



UNCROWNED COMMUNITY BUILDERS

HONORING AFRICAN
AMERICAN HERITAGE



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The Uncrowned Queens Institute for Research and Education on Women acknowledges the lives of African-American men and women whose contributions and accomplishments, mostly undocumented, were instrumental in building a vital community.

"For those who would look for the evidence that there are these archival treasures in records and diaries and club minutes and the like, we have the relentless and passionate energy that these editors have devoted to making this generous record, indeed, testament of our presence in America's midst."

Karla FC Holloway, Ph.D.
William R. Kenan Professor of English, Law, and Women's Studies
Duke University

ABOUT THE INSTITUTE

Mission: to conduct research on the issues affecting women of color; to develop educational programs that will enhance the quality of life for women and their communities; to promote the collection and dissemination of the individual histories of women, women's organizations and women's collective history; and to teach and educate women on the use of technology to preserve and disseminate their histories.

The Uncrowned Queens Institute for Research and Education on Women, Inc., a 501 (c) 3 organization, collects and preserves the individual and collective histories of African-American community builders for future generations. The institute's name derives from the poem, "America's Uncrowned Queens," written by Drusilla Dunjee Houston. Published in 1917, this poem is an ode to the tireless, hardworking and unheralded black woman and expresses the essence of the institute's mission.

LASTING HISTORY

The institute is creating a legacy of African-American community leadership activities by documenting individual and collective histories. This legacy of community history and culture is maintained through the Uncrowned Queens award-winning technopedia, a unique and dynamic multimedia resource at <http://uncrownedcommunitybuilders.com>. This one-of-a kind digital library is accessible worldwide and provides the opportunity for participants to update their biographies as new material becomes available.

The Uncrowned Queens technopedia utilizes the technology of the Internet as a principal medium for:

- Maintaining a permanent repository for the collection, preservation, and dissemination of the individual and collective histories of regional community builders
- Enhancing regional history, sociology, gender studies, and other disciplines
- Recognizing and acknowledging women and men for their accomplishments and contributions to community building
- Establishing a forum to encourage, enhance, and galvanize partnerships and collaborations
- Raising awareness about the importance of a community preserving its own history

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

A board of directors, comprised of community leaders, governs the institute. In 2006, the organization established a unique relationship with the University at Buffalo. The institute receives resources from the university that support the UQ cofounders' full-time commitment to continued development and implementation of UQ programs.

UNCROWNED COMMUNITY BUILDERS

In April 2007, the institute formally launched the Uncrowned Kings initiative. The community response has been overwhelmingly positive. In a few short months, over one hundred biographies of men whose lives have spanned a century or more were submitted. A companion Web site for the Uncrowned Kings initiative can be accessed at <http://uncrownedkings.com>.

With the addition of the Uncrowned Kings initiative, the institute is moving toward a corporate identity that includes all of its initiatives under the umbrella, Uncrowned Community Builders.

SERVICES

The institute provides individual mentorship and educational and community-awareness programs by building and strengthening community networks. Some of the institute's services include:

Uncrowned Queens Archival Program Through an agreement with the University at Buffalo's University Archives, the institute established a program to find and secure the personal papers, photos, awards, and other memorabilia of local African-American Uncrowned Queens.

The first collection secured and donated to the archives is that of Eva Noles, the first African-American to graduate from the Buffalo School of Nursing, now part of the Erie County Medical Center. Mrs. Noles's papers have been cataloged and are available to student and community researchers and for teaching.



"The excavation, collection preservation, and dissemination of the histories and photos of these Uncrowned Kings will contribute immeasurably to our understanding and appreciation of the legacy of regional community builders to the historical fabric of our country. We applaud the work of the cofounders of the institute and look forward to their nationalization of the Uncrowned Queens model of historical and cultural preservation."

**Lonnie G. Bunch, Director
Smithsonian National Museum of
African American History and Culture**

Educational Curricula, Workshops, and Conferences The cofounders, both educators, have developed curriculum and workshop presentations related to their research on local African-American history, African-American women's history, and family history.

The institute has also sponsored three national/international conferences (2001, 2002, and 2003), which addressed the issues of African-American history and women's history. Future conferences or symposiums are being planned in conjunction with the National Conference of Black Mayors.

Publications Uncrowned Queens Publishing, the institute's special affiliate, has issued four editions of *Uncrowned Queens: African American Community Builders*. The institute also produces a monthly online newsletter with a national audience.

Television The cofounders have developed an Uncrowned Queens television show titled *Illuminations*. The half-hour program is broadcast weekly on public access television in Buffalo.

Radio *Uncrowned Queens: Voices from the Community* is a radio program continuing the institute's efforts to preserve the histories of elderly African-American women community builders. The program will be aired on Internet radio from the Web site.

Health Network The UQ Health Network raises awareness and increases interest in participating in health care clinical trials and conducts participatory research on health issues disproportionately affecting women of color, such as lupus, colon cancer, and breast cancer.

Bridging the Digital Divide A primary service of the institute has been to teach the need for and appreciation and understanding of technology in historical and community preservation; persuade the community to move toward technology for research and preservation of community history; maintain ongoing communication with the community through electronic e-mail and Web site updates; encourage comfort with technology; and encourage individual use of technology.

Community Collaboration The institute partners with numerous community, civic, professional, business, and government organizations to accomplish its mission, promote its programs, and enhance its services.

ABOUT THE FOUNDERS

Cofounders Barbara A. Seals Nevergold and Peggy Brooks-Bertram established the Uncrowned Queens project in 1999. They have over two decades of experience working as a team to address educational inequities in the public schools, health issues impacting women of color and, most recently, the initiative to preserve African-American regional history.

Nevergold and Bertram have jointly received the Buffalo Urban League Community Service Award, National Federation of Just Communities' Education Award, the National Women's Hall of Fame, Keeper of the Flame Award, along with many others. They are requested experts for a variety of radio, television, print media, and educational programs on issues about African-American history, women, and leadership.



PEGGY BROOKS-BERTRAM

Peggy Brooks-Bertram is a native of Baltimore, Maryland. She completed a B.A. in political science at Goucher College in Baltimore, Maryland, and later earned both a master's in public health and a doctor of public health from the Johns Hopkins University School of Hygiene and Public Health. In June 2002, Bertram received a second doctor of philosophy in American studies from the University at Buffalo. She has worked in faculty and administrative positions within higher education and in special services for developmentally disabled populations. She is also a lecturer in health, education, and community activism and a poet/playwright, and is a nationally recognized scholar on ancient African history, namely the Cushites of ancient Ethiopia.

Bertram is the cofounder of the Uncrowned Queens Institute for Research and Education on Women, currently located at the University at Buffalo. With her colleague, Barbara Seals Nevergold, she has created a model for the reclamation, collection, preservation, and dissemination of the biographic histories of African-American women and men. Together they authored and edited the book series entitled, *Uncrowned Queens: African American Women Community Builders of Western New York*, three volumes, and a fourth volume, *Uncrowned Queens: African American Women Community Builders of Oklahoma: 1907-2007*. Bertram, along with her colleague is executive producer and cohost of a local cable television program entitled, *Uncrowned Queens: Illuminations*. Bertram has been a resident in the Buffalo community since 1986 and during that time has worked to build important community organizations, including Concerned Parents and Citizens for Public Education, the WASET Cultural Heritage Society, and the Saturday School for African American children.

Bertram's scholarly publications on women's health include "Social and Psychological Aspects of Women's Health: A Diversified Perspective" in *Psychiatric Issues in Women, Bailliere's International Practice and Research in Psychiatry* (1997) and "African American Women: Disfigured Images in the Epidemiology of Depression in African American Women" in *Women's Health and Social Issues*, Catherine F. Collins (editor), 1997. Bertram is also a historian and biographer on the life of Drusilla Dunjee Houston, author of the poem "America's Uncrowned Queens" that served as inspiration for the Uncrowned Queens Institute name. To

date, Bertram's publications on Dunjee Houston include a book chapter featured in the *Oklahoma Centennial Encyclopedia Project, 2007*; a chapter on Drusilla Dunjee Houston in the encyclopedia *Black Women in America*, edited by Darlene Clark Hine for Oxford University Press (2005); and *Wonderful Ethiopians of the Ancient Cushite Empires: Book II, Origin of Civilization from the Cushites* by Drusilla Dunjee Houston, a lost manuscript edited and published by Peggy Brooks-Bertram, Bertram Publishing, 2007.

In recognition of her many contributions, Bertram was inducted into the Western New York Women's Hall of Fame in March 2007. In 2006, she received the Keeper of the Flame Award from the National Women's Hall of Fame and in 2005 she received the NCCJ Sisterhood/Brotherhood Education Award. In 2001, Morgan State University awarded her the university's first Distinguished Achievement Award for Outstanding Contributions to African American History and Culture.



BARBARA A. SEALS NEVERGOLD

Barbara A. Seals Nevergold is a graduate of Buffalo State College and received a doctorate in counseling education from the University at Buffalo. She has worked as a French teacher, school counselor, social worker, and health care administrator. Currently, Nevergold is the codirector of the Uncrowned Queens Institute for Research and Education on Women at the University at Buffalo. She is also an adjunct instructor at Empire State College and the University at Buffalo.

As a cofounder of the Uncrowned Queens Institute for Research and Education on Women, Nevergold with her colleague, Peggy Brooks-Bertram, has created a model for the reclamation, collection, preservation, and dissemination of the biographic histories of African-American women and men. Nevergold, along with her colleague, is executive producer and cohost of a local cable television program entitled, *Uncrowned Queens: Illuminations*. Nevergold and Bertram are the authors and editors of the book series entitled, *Uncrowned Queens: African American Women Community Builders of Western New York*, three volumes, and *Uncrowned Queens: African American Women Community Builders of Oklahoma: 1907-2007*.

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Nevergold has authored several published articles, including: "From Pan Am Protests to the Niagara Movement" (in press, West Virginia University Press); "Buffalo, New York: A Fertile Ground from Pan Am Protests to the Niagara Movement" (in press); "Doing the Pan: The African American Experience at the 1901 Pan American Exposition" in *Afro-Americans in New York Life and History*, January 2004; "Fantastic Color & Special Effects: The Seals Ebony Studio," in the Spring 2002 edition of the *Western New York Heritage Magazine*; "To Be an Instrument for Their Voices: Finding, Writing and Sharing Family Histories," in *Afro-Americans in New York Life and History*, Vol. 25, No. 2, July 2001; and "Transracial Adoption: In the Child's Best Interest?" in *African American Women's Health and Social Issues*, Catherine F. Collins (editor). Nevergold is an accomplished family historian, who is researching her family from the state of Louisiana.

Nevergold has received numerous awards for professional and community service, including the NCCJ Sisterhood/Brotherhood Education Award; the Buffalo Urban League Community Service Award; the 2006 Community Service Award from the CAO Agency of Buffalo and Western New York; the 2006 Daniel C. Acker Award for Community Education from the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People; the National Women's Hall of Fame, 2006 *Keeper of the Flame Award*; the 2007 Western New York Women's Hall of Fame Award, and the 2007 NYS Martin Luther King Award.

UNCROWNED COMMUNITY BUILDERS

A social collaboratory for writing history and building a digital history repository SM

Uncrowned Queens

African American Community Builders SM

Uncrowned Kings

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FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE UNCROWNED QUEENS INSTITUTE:

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WEB SITE: www.buffalo.edu/uncrownedqueens

CREATING A NATIONWIDE MOVEMENT

The institute collaborates with several national organizations for planning the replication of the Uncrowned Community Builder's model in other areas throughout the country.

The first national replication of the Uncrowned Queens initiative occurred in the state of Oklahoma. As an official project of the Oklahoma Centennial Commission, the Uncrowned Queens of Oklahoma was placed on the Master Centennial Plan in 2003.

Officially launched in April 2006, the Uncrowned Queens of Oklahoma collaborated with a broad base of community, civic, and municipal organizations, as well as individuals, throughout the 2007 Centennial Year. It hosted programs in Oklahoma City, Tulsa, Enid, Altus, Chickasha, Shawnee, and Ardmore. *Uncrowned Queens: African American Women Community Builders of Oklahoma: 1907-2007* celebrated more than one hundred Oklahoma women, who represented more than half of the seventy-two counties in the state.

In addition to the Uncrowned Queens of Oklahoma, another one of the institute's most exciting on-going discussions involves the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture.





HONORING OUR HISTORY

MARY CROSBY CHAPPELLE was born in Georgia and moved to Buffalo, New York in 1935. She was a public school teacher of special education for thirty-two years. In her career, Chappelle was Dean Emeritus of the Mary Chappelle Foundation, minister, volunteer, public speaker, journalist, poet, dramatist, singer, and community builder with membership in numerous community, civic, religious, and social organizations.

DRUSILLA DUNJEE HOUSTON wrote the poem, "America's Uncrowned Queens," that served as the inspiration for naming the Uncrowned Queens Institute. During her career she was an educator, racial uplift theorist, institution builder, and journalist. A resident of Oklahoma, Houston's writings cross multiple literary periods and genres, including African and American history, the Black Women's Era (1890-1900), and the Harlem Renaissance. One of the most overlooked woman writers in African-American history, she is also one of the most important African-American women in the American West.

DELMAR L. MITCHELL was the first African-American elected to a citywide office in Buffalo. He was instrumental in establishing an elected board of education and a school desegregation plan. During his career, he served as a county supervisor, Masten District councilman, councilman-at-large, majority leader, and Common Council president.

CLAUDE D. CLAPP was the first black principal of a Buffalo public school and later the first African-American to hold an administrative post within the school district. During his career, he also served as associate superintendent and deputy superintendent of the Buffalo Public Schools. One critical legacy of his tenure with the schools was his institutional support of the United Negro College Fund.

FLORENCE JACKSON LEE graduated from the Pratt Institute in Brooklyn, New York, majoring in fashion design and couture. A top graduate from the Pratt Institute, she was denied employment because of her color. She married and moved to Buffalo, New York, in 1915. There she worked to introduce the literature and musical works of many black writers and composers to young black women.

HELP SUPPORT THE WORK OF THE INSTITUTE

The programs and services of the institute would not be possible without the support and assistance of many friends. We are thankful for the generous individuals, corporations, foundations, and civic and community organizations that have committed to the institute's mission and goals. However, to ensure that the institute continues to grow, as well as to maintain its current status, we need *your* assistance.

Through your support, you play a vital role in our efforts to preserve African-American regional history and make that history accessible to Americans of all ethnicities and ages. Your contribution and support are deeply appreciated.

YES, I WANT TO SUPPORT THE WORK OF THE UQI!

Name: _____

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My tax-deductible gift is enclosed:

\$1,000 \$500 \$100 \$50 \$25 Other _____

Please mail check payable to: The Uncrowned Queens Institute, Inc.
106 Allen Hall
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Buffalo, New York 14214

UNCROWNED QUEENS INSTITUTE THANKS ITS DONORS

The Uncrowned Queens Institute is a nonprofit organization dependent upon individual contributions and grants to support its programs and activities. We are sincerely appreciative of the individuals and organizations that have made donations to the institute. This support helps the institute preserve the history of African-American women and men community builders of Western New York and beyond.

If you would like to make a contribution to our organization, you can mail your donation to Uncrowned Queens Institute in the attached envelope. The institute is a nonprofit, 501 c (3) organization and all contributions are tax deductible.

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