


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 remains under-recognized and underappreciated.

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 the W.E.B. Du Bois Center at the UMass Amherst Libraries have joined with Distinguished Alumna Dr. Irma McClaurin MFA '76, MA '89, PhD '93 in establishing the Irma McClaurin Black Feminist Archive.

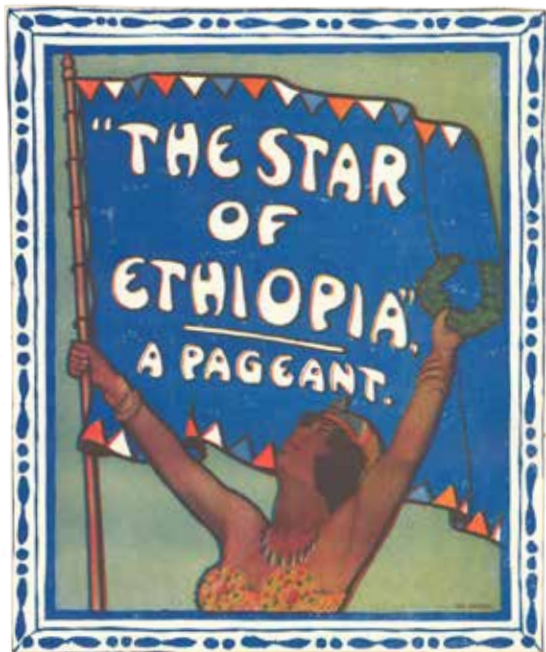
Our goals

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.

We can do more.

For the Black Feminist Archive to reach its fullest potential, we need to activate the collections. It takes a dedication to proper description, digitization, exhibition, colloquia, and direct support of scholarship to ensure that the material will be seen and used by diverse scholars and only then can we fuel a broader conversation within 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 more inclusive histories of the future.



SCUA

At the UMass Amherst Libraries, the Irma McClaurin Black Feminist Archive will join 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 other interdisciplinary archives of this anticipated magnitude dedicated to Black women in the United States. Linked with the extraordinary papers of W.E.B. Du Bois, Horace Mann Bond, David Levering Lewis, Arlene Avakian, 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 scholar, anthropologist, former university president, and award-winning writer. Her writings, books, photographs, and correspondence are the foundation of this unique archive, which has already grown to include the works of other Black Feminists.

Through a life of passion and a deep commitment to social justice, McClaurin



has brought leadership on issues of diversity, inequality, and inclusiveness. A native of Chicago and first-generation college graduate, she received a BA in American Studies from Grinnell College and an MFA in English and MA and PhD in anthropology from UMass Amherst. Her professional positions include serving as Chief Diversity Officer at Teach for America, a non-profit organization working to strengthen the movement for educational excellence and equity; tenured faculty in Anthropology at the Universities of Florida and Minnesota; and Assistant Dean for the College of Arts and Sciences Advising Center, adjunct faculty member in Women's Studies, and Associate Director of Transfer Admissions, all at UMass Amherst. She worked as well as Assistant Director of Admissions at Mt. Holyoke College.

McClaurin has not, however, pursued 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 Publishers Association. She is the editor of *Black Feminist Anthropology* (2001), was named an Outstanding Academic Title by *Choice* magazine in 2002, and is author of *Women of Belize: Gender and Change in Central America* (1996). An accomplished poet, she has published in over 16 magazines and anthologies.



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