

THE POWER OF

OUR STORY:

**A SYMPOSIUM ABOUT
PLACE-BASED STORYTELLING
AND HISTORY,
AND THE BLACK
FREEDOM STRUGGLE**

Friday, Sept. 20
Saturday, Sept. 21

NKU  **NORTHERN
KENTUCKY
UNIVERSITY**

LECTURE SCHEDULE

Friday, Sept. 20

- 9-9:45 a.m. **Registration**-*University Center (UC) Lobby*
- 10 a.m. **Opening Remarks/Introduce Aleah Hordges (MC)**
Dr. David Childs, NKU-UC Ballroom
- 10:03 a.m. **Opening Remarks**
Ashley Lamb-Sinclair, National Geographic Explorer,
2892 Program Founder
Ainsley Lindberg, NKU student, BBoF
Jan-Michele Kearney, Vice Mayor, Cincinnati
Dr. Ginni Fair, Dean, College of Education, NKU
- 10:10 a.m. **Depart to Concurrent Sessions**
- 10:15-11:30 a.m. **Concurrent Sessions**
Dr. Eric Jackson-UC 135
Alundra Childs-UC 204
Craig Rush-UC 335
Jennifer Williams-UC 414
- 11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m **Lunch**-*UC Ballroom*
- 12:30 p.m **Introduction of Speaker**
Dr. David Childs
- 12:35-1:20 p.m **Keynote Speaker**
Kristi Williams: National Geographic Explorer-UC Ballroom
- 1:20-1:40 p.m **Wrap-up/Takeaways and Departure**
Dr. David Childs/ Ashley Lamb

MC: Aleah Hordges (Channel 12 News)



LECTURE SCHEDULE

Saturday, Sept. 21

- 9:30-9:45 a.m. **Breakfast/ Registration-UC Lobby**
- 10 a.m. **Welcome Back**
Aleah Hordges-*UC Ballroom*
- 10:03 a.m. **Isaiah Phillips**
- 10:05-10:50 a.m. **Morning Keynote**
Dr. Kimberly Mack-*UC Ballroom*
- 10:50-12:05 p.m. **Concurrent Sessions**
Dr. Eric Jackson-*UC 135*
Alundra Childs-*UC 204*
Craig Rush-*UC 335*
Jennifer Williams-*UC 414*
- 12:07-1 p.m **Lunch-UC Ballroom**
- 1:05-1:50 p.m **Keynote Speakers**
Karyn Parsons, "Fresh Prince" and Dr. David Childs
- 1:55-2:15 p.m **Wrap-up/Takeaways and Departure**
Dr. David Childs/ Ashley Lamb-Sinclair

The Inaugural 2892 Cincinnati Place-Based Black History Event supported by the National Geographic Society.

Hosted by NKU Black Studies, Black and Brown Educators, College of Education and National Geographic (2892 Miles to Go Program) with support from the National Geographic Society.



SPEAKER PRESENTATIONS

ALUNDRA CHILDS, ED.D. CANDIDATE

The Invisibility of Afro-Latino Culture and Ethnicity: Traversing Black and Latinx Identity at an Ohio School

Often in the U.S., people rigidly think of race and ethnicity as simply Black and White. Because of the legacy of slavery and Jim Crow, Americans seem to be in a holding pattern of how they define racial identity. The talk will center around understanding the complexity of what it means to be Afro-Latino, exploring the history and culture of folks who identify this way. Special attention will be given to the broader work the presenter is doing at a **North Cincinnati** high school with students who identify as Afro-Latinos, Latinx and African American, exploring issues of language, race, historical trauma and identity.

MR. CRAIG RUSH

Teaching and Learning Black History in Cincinnati Neighborhoods

Mr. Craig Rush will collaborate with the public library and do a workshop on African American history in Cincinnati, specifically focusing on Black freedom. He will work with the library in highlighting specific **Cincinnati neighborhoods**. He will draw from his rich knowledge of nearly 30 years as a social studies educator in the Cincinnati Public School district. Workshop participants will be enlightened by his wealth of knowledge in Ohio local history and geography.

DR. ERIC JACKSON, ED.D.

A Testament of Hope and Freedom: Cincinnati's Underground Railroad

Because Cincinnati's location on the banks of the Ohio River, the city's economy was tied to the society of enslavement in the south as well as much Underground Railroad activities. Indeed, a special cadre of individuals became very active in the African American quest for freedom and equality as thousands escaped enslavement and made their journey to the North and freedom. This presentation will focus on Underground activities and stories in **downtown Cincinnati, the West End and Walnut Hills**.

KARYN PARSONS AND DR. DAVID CHILDS, D.D., PH.D.

Telling Our Story: Place-Based Storytelling and the Cincinnati Black Freedom Struggle and Beyond

Overall, Parsons and Childs will speak broadly about their work in writing Black history, multicultural literature, DEI and civil rights. Specifically, drawing from their own communities, families and stories the presenters will explore how history is often place based, local and rooted in family traditions. They will discuss how their own stories are connected to Cincinnati Black history and the freedom movement locally, regionally, nationally and globally. The presenters will make a particular reference to the Cincinnati neighborhoods of **Walnut Hills, West End and Downtown Cincinnati**.

MS. JENNIFER WILLIAMS, M.A. CANDIDATE

Making History: The Legacy of the Fossett Family in Cincinnati

Ms. Jennifer Williams will highlight Cincinnati's role in the struggle for freedom and civil rights and how investigating our community's history helps us plan for its future. She will focus on recent research on Peter and Sarah Fossett, whose descendants remain in Cincinnati today and have kept safe priceless documents related to the family's freedom story. She will discuss in particular the communities of **Cumminsville** and **Walnut Hills**. With workshop participants, she will explore the importance of uncovering untold stories for understanding ourselves and our communities.

DR. KIMBERLY MACK, ED.D.

The Black Freedom Struggle: Learning Local African American History in Ohio

Dr. Kimberly Mack will do a talk on the abolitionist John P. Parker and tie it to the work she does for the Black community in the Cincinnati neighborhood of **Madisonville** (i.e. community gardens, multicultural literacy work, STEM). As a principal in Cincinnati Public Schools, she will also connect the work to her purpose-driven leadership model. Dr. Mack's talk will also highlight notions of grit, resilience and courage—key principles that can be drawn from the freedom struggle.

KRISTI WILLIAMS

Stories of Freedom: From Black Wall Street to 2892 Cincinnati

As a National Geographic Explorer and 2892 Tulsa Lead, Kristi Williams will highlight her advocacy work in highlighting the history of the Tulsa massacre and Black Wall Street. Williams will also draw from her own story and ancestry, having relatives that witnessed the desecration of Black Wall Street. She also will highlight her fascinating Native American ancestry and connect it to the larger Freedom Struggle. As a nationally renowned, high profile civil rights leader and community activist, Williams' work connects to the **2892 Cincinnati freedom** struggle and social justice around the planet.

MEET OUR KEYNOTE SPEAKERS



Dr. David Childs is a professor of social studies, history, education and director of the Black Studies Program at Northern Kentucky University (NKU). He earned two master's degrees and a Ph.D. from Miami University of Ohio. He received a Doctorate of Divinity from Temple Bible College and Seminary in Cincinnati. Dr. Childs is also president of Cultural Diversity Consultants, LLC, an educational consultant organization that focuses on diversity, Black studies, educational leadership and social studies curriculum.

Dr. Childs is an international scholar, having worked in Mexico, Canada, France, England and Liberia, Africa. He has expertise in history, Black studies, social studies education, theology and diversity. He has published more than 200 academic articles and book chapters. He is also a novelist and has published a historical fiction novel on slavery and freedom for young adults. Dr. Childs is currently working on a documentary film for Kentucky Educational Television (KET) and PBS featuring his research on the underground railroad in Kentucky and Ohio. The film is set to come out in spring of 2025. The work is a collaboration with George Clooney and his father Nick Clooney. Dr. Childs has also done work with PBS, NPR, the Smithsonian Institute and National Geographic. The things he loves most is spending time with his wife (Alundra) and children, traveling and being involved with his local church.



Karyn Parsons is best known as the character Hilary Banks on the long-running television show "The Fresh Prince of Bel Air." Today, she is the founder of Sweet Blackberry, an award-winning series of children's animated films and books sharing stories of unsung Black heroes in history. The films feature narration from such notable talents as Alfre Woodard, Queen Latifah, Chris Rock and Laurence Fishburne. They have been screened on HBO and Netflix and are enjoyed by schools and libraries across the country. Karyn has also authored the Sweet Blackberry picture books "Flying Free: How Bessie

Coleman's Dreams Took Flight" and "Saving the Day," which tells the story of how Garrett Morgan invented the traffic signal. Karyn's debut novel, "How High The Moon", was released in March 2019. Her latest novel, "Clouds Over California", hit bookshelves in July 2023.



Dr. Kimberly Mack is renowned as a dedicated advocate for women and children. By day, she serves as principal of John P. Parker School in Cincinnati, Ohio, where her leadership has garnered national attention. The school's innovative approach to education has been featured prominently in the media, including a spotlight on NBC Today Show's Education Nation segment. This coverage highlighted Parker's pioneering programs in community engagement, aimed at nurturing children from early development through to their careers. In 2024, John P. Parker School achieved an impressive four out of five stars on the Ohio School Report Card, distinguishing it as one of only six elementary schools in Cincinnati Public Schools to reach this level of excellence. Outside of her professional endeavors, Dr. Mack is an accomplished author and serves as president of the Purpose-Driven Women's Empowerment Network. She also curates the highly regarded Laugh, Learn, and Launch Conference for Women and Girls. Driven by a profound commitment to uplifting her community, Dr. Mack is recognized as the purpose-driven educator, consistently seeking opportunities to inspire and empower those around her.



Kristi Williams, a.k.a. Orisabiyi, is the great-great-granddaughter of Creek Freedmen and 1874 Supreme Court Justice Jesse Franklin of the Muscogee Creek Nation. She is also a descendant of the 1921 Tulsa Race Massacre, with her Great Aunt Janie Edwards having been present in the Dreamland Theater during the tragic event. Williams is the founder of Black History Saturdays and a National Geographic Explorer. She currently serves as the program manager for Fitting Back In Tulsa with World Won Development and as a consultant for Standpipe Hill Strategies. In 2022, she founded the Standpipe Hill Homebuyers Program, which graduated 17 participants, four of whom are now homeowners. Williams is a dedicated community activist, Greenwood advocate, organizer, political consultant, strategist and campaign manager for Tulsa District 1 City Councilor Vanessa Hall Harper since 2016. She serves on the National Geographic Endowment Oklahoma Advisory Council. She is the former Chairperson of the Greater Tulsa African Affairs Commission and serves on the 1921 Tulsa Mass Graves Oversight Committee for the City of Tulsa. Additionally, she is involved with the Historic Greenwood Main Street and is a founding board member of the Black Wall Street Chamber of Commerce. Her leadership in Tulsa's Coalition for Social Justice led to the successful renaming of the Brady District and changing the narrative from the 1921 Tulsa Race Riot to the 1921 Tulsa Race Massacre. Her numerous accolades include the 2024 Wayfinder Award from National Geographic and several community impact awards. She has been featured in documentaries such as PBS's "The Fire and The Forgotten" and LeBron James's "Dreamland: The Rise and Fall of Black Wall Street," and she frequently speaks on race relations, activism and advocacy. In her spare time, Williams enjoys traveling, reading, gardening and acrylic painting, always striving to become a better ancestor and leave lasting impressions on those she meets. Her favorite quote is from Bishop Richard Allen, founder of the AME Church: "I didn't accept it, I received it."

MEET OUR BREAKOUT SPEAKERS



Alundra Childs is a Spanish teacher at Northwest High School. She has been an educator for more than 20 years. She received a bachelors in Spanish Literature from Northern Kentucky University. She also holds a master's degree in Spanish literature and a second master's in teaching foreign language from Miami University of Ohio. Alundra is currently pursuing a doctorate degree in educational leadership also from Miami University. Her areas of research include Afro-Latino history and culture, multicultural education and Spanish second language acquisition. She

has also studied abroad on several occasions throughout Mexico. She is a classically trained pianist and is director of music at First Antioch Baptist Church. She studied piano at the Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music and with a Russian music educator at Mehas music. She is a board member of First Antioch Ministries, an inner city 501c3 nonprofit that focuses on the areas of food and housing insecurity, addiction, unemployment and education.



Craig Rush Cincinnati Public Schools Social studies educator Mr. Craig Rush will collaborate with the Cincinnati Public Library and do a workshop on African American history and geography in Cincinnati, specifically focusing on the Black freedom struggle in the region. He will work with the library in highlighting place-based Cincinnati freedom struggles such as Union Baptist Cemetery in Madisonville, Peter H. Clark as one of the first African American educators in Cincinnati and, the Escape of the 28 slaves from Kentucky through Hamilton Avenue through to Sandwich Baptist Church in Windsor, Canada.



Dr. Eric R. Jackson is professor of history and associate dean in the College of Arts and Sciences at Northern Kentucky University, with 33 years of academic experience at the university level. Dr. Eric R. Jackson has taught numerous classes in the fields of American and African American history, race relations and peace studies.. Dr. Jackson has also published a wide array of books, books reviews, articles, etc. in many local, regional, national and international journals, such as the *Journal of African American History*, the

Journal of Negro Education, *Ohio History*, the *International Journal of World Peace* and the *Journal of Pan African Studies*.) With more than 50 publications, Dr. Jackson recently completed an online book/website on African Americans in Cincinnati (Oxford University Press, 2015 <http://www.oxfordaasc.com/public/features/archive/0216/index.jsp>), co-authored a book titled "Cincinnati's Underground Railroad" (Arcadia Publishing, Inc. 2014) and co-authored another book titled "Unique Challenges in Urban Schools: The Involvement of African-American Parents" (Rowman and Littlefield, May 2015), "Let Freedom Ring for Everyone": (Cognella 2020), and "Introduction to Black Studies"(University of Kentucky Press, 2023; 2023 Thomas D. Clark Medallion Award). Dr. Jackson also is a member of the Boone County Public Library Board of Trustees, the Kentucky Humanities, Cincinnati Preservation Association, Friends of Music Hall Board (Cincinnati, Ohio).



Jennifer Williams is a northern Kentucky native with a focus in Ohio River Valley history, especially as it relates to the fight for freedom. She is a graduate student at Northern Kentucky University in the Public History and Public Administration programs. She has had the privilege of conducting research on the Black communities in New Richmond, Ohio, and Augusta, Kentucky. She volunteers with the Dinsmore Homestead in Burlington, Kentucky, and the Harriet Beecher Stowe House in Cincinnati, Ohio. Her capstone project on the Fossett family, "Cincinnati's Lost Founders," has been

selected to receive an award from the Ohio Local History Alliance. She serves as the historic preservation officer for the City of Newport.

