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IV.ii.b; 13-10 Drafts Proposal for Wright Archives Friends Auxiliary Proposal for Pilot Project

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DISCUSSION DRAFT

Charles H. Wright

Proposal for Friends of the Archives Auxiliary

Betty Brown-Chappell, PhD and Nancy J. Arnfield, PhD

non
3/16/12
LaNesha

Our vision is to develop a plan to preserve the history and culture of African American citizens and communities within Michigan in a timely fashion thus adding to the knowledge base of our state's history. This plan, as part of the ongoing mission of the Wright, will redress historic trends which have yielded the destruction or neglect of culturally-based information and artifacts thus facilitating an optimal level of public education about preservation strategies, tactics, and methods.

This plan has X components which include:

1. A *working* advisory group composed of individuals who make a contribution of no less than \$500 or who contribute 50 hours of in-kind volunteer effort on behalf of the archives. Such effort may include processing items (music, memorabilia, photographs, documents, or other media), writing grants, supervising other volunteers, providing training, or doing outreach to the community on behalf of the Archives. Monetary contributions may be designated for specific items from a list generated by the Head Archivist.
2. Other funds can be raised to benefit the Archives through developing a processing (accession) donation structure. For example, if an individual wishes to donate a large number of items, then the individual can do as they would do now. However, given the multi-year backlog of processing, if the individual wishes their materials to be processed within a specific time range, then they would be asked to provide a suggested donation for that service. For example, to process Betty's family materials for 2011 might have a suggested donation of \$700 plus a materials cost of \$150 (close to actual cost to hire folks to help out and to buy archival supplies). Our reasoning is that people who have voluminous amounts of materials also have the means to donate and might have incentive to do this given the current financial climate and a projected long processing timeframe. The donated items plus the processing donation would be tax-deductible.
3. General membership in the auxiliary is for anyone who wishes to contribute \$25 per year and attend an annual event where a progress report will be made. This event will also serve as an annual volunteer appreciation day and tokens or certificates may be given at that time.
4. Nancy suggested Betty as chair. Betty agrees only if Nancy serves as co-chair. We believe that we need LaNesha to serve ex-officio which means that she can selectively attend meetings.
5. We will need some staff cooperation such as supervision of our volunteer efforts such as has occurred in the past.

6. While we are not opposed to fundraising events (galas), we believe that such an effort should best be handled by a subcommittee.
7. Ultimately, we would want to develop a volunteer cadre that would be dedicated to archival work and whose skills would be acquired over a year or more of hands-on and limited classroom training. (This last is one component of the larger grant that Betty is working on for the National Endowment for the Humanities.) *Evaluation*

8. Our next meeting will be the week of April 16 and in the interim we will each review materials from Story Corps to see how they market their oral history project.
9. On another note: In doing two sessions of education on preservation thus far (one with Michelle) I have found that it was difficult to engage the audience to take action. Nancy and I think that we need to figure out how best to develop audiences, then how best to engage them in sharing their past to enhance the future . . . or something like that. We need according to Nancy, "A motivated sequence structure for obtaining involvement." Perhaps we need to use the phrase "sharing your reality?"

List

*Borrowing
BPC Archives*

*Southern MI
Grant*

*So Haven
Historical
Q2 Historical*

*display
discussion 3/21
free membership @
Hpm*

*Call for Papers - due Spring?
presentation to professional
group.*

Grant Concept
Statement

DISCUSSION DRAFT

Prepared by Professor Betty Brown-Chappell, PhD, LMSW, MSW

Eastern Michigan University School of Social Work

August 2, 2011

Education and Preservation: The Past Informs the Future

Vision: At the end of the proposed pilot project there will be a plan to preserve the history and culture of African-American citizens and communities within southern Michigan thus adding to the knowledge base of our state's history. Such a project will redress historic trends which have yielded the destruction or neglect of culturally-based information and artifacts.

Mission: Both the museum and Eastern Michigan University believe that it is imperative to develop and foster collaborative efforts among southern Michigan's archival institutions to offer meaningful education and training on the preservation of personal archival documents. Further, it is our plan to foster the collection and preservation of such materials and the education of members of southern Michigan's African American population who may currently have such materials in their possession.

Partners: Eastern Michigan University (EMU) and The Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History are the founding partners of this collaboration. Established in 1849, EMU is an institution of higher education which has over 23,000 students enrolled in more than 200 majors. The *School of Social Work* at EMU, which has trained social welfare leaders in the southeastern Michigan area for over 40 years at the Bachelor level, would be the lead unit at EMU. In collaboration with the University Archivist, the School of Social Work will provide the organizing leadership. The *Wright Museum* is a 501(c) (3) organization based in Detroit that occupies a state-of-the-art facility; *The New York Times* and other media recently reported a positive story about the museum. Operated since 1965 the Museum specifically chronicles history through its exhibits and educational programs. Because the Wright has had over 65,000 patrons in the last year, its cultural impact is extensive; the Archival Library will provide preservation leadership.

Need: Due to historic legal subjugation, traditions of racial discrimination and class oppression, the artifacts of African-American cultural life have been largely lost. The remnants of this past continue in the unfortunate low levels of social achievement in Michigan's largest City. The Detroit Public Schools, the nation's 11th largest, has only a 21.7% graduation rate according to a 2006 report funded by the Bill & Melissa Gates Foundation. While the city is the largest in the state it also has 36.4% poor residents. Due to recent economic downturns, the largest source of the Museum's support, the City of Detroit, has scaled back its financial support. Hence, the size of the Museum's education staff and its capacity has been reduced over the last five years while the volume of content, through web-based products, has increased exponentially and will continue to grow. As a result of this shrinkage of staff but growth in demand, the repository for

much of our historical materials, the Archival Department of the Museum, is currently over 10 (verify) years backlogged in processing donations of historical materials and artifacts.

To provide a means and system to bring this content under control and to create access and educational programs, as well as to support teachers, students, and others, is a critical need that the Museum must address before it can assist other communities and cultural institutions in the state. There is also a need to prevent future generations of photographs, artwork, deeds, books, pamphlets, birth certificates and a multitude of other cultural artifacts from deterioration and destruction.

Concurrently, students in the Bachelor of Social Work Program at EMU must learn strategies and tactics of community organization. Given that the School's Mission "is committed to the empowerment of poor, oppressed, vulnerable, and underserved populations . . . in organizations and communities" one might expect students to learn such organizing skills in Detroit where the School's target population is concentrated. However, such opportunities are scarce due to the time required to commute to the city and the cost of transportation; the geographic options to learn more about community organizing are often limited to more easily accessible areas even if they do not represent the tremendous concentration of poor and oppressed individuals.

Impact/Outcomes: Other major cities such as Chicago and New York have recently launched long-term education and preservation projects focused on the African-American community. The expected impact of the proposed project would occur through a twelve-month pilot program with the following components: (1) recruit a consulting archivist who would devise a plan to deal with the Museum's archival backlog plus supervise the development of educational and preservation materials; (2) recruit a one-quarter time faculty member who would plan for and teach the course on community organizing so that a unit of students could practice educational outreach and organizing in Detroit with the programmatic goal of preserving historical artifacts and educating patrons and potential patrons of the Museum; (3) devise a scholarship program for up to 10 students which would serve to both reimburse them for transportation costs and as an incentive to drive the hour plus commute to Detroit; (4) convene an advisory committee of stakeholders to provide advice and oversight of the project; (5) involve at least 300 local individuals and families in the education and preservation program through 10 or more training sessions; (6) evaluate the objective outcomes of the program based on a pre-post test model of knowledge that patrons gain about preservation methods; (7) plan for the second stage of the project which will involve setting up a similar pilot program in the southwestern part of the state.

Cost: The total pilot cost of \$28,000 is anticipated as follows: \$8000 for EMU faculty member (one course release for two semesters); \$13,000 for the consulting archivist (equals 20% of \$65,000 salary); \$5000 for ten student stipends; and \$2000 to produce educational materials.

Stakeholders: The City of Detroit, its taxpayers and educational/cultural units such as The Detroit Institute of Arts, the Detroit Historical Museum, Public Library, and the Public School System would all be stakeholders in the effort to improve the capacity of to educate African-

American residents of southern Michigan and preserve their heritage. For both EMU School of Social Work and the Wright it is important that ultimately unions, businesses, and local units of government within southern Michigan support and promote greater inclusion of contemporary historical artifacts and information.