

SESSIONS AND SPEAKERS



RAPHAEL CASSIMERE JR., SYMPOSIUM MODERATOR
UNIVERSITY OF NEW ORLEANS

RAPHAEL CASSIMERE JR. is a native of New Orleans and a product of its public schools, a proud graduate of Joseph S. Clark Sr. High School. He received his bachelor's and master's degrees in history from the University of New Orleans and his doctorate from Lehigh University in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. In 1967 he became the first black instructor at UNO. Cassimere has been a full-time member of the history department since 1971 and presently holds the rank of Seraphia D. Leyda University Teaching Professor, Emeritus. In 2005 he was selected as one of the university's all-time "Favorite Professors."

Cassimere has been actively involved with the NAACP since 1960 and has held numerous offices in the organization at the local, state, regional, and national levels. He has also served on a number of governmental boards and commissions, including serving as chairman of the Vieux Carré Commission for three terms and as a founding member of the Louisiana Black Culture Commission.



ERIN GREENWALD, THE HISTORIC NEW ORLEANS COLLECTION
Paths to Freedom in Eighteenth-Century Louisiana

This presentation is intended as a general overview of the history of free people of color in colonial Louisiana, with an emphasis on the paths traveled from slavery to freedom by individuals of African and Afro-European ancestry during the eighteenth century. Topics covered include a comparative examination of slave codes and manumission laws in both the French and Spanish periods, as well as a critical look at how Louisiana's population of free people of color achieved a critical mass—and established a distinct group identity—between 1771 and 1803.

ERIN GREENWALD is a PhD candidate in history at the Ohio State University, where she is completing a dissertation entitled "Company Towns and Tropical Baptisms: From Lorient to Louisiana on a French Atlantic Circuit." She is also an associate curator and historian at The Historic New Orleans Collection. Most recently she edited and wrote the introduction to *In Search of Julien Hudson: Free Artist of Color in Pre-Civil War New Orleans* (THNOC, 2011). Other publications include "To Strike a Balance: New Orleans's Free Colored Community and the Diplomacy of William C. C. Claiborne," an essay that appeared last year in *Nexus of Empire: Negotiating Loyalty and Identity in the Revolutionary Borderlands* (University Press of Florida, 2010).



REBECCA J. SCOTT, UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

Free for How Long? Illegal Enslavement and the St. Domingue Refugees, 1803–1818

We are usually told that among the nearly 10,000 refugees from the French colony of St. Domingue who disembarked in New Orleans in 1809 there were 3,226 slaves. But how can this be? The struggle that would later be called the Haitian Revolution had during the 1790s brought an end to legal slavery throughout that colony. All refugees fleeing the shores of St. Domingue in the face of the Napoleonic expedition of 1802 were under law free citizens. Although some suffered re-enslavement during the time they subsequently spent in Cuba, under federal law no slaves could be landed in the United States from abroad after January 1, 1808. So how could 3,226 individuals from St. Domingue be both categorized as slaves and admitted to the Louisiana Territory in 1809? This presentation will address this seeming puzzle, using the contested case of a woman of color named Adélaïde Métayer versus the tailor Louis Noret to examine determinations of status in New Orleans. The presentation will conclude by emphasizing the fragile legal basis for many claims of property rights in persons, thus raising questions about the boundaries of the complementary category of "free persons of color."

REBECCA J. SCOTT is the Charles Gibson Distinguished University Professor of History and Professor of Law at the University of Michigan. Her book *Degrees of Freedom: Louisiana and Cuba after Slavery* (Belknap, 2005), received the

Frederick Douglass Book Prize; the John Hope Franklin Prize; and the 2005 Williams Prize in Louisiana History, conferred by The Historic New Orleans Collection and Louisiana Historical Association. Scott's recent articles include "Public Rights, Social Equality, and the Conceptual Roots of the Plessy Challenge," *Michigan Law Review* 106 (2008); "Microhistory Set in Motion: An Atlantic Creole Itinerary," in Khan, Baca, and Palmié, eds., *Empirical Futures* (University of North Carolina Press, 2009); and "Rosalie of the Poulard Nation: Freedom, Law, and Dignity in the Era of the Haitian Revolution," in Garrigus and Morris, *Assumed Identities* (Texas A&M University Press, 2010).



SHELENE C. ROUMILLAT, TULANE UNIVERSITY

***"That pride of Distinction, which a soldiers pursuits so naturally inspires":
The Enduring Legacy of the Free Colored Militia and the Battle of New Orleans***

In the 1850s the free colored veterans of the Battle of New Orleans experienced a profound resurgence of public honor for the role they played in delivering victory over British forces in 1815. Local whites were forced to revise their collective memory of the event that was the proudest moment in New Orleans's history and the cornerstone of the city's connection to the United States—a memory from which the free colored veterans had been excised in the years following the battle. This presentation looks at how whites made room in their collective memory for the free colored veterans, how they rationalized this process, and what factors prompted this change. The presentation will also consider how, through this reawakening, the free colored veterans gained personal and collective advantages throughout the mid- to late nineteenth century—long after their militia had disbanded.

SHELENE C. ROUMILLAT is a PhD candidate in history at Tulane University. She is currently working on a dissertation entitled "From the 'Hour of her Darkest Peril' to the 'Brightest Page of her History': New Perspectives on the Battle of New Orleans," a social and cultural history that investigates how the Battle of New Orleans shaped social interactions and cultural dialogues within New Orleans during the nineteenth century, as well as outside perceptions of the city and the burgeoning identity of the nation. This presentation is drawn from a chapter of the dissertation. In 2007 Roumillat received a Dianne Woest Fellowship from The Historic New Orleans Collection. Currently a resident of Nashville, Tennessee, she will return to New Orleans in the summer of 2011.



JESSICA B. HARRIS, QUEENS COLLEGE/THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK AND DILLARD UNIVERSITY

Bel tignon fait pas bel negresse: Dress as Status in the French Creole World

"Fashion is always a statement loaded with content." So says Linda Grant in an essay, "Fancy Dress," about the costumes in John Guare's recent Broadway show *A Free Man of Color*. Nowhere was clothing more rigidly codified in the United States than in antebellum New Orleans. There, a multiclass, multicolor system more closely related to those in the Caribbean and colonial Mexico dictated what was worn when and by whom. Looking at period images of New Orleans, related images from St. Domingue, and more recent postcard images from the French Antilles and the French colonial world, as well as texts by an assortment of authors from Labat to Hearn, this presentation will examine the vestmental universe in which the free people of color existed.

JESSICA B. HARRIS is a culinary historian and has lectured on African American foodways at numerous institutions and colleges throughout the United States and abroad. An award-winning journalist, Harris has written for numerous publications ranging from *Essence* to *Saveur* to German *Vogue*, and she is the author of twelve critically acclaimed cookbooks documenting the foods and foodways of the African diaspora, including *Iron Pots and Wooden Spoons: Africa's Gifts to New World Cooking* (Atheneum, 1989); *Sky Juice and Flying Fish: Traditional Caribbean Cooking* (Fireside, 1991); *The Welcome Table: African-American Heritage Cooking* (Simon & Schuster, 1995); and *High on the Hog: A Culinary Journey from Africa to America* (Bloomsbury, 2011).

A tenured professor of English at Queens College/CUNY, Harris holds degrees from Bryn Mawr College, Queens College, the Université de Nancy, France, and a doctorate in performance studies from New York University. She was the inaugural scholar-in-residence and the Ray Charles Chair in African American Material Culture at Dillard University in New Orleans, where she established the Institute for the Study of Culinary Cultures; she currently serves as a consultant to the program.



ELIZABETH SHOWN MILLS, SAMFORD UNIVERSITY INSTITUTE OF GENEALOGY

Conscience Confronts Reality: Nuanced Slaveholding by Cane River's Free People of Color

In both popular culture and historical studies, few issues involving Louisiana's Creoles of color are as complex or as sensitive as the dual roles many played in the peculiar institution: slave *and* master. The Metoyers of Cane River feature prominently in such discussions, being at one time the nation's largest slaveholding family of color. This presentation explores the Metoyers' multilayered, finely nuanced involvement in the buying and selling of enslaved people, and it offers alternative views based on kinships, spatial relationships, social activism, and community justice.

ELIZABETH SHOWN MILLS is a historian by training who has spent her career studying American culture and the relationships between people, emotional as well as genetic. Past president of the American Society of Genealogists and the Board for Certification of Genealogists, Mills was featured in the BBC's twentieth- and thirtieth-anniversary specials on Alex Haley's *Roots*. She has published thirteen books and forty-six peer-reviewed essays on genealogy, history, and sociology, including the historical novel *Isle of Canes* (Ancestry Pubs., 2004), based on research in six nations' archives. Her book *Evidence Explained: Citing History Sources from Artifacts to Cyberspace* (Genealogical Pub., 2007) was named one of Library Journal's "Best Reference" books of 2007.



WILLIAM KEYSE RUDOLPH, WORCESTER ART MUSEUM

Louisiana's Titian: Julian Hudson, f.p.c., and His World

Julien Hudson (1811–1844) is both the first documented native Louisiana painter and the second earliest documented artist of African descent in the United States. His brief career, which produced five surviving portraits, raises important, far-reaching questions about the art world of antebellum New Orleans, the relationship of free artists of color to their patrons and colleagues, and the ways art history has interpreted them.

WILLIAM KEYSE RUDOLPH is curator of American art at the Worcester Art Museum, an appointment he has held since 2009. Later this month he will assume the position of curator of American art and Decorative Arts at the Milwaukee Art Museum. He previously served as the Pauline Gill Sullivan Associate Curator of American Art at the Dallas Museum of Art from 2004 to 2008. In that capacity, he organized the focus exhibition *Charles Sheeler's "Power" Series* (2006), which reunited a historic series of six paintings executed in 1939, and the traveling show *Bluebonnets and Beyond: Julian Onderdonk, American Impressionist* (2008–2009), a major retrospective of the work of one of early Texas's most important landscape artists.

Rudolph's scholarly interests include portraiture, particularly miniatures, and art of the American South. In partnership with The Historic New Orleans Collection, he has organized the first retrospective and touring exhibition of nineteenth-century free artist of color Julien Hudson (2011–2012, New Orleans, Charleston, and Worcester). He is also the author of *Vaudechamp in New Orleans* (THNOC, 2007) and, with Alexandra Alevizatos Kirtley of the Philadelphia Museum of Art, of *Treasures of English and American Painting and Decorative Arts from the Julian Wood Glass Jr. Collection* (Skira, 2010). Rudolph has been developing an exhibition, with Carol Eaton Soltis of the Philadelphia Museum of Art, devoted to works of Thomas Sully viewed through the lenses of theater and literature. He received a PhD in art history from Bryn Mawr College, an MA in art history from the University of Virginia, a postgraduate diploma from the Courtauld Institute of Art, and a BA from the University of Nebraska–Lincoln.



ROUND TABLE DISCUSSION: FROM LES CENELLES TO BROWN V. BOARD OF EDUCATION

DANA KRESS is a professor of French at Centenary College of Louisiana, where his research interests focus on the Creole literature produced in Louisiana during the nineteenth century. He has edited numerous works by *Créole de Couleur* writers and intellectuals who were active in New Orleans and France. In 2003 he founded Les Éditions Tintamarre, a heritage language press based at Centenary College and specializing in American literature written

in languages other than English. Les Éditions Tintamarre has become a major source for Louisiana texts written in French during the nineteenth century.

THE PLESSY AND FERGUSON FOUNDATION for Education, Preservation and Outreach was founded in 2009 by Keith Plessy, a descendant of Homer Plessy, and Phoebe Ferguson, the great-great-granddaughter of Judge John Howard Ferguson, who upheld the 1890 Separate Car Act, which eventually went to the Supreme Court as *Plessy v. Ferguson* in 1896.

The foundation seeks new ways to teach the history of civil rights through understanding this historic case and its effect on the American conscience. The foundation presents public programs on topics around race, reconciliation, and civil rights; places historic markers about African American civil rights pioneers in Louisiana; and works to correct and expand important civil rights stories in our nation's textbooks.

PHOEBE FERGUSON is a New Orleans native and cofounder of the Plessy and Ferguson Foundation for Education, Preservation, and Outreach. After graduating from the Art Center College of Design in 1981, Ferguson worked for twenty years as a professional photographer in New York City. She began working in documentary journalism and then moved to advertising; Ferguson ran her Tribeca studio for fifteen years, shooting for major ad agencies around the country. In 2000 Ferguson began her master of arts degree in film at New York University. In 2002 she began research on her first feature-length documentary, *Member of the Club*, released in 2008, which tells the story of black society in New Orleans between 1895 and 2005. After moving back to New Orleans in 2006, Ferguson began working at the Amistad Research Center and with grassroots organizations on issues of equity in public education in post-Katrina New Orleans.

KEITH M. PLESSY is a longtime bellman at the Marriott Hotel. A native of New Orleans, he is a graduate of John McDonogh High School and the New Orleans Center for Creative Arts (NOCCA). When he was a student at Valena C. Jones Elementary School in the 1960s, Plessy discovered he had a famous last name. A gifted artist, he was recruited to return to Valena C. Jones Elementary School in 1979 to paint more than a hundred portraits of civil rights leaders on the interior walls of the school. His paintings are still there today. Currently, as president of the Plessy and Ferguson Foundation, Plessy works tirelessly reaching out to civil rights leaders, activists, and community members to let them know about the foundation and to seek their input and guidance in developing programs.

ALEXANDER PIERRE TUREAUD JR., a native of New Orleans, was born in 1936 and lived with his family in the Seventh Ward. He attended Valena C. Jones Elementary School and graduated from J. S. Clark High School in 1953.

As a college freshman, he sued Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge for admission and was the first black undergraduate to attend the university. Six weeks after being admitted, Tureaud was forced to withdraw from LSU as a result of legal technicalities. While the case progressed through the courts, Tureaud attended Xavier University in New Orleans. His father, A. P. Tureaud Sr., successfully petitioned the U.S. Supreme Court to enjoin LSU from discharging his son, but A. P. Jr. decided to remain at Xavier University, graduating in 1957.

Tureaud received a master's degree from Columbia University in 1958 and taught in public schools in New Orleans, Washington, D.C., and White Plains, New York. In 1968 he became the director of special education in the White Plains schools, a position he held for twenty-eight years. Also during that time Tureaud was an adjunct professor at Hunter College, the College of New Rochelle, and Pace University. After thirty-eight years in public education, he retired in 1996.

Currently Tureaud is an educational consultant, artist, and writer. He has coauthored a biography of his father and the history of the modern civil rights movement in Louisiana with Rachel L. Emanuel. *A More Noble Cause: A. P. Tureaud and the Struggle for Civil Rights* in Louisiana will be published by Louisiana State University Press in the spring of 2011.