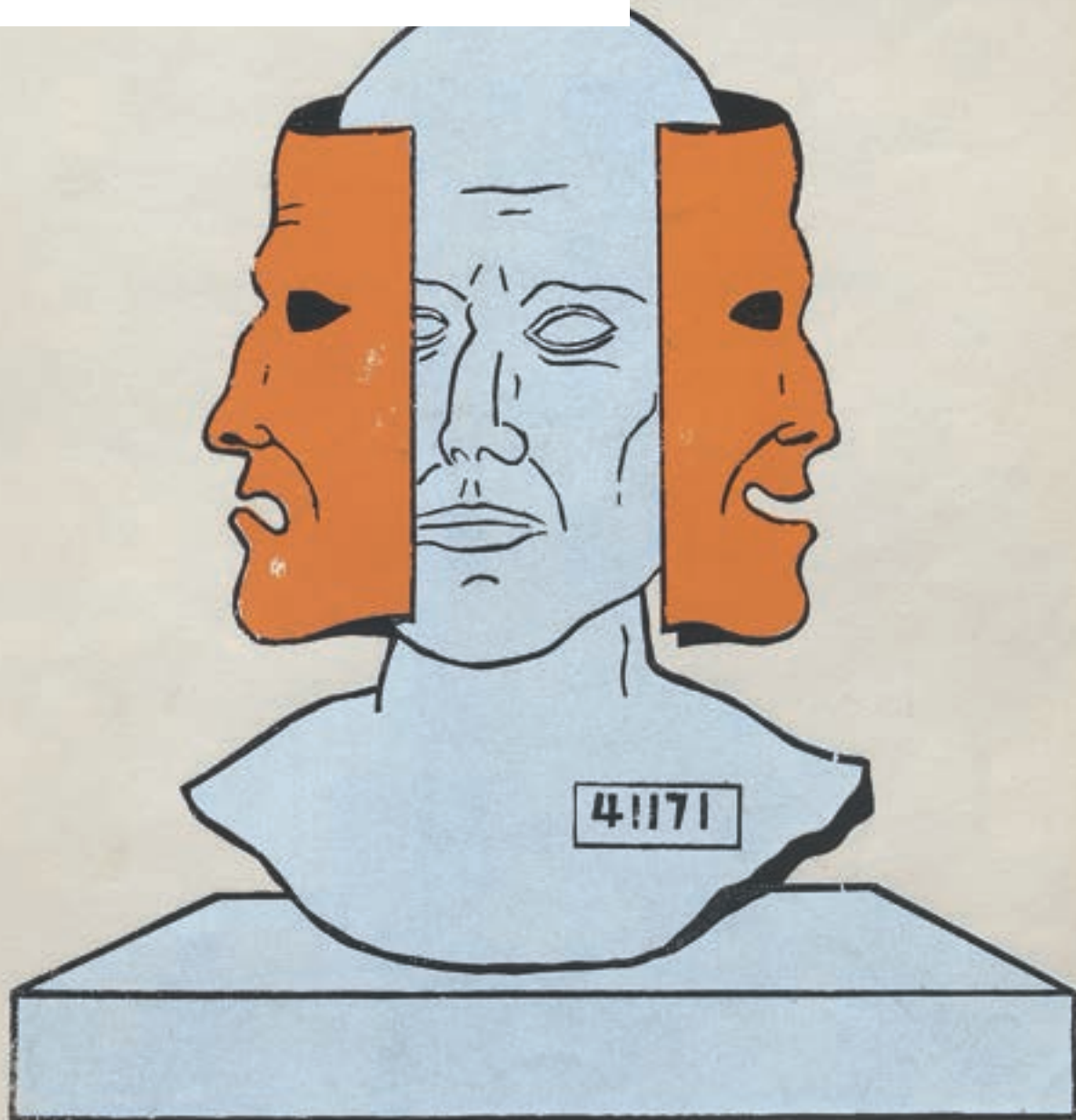


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# FOOTNOTES



FALL 2021 VOLUME 46 NUMBER 2

# FOOTNOTES

FALL 2021, VOLUME 46, NUMBER 2

- 2 News
- 3 Meeting nontraditional students where they are
- 4 Terms of respect
- 8 Black history at Northwestern, one step at a time
- 10 Honor roll of donors



Cover: This 1963 publication, produced by incarcerated people at Kentucky State Penitentiary, is part of an American prison newspaper database purchased to support the Northwestern Prison Education Program (see page 3). Illustration by James McKinney.

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Charles Deering McCormick  
University Librarian:  
Sarah M. Pritchard  
[spritchard@northwestern.edu](mailto:spritchard@northwestern.edu)

Director of Development:  
Jennifer Mullman '99  
[jmullman@northwestern.edu](mailto:jmullman@northwestern.edu)

Director of Marketing and  
Communication:  
Clare Roccaforte  
[c-roccaforte@northwestern.edu](mailto:c-roccaforte@northwestern.edu)

Editor and Writer:  
Drew Scott '92  
[drew.scott@northwestern.edu](mailto:drew.scott@northwestern.edu)

Page 2 photo of Geoffrey Hendricks  
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## Reassessing during a pandemic

by Michael Perry  
*Head of Assessment and Planning*

In 2019, Northwestern's Libraries started the University program review process and were nearing the end of a three-year strategic planning cycle. And then 2020 showed up. The result was a hard stop in planning, but not in service—and certainly not in learning.

In fact, we hit the accelerator on instructive experiences, which taught us a great deal about ourselves. We had to stop business as usual, reassess what was crucial, and rethink how we were supporting our community. We learned we could stop and correct our course in a very short amount of time. Those profound experiences are inspiring us to renew our year of planning looking through a whole new lens. Three initiatives now under way show our scope.

- **Our regular three-year strategic plan.** We've reset our clocks for the 2022–25 timeframe, and as always, we will be asking ourselves deep questions about our role on campus. What are our core services? How can we best deliver them? What impact do they have on users? The pandemic gave us new questions to ask: How important is access to our physical materials? Are digital alternatives acceptable? What lessons did we learn about the best use of our spaces?
- **Program review.** Once a decade or so, every major unit at Northwestern undergoes a systematic examination that combines self-assessment with external review for a thorough analysis of the unit's effectiveness. Program review is rigorous, driven by quantitative data and qualitative input, and results in a plan of action in response to what was learned. Our review began before the lockdown and resumed in the winter of 2020.
- **Renewed focus on diversity, equity, and inclusion.** There is a particular imperative for libraries, as stewards of cultural heritage, to address issues of



equity in how we talk about materials, how we grow collections, and even how we show respect to others in our community. The past year highlighted the urgency of becoming a truly equitable, antiracist organization. In many ways, we may be ahead of the curve in this work, but there is nonetheless much more we can do. To that end, the recent arrival of Victoria O. Akinde as our new director of organizational development and diversity (see page 2) will allow us to craft a vision for our future while reckoning with our past.

So bring on a new year of planning. The lessons learned during the last year have taught us how to make the Libraries more relevant, holistic, and responsive to the needs of the University. ■

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### Libraries welcome first organizational development and diversity director

Victoria O. Akinde in June became Northwestern Libraries' first director of organizational development and diversity. She leads the human resources office and coordinates the Libraries' diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) initiatives.

As director of access services at the Schaumburg Township (Illinois) District Library, Akinde was cochair of its DEI committee. She was also a teaching and adjunct librarian at Harper College in Palatine, Illinois.

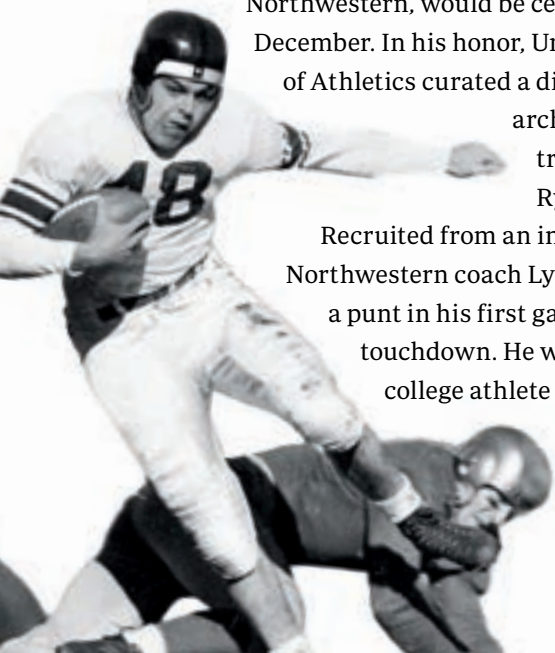
"I am currently on a listening tour, trying to understand the culture and everyone's roles across the Libraries," she said. "It's important to understand how teams work with one another. From there we can strive to enhance the organizational development and DEI efforts already going on."

With equity and inclusion initiatives well under way at the Libraries when she arrived, Akinde has been impressed by "the dedication and passion that folks are already bringing to DEI work. I think we'll see even greater levels of engagement on these issues as we seek to make every member of our community feel heard and valued."

### Exhibit honors Otto Graham's centennial birthday

The late Otto Graham, one of the best quarterbacks to ever play at Northwestern, would be celebrating his 100th birthday this December. In his honor, University Archives and the Department of Athletics curated a digital exhibit of Graham's scrapbook archive (held at the Libraries) and his trophies and awards (on display at Ryan Field).

Recruited from an intramural football team by legendary Northwestern coach Lynn "Pappy" Waldorf, Graham caught a punt in his first game and returned it 93 yards for a touchdown. He went on to become an All-American college athlete in not only football but also baseball and basketball. See more at [libraries.nu/otto100](http://libraries.nu/otto100).



### Hendricks archive adds to Fluxus art movement holdings

The recently received archive of Geoffrey Hendricks (1931–2018) joins those of several associated avant-garde artists at the Libraries, further establishing Northwestern as a hub of research on the radical creative movements of the 1960s and '70s.

Hendricks was known for sculptural works and paintings—especially those featuring cloud-dappled skies painted over canvases and everyday objects, which earned him the moniker "Cloudsmith." He was also recognized for innovative performance pieces that cemented his status as a key contributor to the Fluxus movement.

Held in the Charles Deering McCormick Library of Special Collections and University Archives, the voluminous archive was acquired from Hendricks's two children and his husband Sur Rodney (Sur). The materials will require years to process before they can be made available for scholarly research.

## Meeting nontraditional students where they are

### Librarians assist the incarcerated with research

During summer quarter, a student wrote to librarian Becca Greenstein, asking for materials about the Koch snowflake, a fractal pattern built from repeating triangles—pretty standard stuff for a STEM librarian.

But this student is incarcerated at Logan Correctional Center in Lincoln, Illinois, unreachable by Greenstein except through written correspondence. This kind of consultation—one of more than 100 provided just since the spring for courses taught through the Northwestern Prison Education Program (NPEP)—is anything but business as usual for a librarian.

The fractal research topic arose in a quantitative reasoning class taught at Logan by Northwestern postdoctoral lecturer Eric Chang, and the student's handwritten request came to the Libraries on a form designed specifically for this support service. It prompted Greenstein to assemble several digital articles from the internet and subscription-based journals, which NPEP would print and deliver to the student. Greenstein wrote a brief note encouraging follow-up queries, signing it—as she always does—"Take care and be strong."

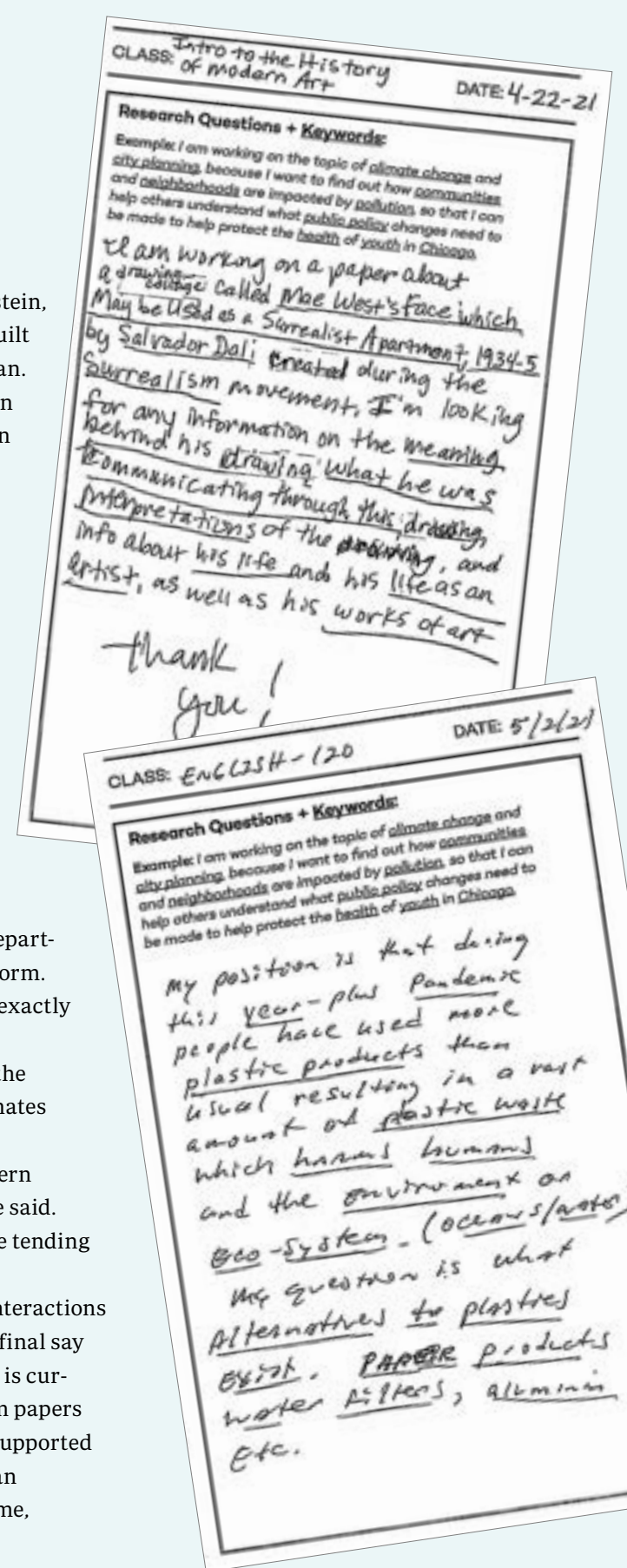
"In a typical consultation, we teach students how to find more resources on their own," Greenstein said. But because of Illinois Department of Corrections restrictions for NPEP, "we can only go by the form. We forward materials to students and hope that what we found is exactly what they need."

NPEP support is now an essential, ongoing service offered by the Libraries, said Josh Honn, the librarian who developed and coordinates the library support program.

"These are incarcerated students, but they are also Northwestern students, and the Libraries must meet students where they are," he said. "For this work, that means supporting learning and research while tending to the harsh realities of the carceral system."

Librarians consult on research and deliver resources, but all interactions are correspondence based and the Department of Corrections has final say over what materials are appropriate. Though the support program is currently linked to a limited number of NPEP classes that feature term papers and case studies, some students take classes that aren't officially supported by the Libraries. So when librarians receive research requests for an unexpected course, it's a sign that the service is needed and welcome, Honn said.

"This work can be demanding emotionally, but it's also rewarding," he added. "It challenges many of our assumptions of librarianship, information access, and freedom. I believe it can help our profession renew its focus on the support of true equity and liberation." ■





# Terms of respect

*With metadata, librarians make decisions that describe humanity*

If words have power, then the librarians who catalog new items are like batteries of immense potential energy. Using an established set of standards, they choose the words that shape how users will find the material and how they will perceive it—a delicate challenge when the subject being cataloged is humanity itself.

“Our job is to stick labels on things,” said Northwestern cataloger Marcia Tiede. “But we have to ask if those labels would be desired by the people the thing is about.”

Even though the subject headings used for metadata—the keywords and terms that help people discover relevant materials—are managed by the Library of Congress in the form of a “controlled vocabulary,” how those words are applied comes with a great degree of subjectivity. Catalogers also have some freedom in certain fields of the catalog record to add terms and notes of their own, giving them the ability to be more descriptive where controlled vocabularies are too limiting.

“We make choices that help our users find resources within the standards available, while trying to be respectful of the people we are describing,” said cataloger Jamie Carlstone. “Sometimes these two goals are at odds because the cataloging systems are human made, so they are as prone to bias as we are. It’s an enormous responsibility.”

*Above: The African Lounge Experience, Anton Wilhelm Amo, and Ornament and Sculpture in Primitive Society reveal the challenges of applying descriptive labels.*

That’s why Carlstone, in search of a more proactive conversation about representation, chairs the Metadata Inclusivity Steering Group, a brain trust of Northwestern Libraries metadata staff who meet regularly to discuss these challenges and make decisions about the words used to represent people, cultures, and ideas in Northwestern’s catalog.

Consider “mental retardation,” an outdated and offensive phrase that until recently was a Library of Congress subject heading. When that institution changed the term, Carlstone and her committee decided to make a blanket change in the catalog, and all materials with that subject heading now use the more accepted term, “intellectual disability.”

Other terms are harder to grapple with, she said, because of the nuances around issues of identity and the generational attitudes that can be revealed by authors’ choices. Here are three such examples that the group has addressed in recent meetings.

## RACE, ETHNICITY, and NATIONALITY

Eighteenth-century philosopher Anton Wilhelm Amo was born in what is today Ghana and taken to Germany when he was about four years old. It’s unclear if slavery was the cause of his removal from his home, but records show Amo was raised by a wealthy noble and, with a privileged education, became a prominent philosopher. Though living in Germany, he wrote in Latin, and he added *Afer* to his name to indicate his identity as an African.

Before filling out the record for the biography *Anton Wilhelm Amo*, purchased by the Herskovits Library of African Studies, cataloger Tiede referenced other books

about Amo. They carried subject headings about philosophers and philosophy in Ghana, though his education and career took place in Germany.

So what role did his ethnicity and his place of birth play in his identity and his work in Europe? The most useful heading, Tiede decided, was “Philosophy—Germany—History—18th century.” To the subject “Philosophers—Ghana” that is regularly applied to works about Amo, she added “Philosophers—Germany” and “Philosophers—Africa,” since Amo identified as African. She also updated other catalog records to better reflect this awareness of Amo’s complex identities.

## “PRIMITIVE”

The word *primitive* has crept into library records for decades, Carlstone said, despite it being inexact or, at worst, patently offensive.

“We see *primitive* used as a catchall for people who are not white, European Christians,” Carlstone said.

The term has been used to refer to everyone from Australian Aborigines to North American Indigenous peoples. But changing it in the catalog isn’t a matter of simply dropping a racist descriptor. Catalogers can’t erase the racism inherent in a text, Carlstone said, and they wouldn’t want to. Sometimes the use of *primitive* reveals the contemporary worldview of the author, however misbegotten.

Consider the book *Ornament and Sculpture in Primitive Society*. Its subtitle includes specific geographic areas of focus: Africa, Oceania, and Siberia. Yet the item was cataloged at Northwestern in 1988 as “Art—Primitive.” The solution here was straightforward: Carlstone added those geographic areas as headings, making the record more discoverable—and more accurate.

## “FOLK MUSIC” and “WORLD MUSIC”

The term *world music* has long been misused to mean regional music by people of color, from South African dance beats to Creole songs, said music cataloger Tomoko Shibuya. In Northwestern’s Music Library, however, catalogers have worked for years to avoid the term and to be more specific about the regions and cultures represented.

*Folk music* has lately joined the ranks of general terms that beg for clarity from catalogers, she said. *Folk* can have multiple meanings: “traditional” music that has been played for generations, acoustic music recorded by largely unknown singer-songwriters, or simply the titles that would be found in the “country/folk” section of record stores, Shibuya said. The catalog record for the CD *The African Lounge Experience* came to Northwestern with the subject headings “world music” and “folk music,” and neither was adequate, she added.

Public libraries’ sound recording collections tend to be geared toward popular music, she said, so they often organize their holdings as record stores would. The broad term “Popular music—Africa” might be better for their audience.

“But our collection has a lot of African popular music, so a narrower term would work better,” Shibuya explained.

In this case, the mellow, electronic grooves of *The African Lounge Experience* were better described by the Library of Congress headings “Lounge music” and “Lounge music—Africa,” without the problematic and inaccurate generic terms. ■



Contact sheet of photos taken at the 1970 Berkeley Folk Music Festival. Charles Deering McCormick Library of Special Collections and University Archives.



Left: Attendees at the 2018 Bursar's Office takeover commemoration view the plaque at 619 Clark Street marking the event. Inset: The Bursar's Office during the takeover in 1968.

# Black history at Northwestern, one step at a time

Most visitors to the Evanston campus pass by the building at 619 Clark Street without stopping. Unlike Deering Library or University Hall, it's not an obvious site of historical interest.

But that building, which housed the Office of the Bursar for decades, was where Black students took bold actions in May 1968 to demand fairer treatment from the University.

The former bursar's office is the first stop on the Black Experience Tour of campus, a new way to discover previously hidden or marginalized stories from Northwestern history. The audio-guided tour, which may be taken virtually or in person on campus, features various locations where visitors can hear brief stories of how Black students experienced and responded to the racial climate on campus over many decades of the 20th century.

To take the tour in person or virtually, visit [northwestern.edu/BlackExperienceTour](http://northwestern.edu/BlackExperienceTour) for instructions to hear audio or download a printable guide. Bronze plaques are being installed at five selected locations included in or related to the tour.

"The tour was designed to engage a wide audience with Northwestern's Black history," said Charla Wilson, the Libraries' archivist for the Black experience. "It's an option to just listen to the audio, but people can also respond to the discussion questions and even learn more about the history with the embedded archival documents."

From 619 Clark, the tour leads visitors to places like Kresge Centennial Hall, where the audio clip addresses the founding of the African American studies department. At the Blomquist Recreation Center stop, visitors hear about Charles "Doc" Glass, an Evanston resident

## Black Experience Tour sites

Visit [northwestern.edu/BlackExperienceTour](http://northwestern.edu/BlackExperienceTour) for instructions for conducting the tour in person or virtually.

- **Tour introduction**, 619 Clark Street
- **1968 Bursar's Office takeover**, 619 Clark Street
- **Black students' relationship with Evanston**, Weber Arch, Sheridan Road and Chicago Avenue
- **Department of African American Studies**, Kresge Centennial Hall, 1880 Campus Drive
- **Black House**, 1914 Sheridan Road
- **Black athlete experiences**, Blomquist Recreation Center, 617 Foster Street
- **Black student housing**, Foster-Walker Complex, 1927 Orrington Avenue
- **Black Greek life**, Scott Hall, 601 University Place
- **Black student activism**, Rebecca Crown Center, 633 Clark Street

## Permanent plaques at sites around campus

- Scott Hall (Black Greek life)
- Black House
- Rebecca Crown Center (student activism)
- Southeast corner of Emerson Street and Orrington Avenue (international houses)
- Ryan Field ("Doc" Glass's legacy)

who offered hundreds of Black student athletes a safe gathering place at his home in the 1950s, '60s, '70s, and '80s.

History PhD student Mikala Stokes, in consultation with Wilson, did extensive archival research and wrote the tour's audio narration. The script unflinchingly recounts Black students' struggles for equal treatment and their opposition to overtly racist policies and practices at the University and in society at large. Many of the truths about institutionalized racism at Northwestern are unflattering.

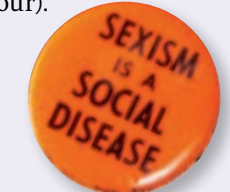
At the stop near Foster-Walker Complex, for example, the tour recounts the long history of housing discrimination on campus. For over 50 years after the first Black students were admitted to Northwestern in the late 1800s, Black students were not permitted to live in University-owned housing, and they were often turned away by landlords in Evanston and Chicago. The policy began to change after World War II, when the University established the desegregated student residences called international houses. But even so, many white students continued to balk at having roommates of color.

"Examining unvarnished history is how we learn from it," Wilson said. "I hope the tour serves as a resource for learning about some of the stories that make up the Black student experience at Northwestern." ■

## Women's history tour showcases Femina Collection

The Social Justice Tours of Northwestern are a suite of guides and recordings that highlight the local history of marginalized groups, including Black students and Indigenous people.

Among the many highlights of the Feminist Campus Tour of Northwestern, developed by the Women's Center, is the historically significant Femina Collection, held by the Charles Deering McCormick Library of Special Collections and University Archives. Tour audio includes an interview with librarian Jason Nargis, who describes the comprehensive archive of materials that document the women's liberation movement of the 20th century, including newsletters, newspapers, posters, flyers, and over 3,700 books and pamphlets ([libraries.nu/FeministTour](http://libraries.nu/FeministTour)).



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Please send any corrections to Jennifer Mullman, Director of Development for Libraries, Press, and University Archives, Northwestern University, 1201 Davis Street, Evanston, Illinois 60208-4410; phone 847-467-7278; jmullman@northwestern.edu.

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*La Roca*, February 1983; newspaper produced by the incarcerated people of the Arizona State Prison



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## A reminder of epidemics past

Perusing the scrapbook of an early 20th-century Northwestern student, University archivist Kevin Leonard found a remembrance of a period when another public health emergency gripped campus. The scrapbook of Florence Emerson Herbert Heffley (class of 1913) gathers many mementos of her time as a student, including this small flag that warns of a scarlet fever quarantine.

The flag represents a period when Heffley and other students lived in fear of the potentially life-threatening disease. Scarlet fever quarantines regularly locked down entire dormitories and canceled campus events. For a time in 1910, Heffley and other residents of the original Willard Hall were confined to their rooms, allowed only brief excursions to walk around the building for exercise. But the hardship soon passed: Heffley's scrapbook also contains a program from a performance later that year at Chicago's Illinois Theater, which the Willard residents attended to mark the end of their isolation.

