



BLACK LAW LIBRARIANS SPECIAL INTEREST SECTION



BLL-SIS ANNUAL REPORT 2020-2021

BOARD MEMBERS

Errol Adams, Chair
Andre Davison, Vice Chair, Chair-Elect
Le'Shawn Turner, Secretary
John Campbell, Treasurer
Angela Mason, Member-at-Large
Gail Mathapo, Member-at-Large
Dawn Smith, Immediate Past Chair

COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Bylaws: Janice Henderson & Allen Moye
Community Service: Nichelle Perry
Education & Annual Programs: Marjorie Crawford & Yolanda Jones
Grants & Awards: Jane Larrington
Marketing & Public Relations: Sabrina Davis
Membership: Miriam Childs
Nominations: Shamika Dalton

FORMATION

BLL-SIS also known as BLISS was formed last July. BCAALL had been in existence for over 15 years. A petition was signed by almost 300 AALL members for this to happen. BLISS has come a long way considering the pandemic and the racial problems that still plagues this country.

As of August 2020, the BLISS board met once a month. A call for volunteers provided 20 volunteers who serve as committee members for BLISS' seven committees. BLISS developed its bylaws which was approved by membership last January. The Bylaws committee co-chaired by Allen Moye & Janice Anderson also worked on updating BLISS' Operation Manual and it is almost completed. The Chair & the Marketing & Public Relations Committee via AALL's Chris Siwa developed and populated the website with BLISS' board oversight.

BLISS has a Google Drive that will be utilized as a knowledge management tool and for continuity purposes. Marketing and Public Relations Committee chaired by Sabrina Davis also did a good job of maintaining BLISS social media platforms including LinkedIn & Instagram. BLISS also has an active blog page.

BLISS' Education & Programs Committee co-chairs Yolanda & Marjorie Crawford, had several welcomed educational programs throughout the year. BLISS also had programs via three collaborations with FCIL (SARS Program), PLLIP (Diversity Summit), & The Diversity & Inclusion Committee (Employment Discrimination). BLISS submitted two program proposals to AALL for its Virtual Conference, and both were accepted i.e. Dismantling Systemic Racism as Law Librarians. The Community Services Committee



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selected Clothes and Shoes for Kids as its community service partner this year. Clothes and Shoes for Kids created a personalized website for us: [SC4K/BLL Back to School Campaign 2021](#).

After several discussions by three board members and AALL, BLISS approved the modified 2020 resolutions to one comprehensive resolution titled '[Resolution Proclaiming That Black Lives Matter, Calling for a Diverse, Equal and Inclusive AALL and Legal Information Profession](#).' AALL members approved this resolution and now appears on AALL's website (Resolution).

BLISS has received donations and needed a separate education related funds account. Hence, the Board approved a request by the Grants and Awards Committee chaired by Jane Larrington, to submit a proposal to AALL for the creation of this education fund. This fund will allow BLL-SIS to offer grants for members to attend the AALL Annual Meeting, Leadership Academy, Management Institute and other continuing education opportunities.

STRATEGIC ACCOMPLISHMENT

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COMMITTEE REPORTS

BYLAWS COMMITTEE

Co-Chairs: Janice Henderson & Allen Moye

Members: Clanitra Nejd

The *Black Law Librarians Special Interest Section* (BLL-SIS) was formed in July 2020. The Committee drafted and wrote the BLL-SIS bylaws to meet the criteria of the AALL Model SIS Bylaws and was approved by the AALL Bylaws & Resolution Committee. The membership approved the bylaws in January 2021.

The Committee is also in the process of converting and updating the Black Caucus Handbook to reflect the needed changes for the BLL-SIS. The Committee contacted the chairs of the committees for their input and approval. Those committees are:



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- Bylaws
- Community Service
- Education & Programming
- Grant & Awards
- Marketing & Public Relations
- Membership
- Nominations

The procedures for each of the Executive Board members is also being updated with the help of Errol Adams, BLL-SIS Chair, 2020-21.

COMMUNITY SERVICE COMMITTEE

Chair: Nichelle Perry

Members: Joyce McCray Pearson, Kerri Rowe, Phebe Huderson-Poydras, Tom Hemstock & Malika Hall

The committee first convened in October to review the charge. The charge was accepted, and we began reviewing Cleveland community service organizations in November 2020. An initial list of community service organizations were discussed at a November 30 meeting and committee members completed further research on the organization and reached out to the organizations.

Organizations Researched:

1. Kids Book Bank - <https://www.kidsbookbank.org/> Malika
2. Shoes and Clothes for Kids <https://sc4k.org/>- Nikki
3. Northeast Ohio Coalition for homeless <https://www.neoch.org/> -Tom
4. Girls with Sole- <https://girlswithsole.org/> Stacey
4. Digital Divide & Veterans Issues - Phebe
5. Cleveland Metropolitan School District – Kerri

The Committee met on January 22, 2021 to select a Community organization. The committee agreed to seek permission to support [Clothes and Shoes for Kids](#) – and make a donation to the [Yvonne Chandler Scholarship Fund](#). Information regarding the organizations is provided in the hyperlinks. Information regarding these organizations was forward to the BLL-SIS Executive Committee. The Executive Committee selected Clothes and Shoes for Kids. Committee member Malika Hall, created an informational flyer and Clothes and Shoes for Kids created a personalized website for us: [SC4K/BLL Back to School Campaign 2021](#). This information was distributed via the AALL BLL-SIS education and training website and will be distributed again at the Annual Meeting.



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EDUCATION & ANNUAL PROGRAMS COMMITTEE

Co-Chairs: Marjorie Crawford & Yolanda Jones

Board Liaison: Andre Davison; Angela Mason & Gail Mathapo

Members: Cassandra Patterson, Kerri Rowe, Phebe Huderson-Poydras, ~~Ashely Matthews~~, Miriam Childs, & Joyce McCray Pearson

The Annual Programs Committee has produced a dynamic, year-round slate of programs including the Annual Conference program, Legal Research in an Era of Black Lives Matter; participation in and planning for the inaugural PLLIP Diversity Summit: From Difficult Conversations to Collaborative Action and earmarking donated funds for scholarship purposes.

Our group collaboration inspired us to reach new heights. A listing of our programming for 2020 – 2021 is below.

BLL-SIS Education and Annual Programs Committee Program List 2020-2021

Yolanda Jones Co-moderator with Marjorie Crawford on the inaugural BLL-SIS Black History Month program - The Law, Librarians, and Brown v. Board of Education, Am I Alone? (Wednesday, February 24, 2021). Speakers included Professor John C. Brittain, University of the District of Columbia; Attorney Ryan Haygood, New Jersey Institute for Social Justice, and Professor Reginald Mitchell, Florida A&M University College of Law. **Program Description:** In this era of the Black Lives Matter movement, the recent mob assault on the U.S. Capitol and the major ongoing incidents of police brutality illustrate the need to revisit the U.S. Supreme Court's unanimous ruling in the landmark civil rights case, Brown v. Board of Education. Researchers, librarians, lawyers, law students, and faculty continue to be at the forefront of the struggle for equality. During the webinar, three civil rights experts will discuss the decision's ongoing impact, civil and human rights issues of today, and how to engage in social justice initiatives.

Errol Adams, Andre Davison, Marjorie Crawford, and Yolanda Jones participated in planning for and as breakout room moderators for the inaugural Private Law Librarian and Information Professional Special Interest Section of AALL 2021 **PLLIP Diversity Summit - From Difficult Conversations to Collaborative Action** (Friday, February 26, 2021). **Program Description:** The work of racial justice is long and it requires all of our innovation and dedication to commit to change. Join Michelle Silverthorn, best-selling author, keynote speaker, and Founder & CEO of Inclusion Nation, as she identifies the challenges to equity and inclusion in our own workplaces and communities, including racism, bias, and the persistent belief that "I don't see color and I don't see race." Then, in a unique virtual workshop, she works with us to design our own solutions to the challenges we see to get us all started on implementing real, sustainable change for good. <https://pllsummit.wordpress.com/diversity-summit-2021/>.

On Wednesday, March 17, 2021, Professor Reginald Mitchell, Marjorie Crawford, and Yolanda Jones spoke to high school students as part of a panel for the New Jersey Central High School Social Justice



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Academy. Professor Mitchell told the story of Virgil Hawkins and the history of segregation in the Florida university system, which Mr. Hawkins fought to desegregate. Marjorie Crawford spoke about her experiences and Yolanda Jones spoke about the Famu Law Library Virgil Hawkins Civil Rights Archive and presented a short documentary from the archive, "A Lawyer Made in Heaven," which was narrated by Barbara Jordan.

See <https://commons.law.famu.edu/virgil-hawkins-archive/>. A thank you letter from the principal is attached to this report.

Sarah Lin Training Program

Sarah Lin and Emily Nimsakont have generously donated their time to BLL-SIS as presenters of a computer programming training program with priority for BLL members. The training is based on Library Carpentry (<https://librarycarpentry.org/lessons/>). Starting in April 2021 and then periodically throughout the remainder of the calendar year, Sarah Lin and Emily Nimsakont present computer programming sessions including:

April 23 – Data Organization in Spreadsheets
May 21 – OpenRefine
September 17 – MarcEdit
October 22 – UNIX Shell
November 19 – Webscraping

See the links below for more information about BLL-SIS education and training initiatives.

See <https://www.aallnet.org/bllsis/education-training/>,
<https://blacklawlibrarianssisblog.wordpress.com/>,
<https://www.aallnet.org/bllsis/news-events/blog/>

NOCALL Donation

The NOCALL Chapter notified BLL-SIS in October of 2020 of their wish to donate unrestricted funds to support an educational scholarship or grant for BLL members. Towards that end, BLL-SIS is providing this statement of purpose for AALL to set up the fund in their financial system so that donations to this fund are tracked appropriately.

This fund is vitally important because of the direction society has taken recently. This award is similar in nature to the Southern New England Law Librarians Association, Barbara Karp Memorial AALL Annual Meeting Scholarship. The BLL-SIS fund will focus on expanding non-traditional opportunities to be inclusive in the law library profession. BLL-SIS will give individuals consideration working in a law library setting financial support to attend the annual meeting. Providing an introduction to the law library profession by attending the AALL annual meeting is in keeping with Yvonne Chandler's focus on bringing people together at through our organization.



**BLACK LAW LIBRARIANS
SPECIAL INTEREST SECTION**



Newark Board of Education

Where Passion Meets Progress



Dr. Sharnee Brown, Principal

March 17, 2021

Re: Thank You

Dr. Yolanda Jones, FAMU Law

Dear Dr. Jones

On behalf of the entire Central High School Community, our Principal Dr. Sharnee Brown, the staff and students; we were delighted to have you join our Social Justice Academy convocation on Wednesday March 17, 2021. Your support at Central High School is critical towards informing the work of the school district, our History & Social Studies teachers, and all who attended the event. We thank you for your contribution to our program.

The “Story Telling for Justice” workshop segment was phenomenal and we thank you for delivering much needed professional development to enrich the cultural competency of our staff and students. You were excellent and your contributions to the presentation will directly improve the lives of Newark students and our ability to provide them with a world-class educational experience. The resources you provided the students will allow for on-going inquiry and enlightenment.

Your virtual visit with the Newark New Jersey, Central High School Social Justice Academy teachers and students was instrumental in supporting our mission to develop viable Social Studies curriculum and we thank you.

Highest Regards, *G. Benton*



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GRANTS & AWARDS COMMITTEE

Co-Chairs: Jane Larrington

Members: Kristina J. Alayan & Stacey Pilson

In this first year of the BLL-SIS, the Grants & Awards Committee was charged with preparing recommendations for the BLL-SIS Executive Board on what grants and awards should be offered in the future. The Committee identified grants and awards offered by other AALL special interest sections and by sister organizations. The Committee also surveyed the BLL-SIS membership to assess member priorities for future BLL-SIS Grants & Awards. Although we received only 11 survey responses, there were some areas of clear consensus that helped to inform the Committee's recommendations. At the time of this report, the Committee is preparing its recommendations for submission to the BLL-SIS Executive Board in early June.

The Committee assisted the BLL-SIS Executive Board in the process of requesting a new fund to support BLL-SIS grants and educational programs, including drafting an agenda item for the AALL Executive Board's July 2021 meeting.

MARKETING & PUBLIC RELATIONS COMMITTEE

Chair: Sabrina Davis

Members: Tom Hemstock, Miriam Childs & Cindy Hirsch

Accomplishments:

- Revised Committee Draft Charge (September 2020)
- Drafted a Marketing Plan (November 2020)
- Drafted a Social Media Policy (December 2020)
- Created *BLISS Blog* (March 2021) & posted weekly: Through May 31, 2021, *BLISS Blog* posts have been featured in *KnowItAALL* four (4) times.
- Revised Social Media Recruiting Posts (June 2021)
- Solicited and publicized news and events from other BLL-SIS Committees (Ongoing)



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- Contributed to BLL-SIS “My Communities” page (Ongoing): The most direct way to reach members continues to be via AALL Communities. All BLL members can post content to AALL Communities, and it isn’t restricted to the members of the Marketing and Public Relations Committee or Executive Board.
- Managed BLL-SIS Social Media Accounts (Ongoing): details below—

The Black Caucus Twitter account switched over to BLL-SIS after the 2020 AALL virtual annual meeting in July. Twitter continued to see a fair amount of activity, and judging by the statistics, a respectable reach. The BLL-SIS LinkedIn account went live in November 2020. LinkedIn usage was moderate, considering LinkedIn is the newest BLL social media presence. Please see statistics below:

Twitter – July 2020-April 2021

- Tweets – 221
- Profile Visits – 7,181
- New Followers – 170
- Tweet Impressions – 42,071
- Engagements – 1,688

LinkedIn – November 2020-April 2021

- Posts – 138
- Impressions – 876
- Clicks – 167
- Likes – 275
- New Followers – 42
- Unique Visitors – 79
- Total Page Views - 128

Facebook and Instagram both have lower engagement as compared to Twitter and LinkedIn. Material from AALL Communities was reposted on both the Facebook and Instagram accounts with shortened descriptions and pictures. Job postings from AALL Community are not reposted on these outlets. Some of the low usage on Facebook may be explained as the page was created in July 2020 long after the popularity of Facebook peaked or perhaps as users wanted to separate their personal and professional identities. Instagram, although much more popular than Facebook, may also be viewed as a personal rather than a professional social media website. Please see statistics below:

Facebook – July 2020 to April 2021

- Posts: 61
- Followers: 31



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- Page Likes: 28

Instagram – July 2020 to May 2021

- Posts: 47
- Followers: 111
- Average of 1-3 likes per post

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

Chair: Miriam Childs

Member: Jane Larrington

The inaugural year of the BLL-SIS membership committee met few of its goals and objectives, though a mid-year campaign boosted membership significantly. The committee itself suffered from a lack of members. Chair Miriam Childs collaborated with BLL-SIS Chair Errol Adams to draft a welcome kit in time for the 2021 CONELL Marketplace. One of the Committee's charges is to distribute a welcome kit to new members as they join. Chair Miriam Childs didn't establish regular contact with the BLL Board to request quarterly reports of new BLL members from the AALL membership services manager. The Membership Committee also didn't establish a schedule for spotlighting BLL members on AALL Communities and social media. A call for volunteers by the Marketing & Public Relations Committee netted two new committee members. Next year the Committee will be in a better position to reach out in real time to new members; encourage membership growth; and choose members to feature on social media and AALL Communities.

NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE

Chair: Shamika Dalton

Members: Joyce McCray Pearson & Michelle Tolley

The Nominations Committee sent out a 'Call for Nominations' to the BLL-SIS listserv on February 15, 2021, requesting nominations by February 26, 2021. Due to a low number of nominations, the Committee extended the nomination period two more weeks ending March 22, 2021. In addition to the 'Call for Nominations,' the Committee reached out to numerous BLL-SIS members individually to encourage them to run for office. The following slate was submitted to and approved by the Board:

- Vice-Chair/Chair-elect – Dr. Yolanda Jones
- Member-at-Large – Miriam Childs and Kerri-Ann Rowe

The Committee would like to thank these candidates for their participation in the election.



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The Committee coordinated with Le'Shawn Turner, BLL-SIS Secretary, and Chris Siwa, Director of Information Technology at AALL, to create the ballot using AALL's online election platform. The election was held from May 14, 2021- May 27, 2021.

The election results were:

- Vice-Chair/Chair-Elect – Dr. Yolanda Jones
- Member-at-Large – Miriam Childs

INCOMING BOARD 2021-2022

Andre Davison, Chair
Yolanda Jones, Chair-Elect
Le'Shawn Turner, Secretary
John Campbell, Treasurer
Angela Mason, Member-at-Large
Miriam Childs, Member-at-Large
Errol Adams, Immediate Past Chair

Submitted by

Errol Adams
BLL-SIS Chair