



January 18, 2018

HumanitiesDC
925 U Street NW
Washington, DC 20001

To the DC Oral History Collaborative:

On behalf of the Brookland Neighborhood Civic Association, I write in support of Eve Austin's application for a grant to tell the oral history of the Brookland Literary and Hunting Club (BLAHC). The story of BLAHC is the story of the informal civic network that supports and undergirds a community through periods of historical change. Because such groups are by definition less institutionalized and their role in a community less documented in the public record, efforts to preserve their memory and tell their story are all the more essential. And as a social club as much as a civic organization, the story of BLAHC is sure to uncover hidden gems of personal humor, joy, and struggle in the day-to-day lives of its members—something often lost in bigger-picture History.

Even more so, the story of BLAHC is the story of Brookland's heritage as an incubator of African-American academic and professional achievement, dating to a time when segregation was still sanctioned in DC and the rest of the country. Indeed, just a year before BLAHC formed in 1942, the predecessor to the BNCA, the Brookland Civic Association, was formed in 1941 as a Black response to the fact that the Brookland Citizens Association did not allow Black members.¹ As the Brookland community undergoes another period of change, facing the twin opportunities and challenges of revitalization and gentrification, telling the story of historical Brookland through the lens of African-American accomplishment in the form of the successful members of the BLAHC group can provide critical insights into both the past and future of our thriving, diverse DC community.

The BNCA would be thrilled to organize and host events to share, examine, and discuss the stories uncovered by this project. Such events can

¹ <http://brooklandcivic.org/history/>

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play a valuable role in connecting older and newer members of the community and reinforce a unique, shared, place-based identity. We strongly encourage sufficient funding to do videotaping of oral history for this project. The ability to share videos will greatly enhance our ability to draw members to events around this project, and will be a better means of passing down the legacy of BLAHC.

BNCA fully, strongly, and enthusiastically supports funding for this project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Daniel Schramm".

Daniel Schramm
President, Brookland Neighborhood Civic Association

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