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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.*

## Connecting with the Community: Spring Updates from the August Wilson Archive

This spring, the Pittsburgh community engaged with and explored the vibrant and unique materials within the August Wilson Archive in a variety of ways. From student-curated exhibits that celebrate the influential playwright's legacy to lively block parties and college class visits, Archives & Special Collections (A&SC) within the University of Pittsburgh Library System (ULS) is excited to share these updates with you.



*Trinity Manison, Drael Thomas (August Wilson Outreach and Engagement Curator), and Ed Galloway (Associate University Librarian for A&SC) at the exhibit.*



*Materials from the August Wilson Archive on display at the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh.*

## **University Preparatory School, Milliones Student Co-Creates August Wilson Archive Exhibit for Carnegie Library**

The August Wilson Archive has been working actively to engage the Pittsburgh community in as many facets as possible. In May, the archive worked with University Preparatory School, Milliones student Trinity Manison to create an exhibit to be housed at several branches of the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh. The exhibit worked primarily with materials from *King Hedley II*, Wilson's take on the 1980s for his American Century Cycle. Using different drafts, rehearsal schedules, and production designs, Trinity centered her exhibit on exploring the themes of the play that she feels still can be explored today: abortion, incarceration, and urban renewal (particularly that of the Lower Hill District).

## 20th Century African American Literature Class Engages with August Wilson Archive Materials

Last semester, several classes from the University of Pittsburgh's Department of English used the August Wilson Archive to enrich their classroom experience. One highlight was the 20th Century African American Literature class taught by Shaun Myers. The class focused on prominent writers in that century and how their works transformed over time. August Wilson was featured in the class, along with his play *Joe Turner's Come and Gone*. Students visited the archive to explore various drafts and production notes, which added primary source context and additional insights into Wilson's writing process. We look forward to welcoming more classes in the fall!



*Megan Massanelli (A&SC Engagement and Outreach Librarian) and Bill Daw (Curator of the Curtis Theatre Collection) at the August Wilson Block Party.*

## ULS Celebrates August Wilson Birthday Block Party

The ULS sponsored the August Wilson Birthday Block Party in the historic Hill District to join in celebrating Pittsburgh's late, great playwright. The ULS team staffed a booth to spread the word about the August Wilson Archive and the many other collections we have in A&SC. In addition, the Director of the ULS, Kornelia Tancheva, was granted the August Wilson Legacy Award. Drael Thomas (August Wilson Archive Outreach and Engagement Curator) and Ed Galloway (Associate

University Librarian for A&SC) accepted the award in her absence.

## Spotlight on the Blue, Gold and Black Digital Archive

*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.*



*50th anniversary celebration of Epsilon Kappa Chapter of Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity. Taken in the lobby of the Wyndham Hotel on Pitt's Campus. Pictured from left to right: Darrel Burris, Todd Sharpe, Sid Lucas, Clifton Moseley, Nathan McGriff, Kurt Rouse, Stephen Whitaker, Gary McKethan, Alfonzo Washington, Jr.*

This month we are featuring a community contribution from the Blue, Gold, and Black Digital Archive. Gary McKethan submitted [this photo](#) from the Epsilon Kappa Chapter of Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity's 50th-anniversary celebration, hosted in 2022!

If you are a current or former member of the Pitt community, please consider adding your stories and photos to the archive!

**Share Your Pictures & Stories!**

**Introducing Drael Thomas, August  
Wilson Outreach and Engagement  
Curator**



Last fall, the ULS welcomed Drael Thomas into the role of August Wilson Outreach and Engagement Curator. Her main responsibilities are managing outreach activities through programming, exhibitions, and social media initiatives. Prior to starting this role, Drael worked for several years as a Process Engineer before making the jump to the library world and serving as the University Library System Diversity Fellow.

She holds a Bachelor of Science in Chemical Engineering from UT-Austin and Master of Library and Information Science from Pitt. Drael is a native of Houston, Texas. Diving headfirst into the rich Black history in the Pittsburgh region, Drael is a driven, community-centered archivist and is honored to serve in this role.

## **August Wilson Student Award Now Accepting Applications!**

We are excited to announce **the August Wilson Archive Student Award!** This research award provides \$1000 to Pittsburgh-area high school students to explore the August Wilson Archive. The program gives students an opportunity to explore primary source material, Wilson's own notes, writing, and other artifacts, and to create a project, exhibit, or creative work. This final product may look like a small exhibit using materials with descriptions written by the student, a diagram showing connections between materials in the collection and secondary sources, an artwork, or a video. See an example project

timeline [here](#).

Students receiving this award will be supported by full-time Pitt staff including the August Wilson outreach curator. Recipients will travel to Hillman Library in Oakland and present their work in the community. Preference will be given to students in the Pittsburgh Public School System.

**Learn More and Apply**



## **The University of Pittsburgh Library System Acquires the Archive of Jazz Legend Sam Rivers**

The ULS is pleased to announce the acquisition of [the Sam Rivers Archive](#). As a jazz saxophonist, flutist, and pianist, Rivers (1923–2011) earned worldwide renown in traditional and avant-garde jazz. As an entrepreneur, he nurtured the careers of many younger musicians.

The archive joins the ULS's esteemed jazz collections that contribute to making the University of Pittsburgh a major destination for jazz studies. Michael Heller, Associate Professor in the Music Department, remarked the Jazz Studies program is "ecstatic for the opportunity to engage with the legacy of this legend of Black American music."

The archive includes roughly forty boxes documenting Rivers' career from the 1950s until his death. Highlights

include over 500 performance-ready scores, drafts of scores documenting his creative process, over 300 unreleased audio and video recordings from 1957 to 2007, and thousands of clippings, posters, and programs. Processing of the archive will commence later this year.

**Learn more about Sam Rivers!**

## **Notes from Bedford Avenue**

*Updates from the August Wilson Archive at Pitt*

Earlier this year, the ULS celebrated the grand opening of the August Wilson Archive with a series of special events. Our partners included #ArtsinHD, August Wilson African American Cultural Center, August Wilson House, August Wilson Society, and the University of Pittsburgh's Department of English, Department of Theater Arts, and the Center for Creativity. The celebration featured panel discussions and workshops with local historians including Dr. Laurence Glasco, Carl Redwood, and Dr. Joe Trotter; Wilsonian Warriors such as Kenny Leon, Montae Russell, and Michele Shay; visiting academic scholars including Dr. Eric Glover, Omiyemi Green, Dr. Ladrica Menson-Furr, Dr. Khalid Long, John Henry Merritt; and local artists including Deavron Dailey and Bonita L. Penn. Recordings of selected events can be viewed at [augustwilson.library.pitt.edu](http://augustwilson.library.pitt.edu).

On March 3rd, we welcomed about 200 people for our grand celebration event at Hillman Library. The event featured exciting items in the collection along with interactive activities using or inspired by archival material, a preview of Carl Kurlander's documentary on August Wilson and the Hill District, and a jazz performance by the forthcoming Pitt Community Ensemble.

The collection is open to the public and accessible in Hillman Library Monday - Friday 9 AM - 4:45 PM. We invite you, and encourage you to invite others, to explore, learn, and create from

the August Wilson Archive. You can find more information about the collection, upcoming events, and opportunities to work with us at [augustwilson.library.pitt.edu](http://augustwilson.library.pitt.edu).







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