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**DC HISTORY CONFERENCE HONORS THE DISTRICT'S
STRUGGLE FOR SELF-DETERMINATION AND TRACK RECORD OF RESILIENCE**

Conference takes place April 3-6, 2025

Free and open to the public; pre-registration highly recommended

WASHINGTON (March 25, 2025) — The 51st Annual DC History Conference, co-presented by the DC History Center, the DC Public Library, and HumanitiesDC, returns as the District is experiencing overwhelming disruption and weakening home rule. Spotlighting DC as a proud hometown, the free community event takes place Thursday, April 3 through Sunday, April 6 in Downtown Washington.

This year the DC History Conference spans four days and features more than 38 panels, keynotes, walking tours, and poster presentations. Timely topics include mass incarceration, activism, gun violence, Go-Go, and many more. Speakers bring an array of backgrounds and types of expertise, from emerging historians and journalists to artists and community organizers.

"Last year the DC History Conference recognized the 50th Anniversary of the Home Rule Act of 1973," said Laura Brower Hagood, executive director of the DC History Center. "Things are a little different now. The city's self-determination is in question, and the 51st Conference is a moment to draw strength from our community's history of resilience."

"DC Public Library is proud to co-present this landmark conference that reminds us all of what makes DC unique," said Richard Reyes-Gavilan, executive director of the DC Public Library. "This year's program comes at a remarkable time in the history of Washington, DC and encourages residents to gather, experience community, and deepen their connection to our city."

The event is free to all attendees, but online pre-registration is strongly recommended. "Whether you plan to attend all weekend, one day, or even just one panel, your free registration gives you access to the entire conference program," said Maren Orchard, the conference's lead organizer. To see the detailed schedule and to register, visit conference.dchistory.org.

More than 1,000 attendees joined the conference last year. Organizers expect record registration again this year.



The event opens on Thursday, April 3, with the Oral History Symposium at the DC History Center, in partnership with Oral History in the Mid-Atlantic Region. In addition to sessions throughout the day, collaborative learning opportunities include a walking tour of 7th Street NW with author and oral historian Shilpi Malinowski and an evening panel on the impact of gun violence.

On Friday, April 4, panels present leading scholars, researchers, and community-based history practitioners throughout Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Library. At 12 pm, a panel assesses the historic impact of DC's Financial Control Board in the 1990s.

Organizations doing humanities-based work across the DMV share their latest projects in a tabling-style event during the History Network. The day's program culminates with "Before Hardcore: DC's Pre-Punk Rock Scene," which doubles as a live recording of the DC Rock History Podcast. The day ends with an After-Hours Celebration on the rooftop with appetizers, drinks, and live music.

The conference continues Saturday with a documentary screening, an Emancipation Day performance, and a chance to practice "deep listening" to oral histories. A panel titled, "Experiments in Self-Determination," examines the ANC structure, DC's 1976 Bicentennial Assembly, and DC's battle for a vote in the House of Representatives' Committee of the Whole. Midday, the DC History Showcase features the poster session, author's corner, and a second networking opportunity for DC history projects.

Saturday's highlight will be the Letitia Woods Brown Memorial Lecture, "Hoops and Soul: Black Resistance and Resilience through Sport and Sound," featuring historian and author Maurice Jackson in conversation with literary activist and renowned poet E. Ethelbert Miller.

Jackson makes the case for how sports and music have long played a central role in the lives of Black Washingtonians. More than just spaces for entertainment and joy, they were a barometer of social conflict and progress—arenas in which African Americans combated racial injustices.

Thanks to the Downtown DC BID, Sunday begins with an array of walking tours, covering the local culinary scene, transportation, and Asian American culture in DC in and around Gallery Place (tours are already sold out).

Sunday's sessions kick off with a keynote address, "Fearless Vampire Killers: The Bad Brains Photographs of Glen Friedman." Photographer Glen Friedman and punk icon Ian MacKaye discuss Friedman's early 1980s photographs of the influential punk band, Bad Brains. The



conference's final day concludes with sessions covering DC theater, roller skating, the Civil War, DC's prisons, and teaching with LGBTQ+ archives.

More information on the conference schedule and speakers can be found at conference.dchistory.org. Select sessions will be shared online following the conference.

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About the DC History Conference

The DC History Conference is an interdisciplinary community conference considering the District's past, present, and future. Since the first conference in 1974, the conference organizers aim to provide a welcoming, educational, and stimulating forum for original research on and engagement with the history of the Washington, DC metropolitan area, including Maryland, Virginia, and the federal government. For more updates, follow us on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram (@dchistcon) and share about the conference using the hashtag #DCHistCon. For more information, visit conference.dchistory.org.

About the DC History Center

Established in 1894 and located at the Carnegie Library in Downtown DC, the DC History Center is a community-supported nonprofit organization, which deepens understanding of our city's past to connect, empower, and inspire. It collects, interprets, and shares the history of our nation's capital through research and scholarship, adult programs, youth education, and exhibits. We seek to do this work as a welcoming and inclusive community that fosters curiosity and nurtures civic engagement to strengthen the District for all. For more information visit dchistory.org.

About the DC Public Library

The District of Columbia Public Library is a dynamic source of information, programs, books, and other library materials and services that improve the quality of life for District residents of all ages that, when combined with expert staff, helps build a thriving city. The Library provides environments that invite reading, community conversation, creative inspiration and exploration, lectures, films, computer access and use, workforce and economic development, story times for children, and much more. DC Public Library provides services at the Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Library, 25 neighborhood libraries and in nontraditional settings outside of the library buildings. DC Public Library enriches and nourishes the lives and minds of all District residents, provides them with the services and tools needed to transform lives, and builds and supports communities throughout the District of Columbia. For more information, visit dclibrary.org.



About HumanitiesDC

HumanitiesDC aims to illuminate the rich communities that make up the District using the tools of the humanities. Through our grantmaking we support Washingtonians and local organizations interested in helping build a vibrant city where all can engage in intellectual exchange, reflect on our connected stories and celebrate our various cultures. With our public programs we partner with local experts, scholars and creatives to design and host unique initiatives, workshops, discussions, performances, storytelling gatherings and more that explore the culture of our nation's capital. To learn more about our grant opportunities, programs and how you can become involved visit humanitiesdc.org.

DC History Conference Organizational Partners

DC Historic Preservation Office, DC Office of Planning; DC Preservation League; Heurich House Museum; DC Office of Public Records and Archives; The Albert H. Small Center for National Capital Area Studies; and White House Historical Association

DC History Conference Donors and Sponsors

DC Public Library Foundation, HumanitiesDC, Events DC, the Office of the Secretary of State of the District of Columbia, DowntownDC Business Improvement District, EHT Traceries, Georgetown University Press, The Albert H. Small Center for National Capital Area Studies, the Rainbow History Project, the Crowley Company, the Family of Letitia Woods Brown, as well as the DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities. The 51st is our media sponsor, and Eaton DC is our hotel partner.