An Endangered Species: The Black Male Librarian

Julius C. Jefferson, Jr.
Congressional Research Service
Washington, D.C.

Despite the small numbers of Black librarians, there is a rich but untold or forgotten history of Black American's contributions to the profession. This program will examine the history and contributions that Black male librarians have made in the Nation's intellectual and cultural past and present and discuss strategies to encourage Black males to pursue careers and leadership positions in library and information science fields. In addition, The program will highlights issues Black males encounter in the workplace and the recruitment and retention of Black male librarians.
The Black Male Librarian...

An Endangered Species

Presented by Julius C. Jefferson, Jr.

The National Diversity in Libraries Conference
October 1-4, 2008
Louisville, Kentucky
Topics

• Statistics - Credentialed Librarians by Characteristics
• 19th and 20th Century Black Male Librarians
• Issues Facing Black Male Librarians
• Solutions to Recruit
Credentialed Librarians by Characteristics
The Black Male Librarian... An Endangered Species

Statistics for Librarians — 2000
Number of Credentialed Librarians by Race — Total 109,958*

* Diversity Counts Office for Research and Statistics Office for Diversity — Table 1: Number of Credentialed Librarians by Characteristic, 2000
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Number of Credentialed Librarians by Race and Sex:
FEMALES — Total 90,495*

* Diversity Counts Office for Research and Statistics Office for Diversity — Table 1: Number of Credentialed Librarians by Characteristic, 2000
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Number of Credentialed Librarians by Race and Sex:
MALES — Total 19,463*

* Diversity Counts Office for Research and Statistics Office for Diversity — Table 1: Number of Credentialed Librarians by Characteristic, 2000
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Number of Credentialed Librarians by Race and Sex — Total 109,958*

Diversity Counts Office for Research and Statistics Office for Diversity — Table 1: Number of Credentialed Librarians by Characteristic, 2000
19th Century African-American Librarians...
Daniel Murray
1852-1925

Served 52 years at the Library of Congress.
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19TH CENTURY AFRICAN-AMERICAN LIBRARIANS

John F.N. Wilkerson

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>William H. Grimshaw</th>
<th>First attendant in the Jefferson Congressional Reading Room</th>
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<td>19TH CENTURY AFRICAN-AMERICAN LIBRARIANS</td>
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George W. Forbes
1864-1927

Served as assistant in the West End Branch of the Boston Public Library from 1896-1912.
Monroe Nathan Work 1866-1945

Founder and director of the Department of Records and Research at Tuskegee in Alabama. Founded the annual “Negro Year Book.”
Thomas Fountain Blue
1866-1935

Headed the first public library to establish branch services for Blacks in the South (Louisville, KY).

First African American to speak before the American Library Association.
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Edward C. Williams</th>
<th>1871-1929</th>
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<tr>
<td>First professionally-trained African-American librarian, educator, and writer.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cited as one of American Libraries’ 100 library leaders of the century.</td>
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Henry Proctor Slaughter
1871-1958

Typographer and journalist by occupation, but best known as a bibliophile and collector.
Arthur A. Schomburg
1874-1938

In 1911, co-founded the Negro Society for Historical Research. Between 1931 and 1932 Schomburg served as Curator of the Negro Collection at the library of Fisk University.
20th Century African-American Librarians...
Robert E. Wedgeworth

In 1972, became the first African-American Executive Director of the ALA, the first black dean of the library school at Columbia University, the first black library director at the University of Illinois, and the first African-American as well as non-European to head the IFLA in more than sixty years.
Joseph Henry Reason
1905-1997

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20TH CENTURY AFRICAN-AMERICAN LIBRARIANS

### Major R. Owens
1936-

*The country’s only librarian who was a member of the U.S. Congress.*
Arna Bontemps
1902-1973

Served as head librarian at Fisk University from 1934-1964.
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20TH CENTURY AFRICAN-AMERICAN LIBRARIANS

E.J. Josey
1924-

Cofounder, Black Caucus of the American Library Association (BCALA), 1970; ALA, president, 1984-85.
Issues and Solutions
The Black Male Librarian... An Endangered Species

Survey of Black Male Librarians Shows Following Issues:

- Not being promoted
- Not enough librarians of color
- Not enough mentors that can offer inside knowledge of how a library works politically
- Not getting the same opportunities as whites
- Ostracized by patrons
- Not being seen as qualified
- Stereotyped as only good for handling difficult people
- Not taken seriously as a professional, going beyond to prove worthy
- Feeling like a token hire
- When stating difference, seen as angry or confrontational
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## Solutions for Recruiting:

- Reiterating the value of the profession
- Sell the diversity of profession
  
  \textit{(ex: make a connection between the library and sports)}
- Introduce profession to children, as early as kindergarten
- Highlight the role of the Internet
- Mentorship
- Need more African Americans in academia and positions to hire

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