

No images? [Click here](#)



This email is a quarterly newsletter from the University of Pittsburgh Library System (ULS) sharing news, event information, collection updates, and more from the August Wilson Archive and Black arts and culture collections.

University of Pittsburgh Library System Receives One Million Dollar Grant from the Henry L. Hillman Foundation for August Wilson Archive Outreach and Engagement



The University of Pittsburgh Library System (ULS) recently announced a \$1 million grant from the Henry L. Hillman Foundation to support the final preparation of the August Wilson Archive for its

opening to the public, followed by two years of support for in-depth public engagement.

This grant is the largest in the history of the ULS, building upon many other charitable donations and grants supporting the archive since its acquisition in 2020. August Wilson, one of the greatest American playwrights, is most widely known for his American Century Cycle. All ten plays in the cycle were produced on Broadway—two of them earning Wilson the Pulitzer Prize for Drama.

"Pittsburgh was such a formative influence on August Wilson's work and shaping his worldview," said David K. Roger, president of Henry L. Hillman Foundation. "The ability to preserve the archive here in Pittsburgh where it will be accessible to audiences who grew up in the neighborhoods featured in Wilson's storytelling is gratifying. This opportunity would not have been possible without Constanza Romero's generous collaboration with the University of Pittsburgh, helping to create an unprecedented view into the creative process of a singular American playwright."

Funding from the Henry L. Hillman Foundation will support the final stages of material processing and a focus on local and national partnerships to bring the archive to life. The ULS will reach out to students and instructors in Pittsburgh Public Schools, create public programming and exhibits, and offer research opportunities for local organizations and individuals interested in Wilson's work.

The archive is currently being processed and will open to the public in January 2023. Through partnerships with other local cultural organizations, the ULS is also working to provide a week-long celebration of the legacy of August Wilson in March 2023.

"The Henry L. Hillman Foundation grant will enable us to integrate the August Wilson Archive in the very fabric of the local cultural and civic life," said Hillman University Librarian and Director of the ULS Kornelia Tancheva, who is the grant principal investigator. "Wilson's work was deeply informed by his experiences growing up in the Hill District neighborhood of Pittsburgh, which makes the opportunity to share this

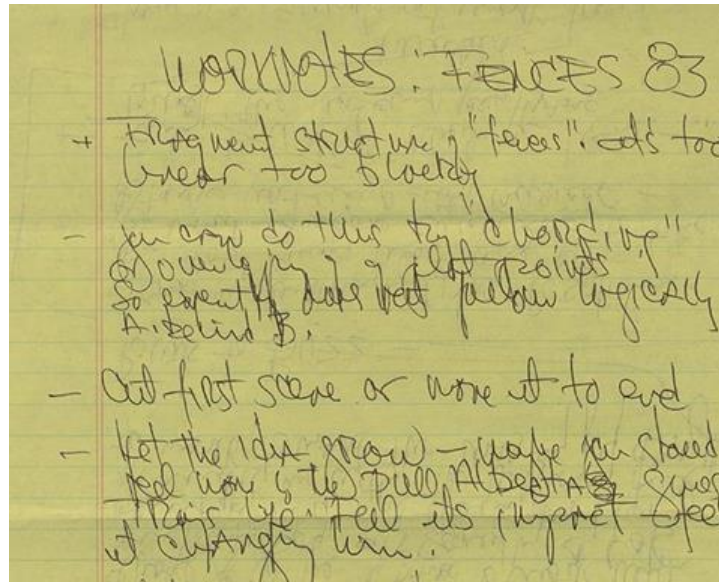
collection with those communities, local schools, and cultural and arts organizations incredibly satisfying. With the generous support of the Henry L. Hillman Foundation, we embark on what is, in some ways, a second homecoming for the archive."



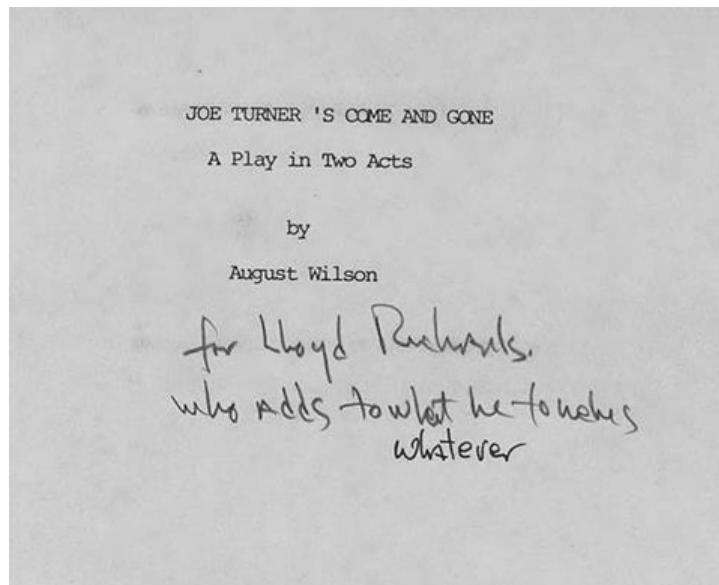
One of Daphne Pascucci's costume designs for the 1984 Yale Repertory Theatre Production of "Ma Rainey's Black Bottom."



August Wilson (far right) poses with the "Fences" Yale Cast in 1984.



These working notes for Wilson's "Fences" may relate to the staged reading of the play at the Eugene O'Neill Theatre Center's 1983 National Playwright's Conference.



This annotated "Joe Turner's Come and Gone" script has a dedication to Lloyd Richards, who directed many of Wilson's plays. The collection includes scripts for each of Wilson's American Century Cycle plays from various points in their development.

Add Your Voice to the Blue, Gold and Black Digital Archive!



Earlier this year, the ULS launched the Blue, Gold and Black Digital Archive. This archive is a collaboration between the ULS and the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion to collect and share materials that reflect the incredible variety of experiences and memories of Black students, faculty, and staff at Pitt. If you are a current or former member of the Pitt community, we encourage you to [share YOUR stories and photos!](#)

Student worker Haliyat Oshodi returned to Archives & Special Collections this fall, where she continues to assist with material review, description, and publication. Thanks to her efforts, the Blue, Gold and Black website now features a digital exhibit titled "*True Black Freedom*": *History of Activism at Pitt*. You can [browse the exhibit online](#), including materials related to topics such as "Black Studies: Education in Action" and "Black Action Society: The Representative Body of Black Students".

Planning to attend Homecoming 2022 in October? [Register for one of our Archives & Special Collections Tours](#), and stop by to chat with members of the African American Alumni Council about the Blue, Gold and Black Digital Archive. We hope to see you there!

**Oral History Preservation Project
Awarded Recordings at Risk Grant**

This spring, the Council on Library and Information Resources (CLIR) Recordings at Risk program awarded a \$36,826 grant to the University of Pittsburgh Library System (ULS), funding the digitization of five Pittsburgh area oral history collections held by Pitt's Archives & Special Collections Department. Combined, these materials will create a rich digital collection of primary sources sharing first-person accounts of African American migrants and European immigrant workers in the Pittsburgh area.

The project, titled "Preserving the Experiences of African Americans and Immigrants Racing to Pittsburgh's Steel Valley," will preserve and digitize 350 oral history interviews highlighting the experiences, lives, and voices of minority communities in Western Pennsylvania from the 1970s to the early 2000s. Each interview will be transcribed and transferred into digital formats from the original cassette tapes, which are becoming fragile with age and usage. All of the digitized interviews will be made freely available to the public through the Historic Pittsburgh and ULS Digital Collections websites, allowing the continued exploration of these unique and diverse voices by modern scholars and community historians. [Read the full project announcement](#), and stay tuned to this newsletter for updates!

About the Council on Library and Information Resources (CLIR): *The Council on Library and Information Resources (CLIR) is an independent, nonprofit organization that forges strategies to enhance research, teaching, and learning environments in collaboration with libraries, cultural institutions, and communities of higher learning. To learn more, visit www.clir.org and follow CLIR on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).*

Pitt Undergraduate Assists with August Wilson Archive



A selection of padded and unpadded clamshell and lidded boxes made to store and protect various objects from the August Wilson Archive.

In February, Pitt undergraduate student Adrienne Lai joined Archives & Special Collections Preservation Coordinator Anaïs Gâteau in processing the August Wilson Archive. Adrienne will double major in anthropology and history of art and architecture, with a minor in museum studies.

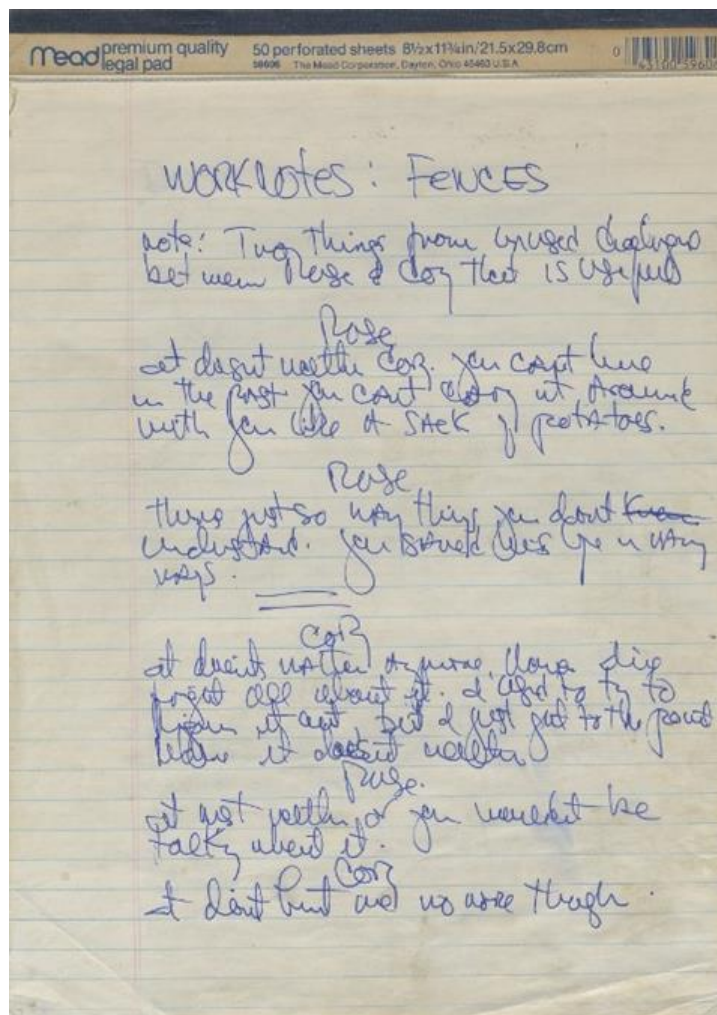
Working on the archive thus far has delivered both exciting surprises and unexpected challenges. Over the past months, Adrienne organized, consolidated, and inventoried oversized materials of varying categories—some related to Wilson’s plays and some of a personal nature. She also identified the best storage or preservation solutions for each item. For example, some ceramic figures or trophies require support and protection from padded custom-sized enclosures, whereas paper materials like posters and diplomas are better placed in folders. To that end, Lai designed and handbuilt many clamshell and padded boxes.

While the diverse needs of the August Wilson Archive can make preservation work complex, they also make it fun! Adrienne particularly enjoyed the items that revealed a more personal side of Wilson, such as notes or artworks from his family and friends or objects related to his personal interests in art and social causes. The archive encompasses all facets of August Wilson and his life, humanizing the playwright and adding depth to our knowledge of his creative genius.

Notes from Bedford Avenue

Updates from the August Wilson Archive at Pitt

On Saturday, August 13, the August Wilson House celebrated its grand opening with a star-studded event. An archway framed the red carpet, featuring pages from Wilson's notebooks which are housed in the August Wilson Archive at Pitt. It was exciting to see the materials brought to life in such a unique way!





Follow Us on Social Media!



Forward this newsletter

Subscribe to this newsletter

THIS MESSAGE WAS SENT BY

Archives & Special Collections, [University Library System](#)
320 Hillman Library
University of Pittsburgh
3960 Forbes Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15260

You are receiving this email because you signed up for the Black Arts & Culture in the Archives newsletter using our online form.

[Unsubscribe](#)

