



SC African American Heritage Commission

January Newsletter

Welcome to the SC African American Heritage Commission newsletter. In it you will find updates about their activities and events pertaining to African American History in South Carolina!

SCAAHC Events & Announcements

Commissioner Profiles

For the next few newsletters, we will be doing brief profiles on the SC African American Heritage Commissioners, detailing their background, how they became involved with the Commission, and more. [This month's profile is on Commissioner Dr. Robert Adams!](#)

Dr. Adams was born in Bangor, Maine, and raised in military institutions across the South (Florida, Mississippi, North Carolina, and Texas). He earned an M.A. in sociology from the University of Florida and a Ph.D. in anthropology from the University of Texas at Austin. Robert has worked extensively in Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, Europe, Latin America, and North America.



Previously, Dr. Adams served as the Senior Vice President of Programs at the NEA Foundation in Washington, DC, overseeing the Foundation's grantmaking programs. Dr. Adams has also worked as an Executive-on-Loan/Interim Chief Operating Officer at the Martin Luther King, Jr. Center for Nonviolent Social Change in Atlanta, a Program Officer at the Fetzer Institute in Kalamazoo, Michigan, Associate Director of the Institute of African American Research at the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill. Dr. Adams recently served as Co-Founder and Principal for Sargent Adams Consulting LLC. in Boston, MA. He provided strategic guidance on change management and diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) for Fortune 500, government, labor, and nonprofit clients.


Dr. Adams was a 2008 U.S. Fulbright Faculty Fellow at the Catholic University of São Paulo in Brazil, a 2016 Association of Black Foundation Executives (ABFE) Connecting Leaders Fellow, and a 2003 International Career Advancement Program (ICAP) Fellow. He is the author of more than 15 publications, including editor of *Rewriting the African Diaspora in Latin America and the Caribbean: Beyond Disciplinary and National Boundaries* (Routledge 2013).

"I am honored to be chosen by the Penn Center's Board of Trustees to lead this hallowed institution. I humbly follow in the footsteps of a long line of distinguished leaders who have made impactful contributions to the history of Penn Center and our national history. I look forward to working with the Board, community, and other stakeholders to continue the center's position as a 'living laboratory of Black freedom' and guardian of Gullah-Geechee culture," said Dr. Robert L. Adams.

2026 SCAAHC Annual Conference Registration Open!

Registration for the 2026 SCAAHC Annual Conference is officially open! **Pre-registration is required and spaces are limited.** See below or click the "Download Flyer" button to see the current schedule of events. The registration link can be found [here](#) or on the [Commission's webpage](#). If you have any question, reach out to Ayanna Goines, agoines@scdah.sc.gov. Hope to see you on February 28, 2026!!

Download Flyer



The flyer features the SCAAHC logo on the left, which is a map of Africa with the acronym SCAAHC. Below the logo is the address: SC ARCHIVES AND HISTORY CENTER, 8301 Parklane Road, Columbia, SC 29223. It also includes contact information for Ayanna Goines and a note that lunch is included in the registration fee. The main content on the right lists the conference date (Saturday, February 28, 2026), a registration link, and a detailed schedule of events from 8:30 AM to 3:45 PM, including sessions on Black involvement in the American Revolution, preservation of land, Black entrepreneurs, and student research.

2026 SC African American Heritage Commission Annual Conference
Saturday, February 28, 2026
Registration Link: <https://pci.jotform.com/form/253026591692966>

Schedule
8:30AM – 8:55AM Registration
9:00AM – 9:10AM Opening Welcome
9:15AM – 10:25AM 1st Session Block
SC250: Black Involvement in the American Revolution
* At the beginning of American Revolution in the fall of 1775, Loyalists began to flee from the colonies, leaving behind their enslaved labor force. Patriot Committees of Safety saw these "masterless" Black men and women as potential instigators of revolts and set out to confiscate them. Learn about Patriot carceral politics, the Black carceral experience, and how freedom was denied to the Black population as America earned its independence.

Preservation of the Land
* Hear from various organizations across the state who have taken steps to preserve the history and legacy of schools with significant importance to the Black community. From Clarendon to Columbia, during Reconstruction and the Civil Rights era, these schools have rich stories that are told today in various ways.

10:30AM – 11:40AM 2nd Session Block
Black Entrepreneurs & Entrepreneurship
* Hear about the significance of Black businesses in the late 19th and early 20th century. During this time of financial and political progress for Black Americans, businesses were formed, creating safety and community.

Black Artistic Expression
* This panel discusses the use of visual arts to portray Black history. Speakers will talk about the impact of using narrative images to tell stories whether they be genealogical, educational, or for entertainment.

11:45AM – 12:55PM Lunch
1:00PM – 2:15PM 3rd Session Block
Don't Wait, Do!
* Learn from individuals who took action to preserve Black South Carolina history. Whether it was a family story or requesting government records, these projects were initiated by people dedicated to protecting unknown and untold stories.

Student Research
* Undergraduate and Graduate students will discuss their current research topics pertaining to Black History in South Carolina. Topics range in subject matter, time period, and research methods.

2:20PM – 3:45PM Keynote Address –
Dr. Bobby Donaldson & Congressman James E. Clyburn
* Two major leaders, Dr. Donaldson and Congressman Clyburn will describe their experiences with preserving the Black stories that make South Carolina history. They will also discuss Congressman Clyburn's new book *The First Eight*.

SC ARCHIVES AND HISTORY CENTER
8301 Parklane Road
Columbia, SC 29223

Space is limited. Pre-registration is highly recommended.

Registration Fee Per Person:
- Regular: \$40
- Senior: \$20
- Student: \$15

*Lunch is included in registration fee.
GF/Vegetarian options available.

For additional conference information and questions visit scaahc.org or contact Ayanna Goines at: agoines@scdah.sc.gov

Commission Activities

Commissioners have been busy participating in events. See below for a recap!

January 2026

The Commission has been meeting in committees to bring the state a wide variety of projects highlighting Black history. These projects include the involvement of Black individuals in the American Revolution, a Green Book publication, a book prize, the annual conference, and more that will be announced at a later date! Follow the Commission on Facebook, Instagram, and subscribe to the newsletter for updates and announcements!



Recent African American Preservation News

Bull Swamp Baptist Church Black History Month Events

Bull Swamp Baptist Church in Orangeburg will be holding a series of events during Black History Month. The first will begin on February 7th with a talk given by Dr. Walter Curry. Events will continue on each Saturday of the month of February, culminating with a chartered bus cultural trip to Myrtle Beach. RSVP by January 30. For more information contact Ms. Annette Morrison at aemorrison1@icloud.com or [click here](#).



Black Episcopal Church Listed to National Register

St. Mark's Episcopal Church in Charleston County has been listed to the National Register of Historic Properties. This church is closely associated with Charleston's elite free Black community and was formed in 1865 as the first Protestant Episcopal congregation in the state to be established by Black congregants independently, rather than as a mission church. To read more about St. Mark's history, click [this link](#).



Center for Civil Rights History & Research Brown Bag Lunch Series

The Center for Civil Rights History & Research will host a series of lunch-and-learn programs exploring African American history through health, education, activism, and archival discovery. This four-part series offers behind-the-scenes into exhibitions, collections, and public history projects connected to the Center's research and outreach work. For the schedule of programs, click [this link](#).

Center for Civil Rights History and Research
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA

BROWN BAG LUNCH SERIES

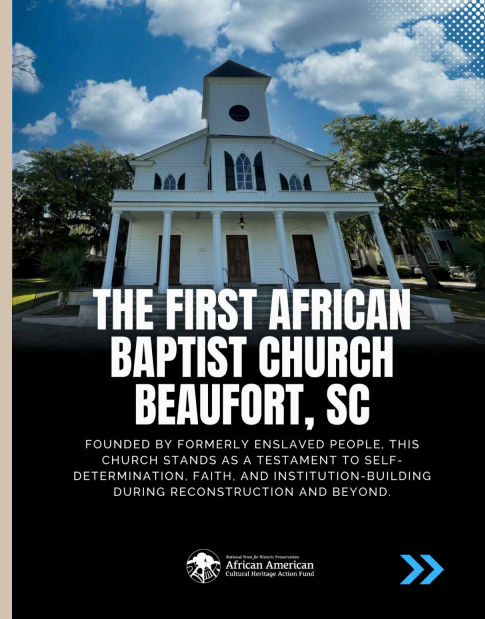
Thursday January 29, 2026 12:00 PM - 1:30 PM Ernest F. Hollings Special Collections Library & Virtual	Thursday February 26, 2026 12:00 PM - 1:30 PM Virtual
Thursday March 26, 2026 12:00 PM - 1:30 PM Virtual	Thursday April 16, 2026 12:00 PM - 1:30 PM Virtual

Join the Center for Civil Rights History and Research for hybrid and virtual lunch-and-learn sessions exploring African American history through health, education, activism, and archival discovery, with behind-the-scenes insight into exhibitions, collections, and public history projects.

More information available
civilrights.sc.edu/brownbagseries

SC Church Receives award from National Trust

In honor of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day, the African American Heritage Fund awarded five, iconic, historically Black churches with \$1 million, including The First African Baptist Church in Beaufort. Founded by formerly enslaved people, the church stands as a testament to self-determination, faith, and institution-building during Reconstruction and beyond. Learn more about the fund at [this link](#).



Grants

- **Richland County Conservation Commission Historic Preservation Grants:** This grant, administered by the Richland County Conservation Committee provide historic preservation grants to assist landowners to preserve, restore, or rehabilitate historically significant buildings or sites in Richland County and to develop education and research programs that promote historic preservation in Richland County. **The application portal opens on December 1, 2025 and will close on February 1, 2026.** For more info on eligibility requirements, [click this link](#).
- **National Fund for Sacred Places Grant:** The National Fund for Sacred Places supports congregations undertaking significant capital projects at purpose-built historic houses of worship. The National Fund prioritizes buildings that have historic, cultural, or architectural significance; particularly those that are significant at the national or regional level. **The application will launch January 13, 2026 and are due March 3, 2026.** For more info on eligibility requirements, [click this link](#).
- **African American Cultural Heritage Action Fund National Grant Program:** Grants from the National Grant Program of the National Trust for Historic Preservation's African American Cultural Heritage Action Fund are designed to advance historic preservation projects at sites related to Black history in the United States. **The application will open on January 13, 2026 and will close on February 6, 2026.** For more information on the grant, [click this link](#).

Dept. of Archives & History News

The State Historic Preservation Office has an email newsletter "News and Notes" that is sent out monthly with information about SHPO programs and events. The newsletter also highlights the programs and events of state and national preservation groups. To subscribe [click this link](#).

Upcoming Events & Conferences

- **February 12-14, 2026:** The 5th Annual African American History Education Conference will take place over the course of three days. Packed with tours, performances, and information on ways to include African American history in

curriculum, especially during the 250th anniversary of the American Revolution. For more information and registration, click [this link](#).

- **Saturday February 21, 2026:** If you are a lover of food, the South, and history, you will not want to miss this opportunity to explore the culinary history of our culture while supporting the SCAHF mission to preserve and promote the documentary and cultural heritage of the Palmetto State. *South Carolina Foodways: the Culture, the History, the Taste* will be a day of enlightening information, entertaining anecdotes, and delicious food. For more info and registration, [click here](#).
- **Saturday February 28, 2026:** Join SCAAHC on Saturday February 28th, 2026 as they bring together like-minded people for stimulating conversation about African American history and culture in South Carolina. This one-day event held at the Archives & History Center will begin at 8:30am and last until 4:00pm. There will be sessions throughout the day covering a wide array of topics like the Preservation of Black schools across the state, taking action to preserve and promote Black South Carolina stories, Student Research, Black involvement in the American Revolution, and the Black Entrepreneurship. Keep up to date on the Commission's website: scaahc.org
- **March 5-7, 2026:** The SC Interpreters Mini-Conference welcomes interpreters from across the state to come together to learn through interactive sessions, Certified Interpreter led excursions, and networking events. Registration information can be found at [this link](#).
- **March 19-21, 2026:** Join the Confederation of SC Local Historical Societies for their annual Landmark Conference occurring in York, SC. To stay up to date on conference information, visit [this link](#).
- **April 24, 2026:** The SC Historic Preservation Conference will take place at the SC Archives & History Center in Columbia. Registration information will be available in late February 2026. To receive direct emails about the conference, please send a request to Donna Foster at dfoster@scdah.sc.gov. To learn more about the call for proposals, visit [this link](#).
- **June 9-11, 2026:** The College of Charleston's Avery Research Center for African American History and Culture is hosting a three-day symposium focused on black education and the preservation of Black History through archives, and community engagement. Information can be found at [this link](#).
- **October 1-3, 2026:** The Slave Dwelling Project is holding a conference in North Charleston titled "250 Years and Counting: Reckoning, Resilience, and Remembrance." Currently, they are accepting proposals for themes surrounding the Revolutionary Era. For more information, visit [this link](#).

Ongoing Events

- The Bart Garrison Agricultural Museum of South Carolina in Pendleton has unveiled a new exhibit titled *Cultivating Legacies: The Story of Black Americans in South Carolina's Agriculture*. This exhibit highlights the resilience, innovation, and significant contributions to the state's agricultural development by Black farmers. For more information, visit [this link](#).
- The Center for Civil Rights and History's exhibit "[Where Do We Go From Here?](#)" explores Dr. Martin Luther King's questions about the future and illustrates how the passage of major civil rights legislation affected education, housing, health care, employment, and more. This exhibit, housed at the Ernest F. Hollings Special Collections Library at the Thomas Cooper Library can be viewed during the Library's normal hours of operation. Click here for [more info](#).
- Free Admission to the Columbia Museum of Art where visitors can see the "[Our Story Matters](#)" Gallery that discusses Columbia's vibrant Washington Street Black Business District.
- Historic Columbia's latest exhibit [Heat & Hardship: The Hidden Labor of Enslaved Cooks](#) is on display at the Robert Mills House & Gardens. This innovative exhibit

reimagines the site's warming kitchen, offering visitors a deeper understanding of the lives of enslaved cooks in the 1820s. For more information on the exhibit and to purchase tour tickets visit [this website](#).

- Despite his legacy as a trailblazer, Leo Twiggs has never had a full retrospective in his home state of South Carolina. The Gibbes aims to remedy that by celebrating his visionary career, showcasing his iconic Batik technique and profound reflections on the American experience across six decades of work. Guest curated by art historian Dr. Frank Martin, the exhibition--accompanied by a full-color catalogue--will mark the 50th anniversary of Twiggs' first solo show at the Gibbes in 1976. The exhibition will run from January 30, 2026- May 3, 2026. For more info and tickets, visit [this link](#).



"Those Who Have Must Turn Around and Give."

—Dr. Myrtle Glascoe

Celebrating Forty Years of Preserving Black History and Education

The College of Charleston's Avery Research Center for African American History and Culture is hosting a three-day symposium focused on Black education and the preservation of Black History through archives, and community engagement **June 9–11, 2026**, at the College of Charleston in Charleston, South Carolina. The symposium's title comes from the Avery Research Center's first executive director of the Avery Research Center, Dr. Myrtle Glascoe. She laid the groundwork for community archiving and preservation, partnering with the Avery Institute of Afro American History and Culture. She also established early collection initiatives, including hosting archival workshops with local churches and highlighting the work of Gullah Geechee artists.

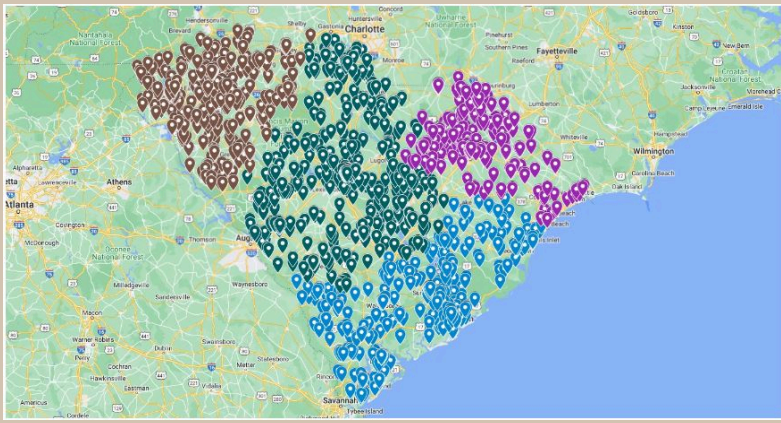
Her tenure also marked the restoration of the building that housed the Avery Normal Institute (1865–1954) on 125 Bull Street. The Avery Normal Institute was a private normal school that trained generations of educators and civic leaders. Graduates known as Averyites include Septima Clark, Cynthia McCottry-Smith, Eugene Hunt, and former South Carolina State University president Dr. Robert Shaw Wilkinson. Before serving at the Avery Research Center, Dr. Glascoe was a member of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, connecting education, communication, and advocacy as director of West Helena's Freedom School.

As the Avery Research Center prepares to recognize multiple milestones with the Avery Normal Institute turning 160 and the Avery Research Center's fortieth anniversary, we are making a call for proposals for our three-day symposium on education and archives. We encourage research to have a Southern emphasis. We invite all scholars, organizations, students, independent researchers, community historians, and activists to submit a proposal on one of the following topics:

- Community archives and Black Memory Work
- Sustainability
- Archival and education adaptation to climate change
- Black Educational Institutions and Black Educators
- Decolonizing Educational Curricula
- Black Pedagogies and Epistemologies
- Digital Humanities and Access to Black archives
- Education Policy

Avery Research Center at the College of the Charleston
125 BULL STREET | CHARLESTON, SC 29424

[Interactive Map of All Approved South Carolina Historical Markers](#)



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SC African American Heritage Commission

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