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This email is a 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.

From the Hill to the Stage: Celebrating the August Wilson Archive



Archives & Special Collections (A&SC) within the University of Pittsburgh Library System (ULS) is pleased to announce that **the August Wilson**

Archive is now open for research by students,
faculty, scholars, and the public in the A&SC
Reading Room in Hillman Library!

The archive features a vast number of drafts and production documentation for Wilson's American Century Cycle plays and other writing projects, as well as more than 700 notebooks and notepads that Wilson used to capture his thoughts and develop character ideas and dialogue. The materials also include interviews with Wilson and recordings broadcast during his lifetime, along with awards, degrees, and accolades for his works from organizations at all levels of society.

The organization of the archive is detailed in [the collection finding aid](#). Additional materials will become available for research use as processing is completed. To work with the collection, [appointments](#) are highly recommended. Schedule a visit to our Archives & Special Collections Reading Room on the third floor of Hillman Library between Monday and Friday from 9 a.m. – 4:45 p.m.

We invite you to join us February 24 – March 3 for a series of events celebrating the legacy of August Wilson and the opening of his archive at Pitt.

This celebration is free and open to the public, hosted in partnership with August Wilson African American Cultural Center, August Wilson House, #ArtsinHD, August Wilson Society, and University of Pittsburgh's Department of Africana Studies, Department of English, Department of Theatre Arts, and the Center for Creativity. [Stay tuned to the ULS August Wilson Archive website for registration information.](#)

The August Wilson Archive complements several of our existing archival collections related to Wilson's own experience as an emerging playwright in his hometown of Pittsburgh, including the **Dr. Vernell Lillie Papers**, the **Bob Johnson Papers**, and the **Rob Penny Papers**.

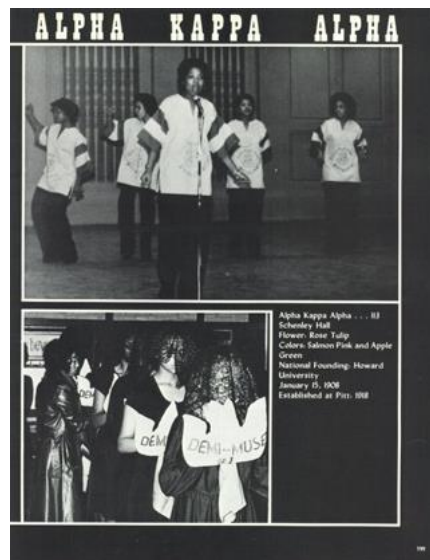
A large portion of the **Kuntu Repertory Theatre Records** opened for research in December 2022. The Kuntu Repertory Theatre was founded in 1974 by Dr.

Vernell A. Lillie and Rob Penny as a project of Pitt's Department of Africana Studies. For over 35 years, Kuntu was a predominant African American performing arts group in Pittsburgh. Please visit the [Kuntu Repertory Theatre Collection finding aid](#) for more information about the fully processed production records and photographs. Stay tuned for updates as we continue processing electronic records, administrative records, workshop materials, art and memorabilia, and audio and video materials.

Blue, Gold and Black Highlight: The Divine 9

The Blue, Gold and Black Digital Archive is a dynamic digital archive, coordinated by the University Library System and Pitt's Office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion, created to reflect the Black Pitt experience through the years.

The Divine 9 are the nine historically Black Greek organizations that make up the National Panhellenic Council (NPHC). A [new digital exhibit](#), curated by A&SC undergraduate student worker Haliyat Oshodi, looks back on the founding and histories of five of these organizations at the University of Pittsburgh: Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity Inc., Delta Sigma Theta Sorority Inc., Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority Inc, Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority Inc., and Zeta Phi Beta Sorority Inc.



Explore the Exhibit

If you are a current or former member of the Pitt community, we encourage you to **add your stories and photos to the archive!**

Share Your Story

City of Pittsburgh to Celebrate Black History Month with Tribute to Playwright August Wilson

Celebrate Black History Month by learning about the life and works of August Wilson! Working in partnership with the ULS, the City of Pittsburgh Office of Special Events will present **“Highlights from the August Wilson Archive”** to spotlight Wilson’s life.

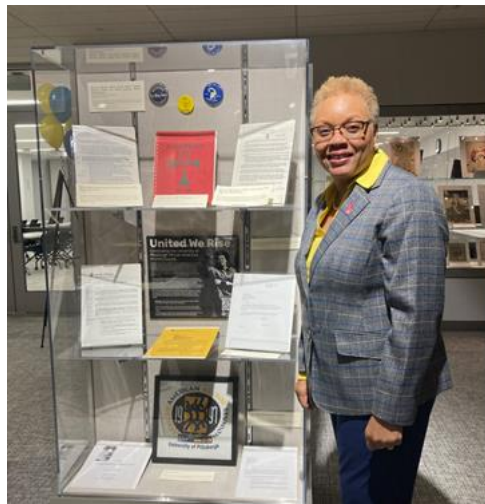
A month-long display in the City-County Building’s grand lobby will feature a variety of materials from the library’s collection, including photographs, playbills, handwritten notes, play materials, other memorabilia, and an interactive activity. Online content from February 1 - 28 will feature a series of interviews with individuals who knew the playwright personally and professionally, photographs, and highlights of memorabilia on display downtown.

The public is invited to attend the exhibit’s opening reception on Monday, February 6, at 6 p.m. in the City-County Building’s grand lobby. Festivities will include entertainment, refreshments, and remarks by Mayor Gainey, the Director of the University Library System, the Outreach and Engagement Curator of the August Wilson Collection, the Taylor Allderdice High School student who created the exhibit, and individuals who knew Wilson personally and professionally.

Additional information about the 2023 City of Pittsburgh Black History Month celebration is available at pittsburghpa.gov/events/black-history.

The City of Pittsburgh's celebration of Black History Month is presented by the Office of Special Events in partnership with the University of Pittsburgh Library System. This year's celebration is sponsored by AARP Pennsylvania, 100.1 & AM 1020 KDKA NewsRadio, and WAMO 107.3.

United We Rise Exhibit Curated by African American Alumni Council



During the fall semester, the African American Alumni Council's (AAAC) History and Archives Committee curated artifacts from members' personal collections and from the ULS's University Archives holdings, to help showcase the rich history of the council. This exhibit was displayed in Hillman Library's Archives &

Special Collections Exhibit Gallery. **United We Rise** included buttons, t-shirts, correspondence, photographs documenting important reunions, various members, scholarship funds established by the AAAC, newsletters, and more!

Pam Heywood (pictured above left, AAAC History & Archives Committee Chairperson) and Haliyat Oshodi (Blue, Gold, and Black Digital Archives student employee) staffed an information table in the gallery to chat with Homecoming 2022 visitors about the exhibit. They also promoted the Blue, Gold and Black Digital Archive and encouraged alumni to check out and contribute to the site.

Apply to the August Wilson Archive Community Artist-Scholar Award and Research Award

We are excited to announce **two new August Wilson Archive research awards**. Applications for both opportunities are accepted on a rolling basis. For more details and application instructions, please visit library.pitt.edu/asc-research-grants-and-awards.

The **August Wilson Archive Community Artist-Scholar Award** provides support for and incentivizes local artists and scholars to explore the August Wilson Archive. Each awarded Community Artist-Scholar will receive an honorarium of \$2,000 to support their research activities in the archive, as well as a commitment for consultative research support from ULS librarians and archivists. Awardees will share their work at a public event hosted by the ULS. Previous experience working with an archive is not required and we accept artists from all disciplines including visual, performance, and written art.

The **August Wilson Archive Research Award** supports research into the August Wilson Archive by offering a researcher use of the collection to create a scholarly article or professional presentation, prepare to teach a class on theatre or literature, produce a video or documentary, write a book (or

chapter), or generate some other body of work. The researcher will share their research with the ULS to build a body of work around the use of the August Wilson Archive. The successful applicant will also be asked to present (in-person or remotely) to Pitt staff on their work in the archive. Awarded scholars will receive up to \$5,000.

[Learn More and Apply](#)

Notes from Bedford Avenue

Updates from the August Wilson Archive at Pitt

Volume 4 of the August Wilson Journal was published at the end of 2022. We hope you enjoy the articles, interviews, and updates shared below.

[August Wilson's Signification on the Kójódá within the "Structurally Conservative" Fences](#) by Omiyemi (Artisia) Green

The plot of *Fences* signifies a Yorùbá concept of measuring time, the Kójódá, and thus, the play has an Ethnocultural Dramatic Structure (EDS). In this fashion, Wilson dramatically treats the experiences of Black Americans, with full cognizance of Western formulaic constructions in playwriting, yet the social behaviors of his characters and his plotlines are propelled by identifiable diasporic formations of indigenous African practices and concepts.

["Hear Me Talking to You": Improvisation and the Auricular Imperative in Ma Rainey's Black Bottom](#) by Jürgen E. Grandt

Combining the two defining blues tropes of travel and of love gone wrong, the auricular imperative issued by "Hear Me Talking to You" applies to Ma Rainey, the Mother of the Blues, as much as to Levee Green, the young, upstart jazz modernist. Hence, Wilson's play dramatizes listening as a profoundly ethical act, a paramount act whose obviation can bring tragic consequences.

[Finding Frederick "Fritz" Kittel](#) by Christopher B. Bell,
Ladrica Menson-Furr

August Wilson Journal editors Christopher B. Bell and
Ladrica Menson-Furr interviewed Johannes Feest via
Zoom about his research into August Wilson's father
Frederick "Fritz" Kittel.

[Updates from the August Wilson Archive at Pitt Library
System](#) by Leah Mickens and William Daw

Our very own ULS team members Dr. Leah Mickens
and William Daw provide an update on the August
Wilson Archive.

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