries
Jemonde Taylor - St. Ambrose Episcopal Church
Denise Thorpe - Presbyterian Church (USA)

Read panelists’ bios at aawnc.unca.edu
Keynon Lake  
*My Daddy Taught Me That*  

Sekou Coleman  
*Beneath the Veneer*  

Diane Tower-Jones  
*Beneath the Veneer*  

Nicole Townsend  
*Community Organizer*  

Justin Edge  
*Pisgah Legal Services*  

Latoya Gardner  
*Pisgah Legal Services*  

*Read panelists’ bios at aawnc.unca.edu*
SATURDAY PANELISTS

Savi Horne
North Carolina Association of Black Lawyers

Zaphon Wilson, Ph.D.
NC Central University

James Steele, Ph.D.
NC A&T University

Jarvis Hall, Ph.D
NC Central University

COMMUNITY RESILIENCE PANEL

Al Whitesides
Buncombe County Commissioner

Je’Wana Grier-McEachin
ABIPA

Shuvonda Harper
My Community Matters

Andrea Golden
Emma Community Ownership

Sophie Dixon
Pearson Plan/ Shiloh Community

Libby Kyles
YTL Training Program

Tamiko Ambrose Murray
Asheville Writers in the Schools & Community/ Word on the Street
Musicians performing during the conference:
Kelle Jolly, Melody, and the Delta House Jazz Band
Conference Sponsors:

UNC Asheville
YMI Cultural Center
Wilma Dykeman Legacy
Brian Butler, Howerton Professor of the Humanities
Daniel Pierce, NEH Distinguished Teaching Professor in the Humanities
Dean of Social Sciences

Office of the Provost
UNC Asheville Department of History
UNC Asheville Center for Diversity Education
UNC Asheville Africana Studies Program
McClure Fund
Jessee Ray Jr.

Conference Organizing Committee:

Darin J. Waters
Sarah Judson
Reid Chapman

Gene Hyde
Deborah Miles
Steven Nash

Special Thanks and Recognition to:

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Ami Worthen