


Irma McClaurin



Black Feminist Archive

Special Collections & University Archives UMass Amherst Libraries





“Our stories, our voices, our lives, are too often disregarded, marginalized and left on the cutting floors of films, the editing screens of books, while archivists have ignored us. This archive will be a game changer by preserving and showcasing the intellectual and activist contributions of Black feminists for all eternity.”


Irma McClaurin






The Irma McClaurin Black Feminist Archive

Archives are where histories are recorded and written, but even at their best, they are imperfect reflections of an imperfect world. Inequities in whose writings are collected produce inequities in whose histories become known, and the failure of vision of one generation becomes failure for the next. The profound contributions to scholarship and activism made by Black Feminists, for example, are still seldom seen in archives, so that the full record of their achievements still remains underrecognized and underappreciated.



We can do better.

To raise awareness of the issues and increase visibility of the unique contributions of women of color, the Department of Special Collections and University Archives (SCUA) and W.E.B. Du Bois Center at UMass Amherst have joined with Distinguished Alumna Dr. Irma McClaurin MFA '76, MA '89, PhD '93 in establishing the Irma McClaurin Black Feminist Archive.





Our goals

To address the gaps in archival representation, we will seek out, collect, and preserve materials that document the intellectual, political, and cultural contributions of women of color, and especially Black women.

Still we can do more.

For the Black Feminist Archive to reach its fullest potential, we need to activate the collections: only through proper description, digitization, exhibition, colloquia, and direct support of scholarship can we will ensure that the material will be seen and used by diverse scholars and only then will it fuel a broader conversation in and beyond academia.

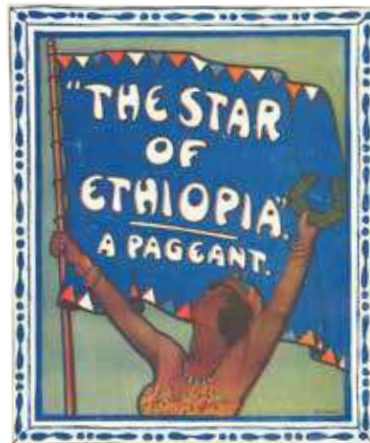
In short, by documenting the lives and work of a vibrant community of Black women activists and scholars we can lay the foundation for the more inclusive histories of the future.




SCUA

At UMass Amherst, the Black Feminist Archive will join with a suite of social justice collections in creating a center of excellence in the documentation of African American and women's studies.

There are currently no interdisciplinary archives of this anticipated magnitude dedicated to Black women. Linked with the extraordinary papers of W.E.B. Du Bois, Horace Mann Bond, David Levering Lewis, and the Africa America Institute, among others, the Archive will have transformative potential, not just for academic research, but for the lives of women and men across the globe facing the





challenges of the 21st century and beyond.


Black Feminists have been social bellwethers, nationally and globally, and we intend their voices to be heard. Come into the archive.

Be heard.



“...I learned feminism disproportionately from Black women.”

Gloria Steinem






Irma McClaurin

This interdisciplinary archive is the vision and legacy of Dr. Irma McClaurin, an accomplished anthropologist, former university president, and award-winning writer. Her correspondence, books, photographs, and writings are the foundation of this unique archive, but the archive has already grown to include the works of other Black feminists.


The chief diversity officer for Teach For America, a nonprofit organization working to strengthen the movement for educational equity and excellence, McClaurin has lived a life of passion and deep commitment to social justice, bring-





ing leadership on issues of inequality, diversity, and inclusiveness. A native of Chicago and first-generation college graduate, she received a BA in American Studies from Grinnell and an MFA in English and both MA and PhD in anthropology from UMass Amherst. Prior to joining Teach For America, she worked on the Anthropology faculty at the Universities of Florida and Minnesota and as Assistant Dean for the UMass Amherst College of Arts and Sciences Information Advising Center and adjunct faculty in Women's Studies.

McClaurin has not, however, followed a routine career path. She has served variously as president of Shaw University, founding executive director of the University of Minnesota's Urban Research and Outreach-Engagement Center, deputy provost at Fisk University, and the Mott Distinguished Chair of Women's Studies at Bennett College for Women where she founded the Africana Women's Studies program. In addition, McClaurin served as a program officer at the Ford Foundation, managing an annual portfolio of \$10M that supported Black Studies, Women's Studies, and the Ford Foundation Diversity Fellowship.



An award-winning writer, McClaurin earned first place for the 2015 Emory O. Jackson National Column Writing Award from the Black Press given by the National Newspaper Publishing Association. She is the editor of *Black Feminist Anthropology* (2001), named an Outstanding Academic Title by Choice Magazine, and author of *Women of Belize: Gender and Change in Central America* (1996). An accomplished poet, her poems have appeared in over 16 magazines and anthologies.



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