

**CONTACT INFORMATION**

DC History Center  
Katrina Ingraham  
kingraham@dchistory.org

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**THE DC HISTORY CONFERENCE CELEBRATES 50 YEARS BY  
HONORING THE CITY'S HISTORY AND THE COMMUNITIES THAT  
SHAPED THE PAST HALF CENTURY**

*Three-day conference takes place April 4-6, 2024  
In-person event is free and open to the public; registration required*

**WASHINGTON (March 12, 2024)** — The Annual DC History Conference, co-presented by the DC History Center, the DC Public Library, and HumanitiesDC, returns for its 50th anniversary with a compelling series of discussions relevant to the current moment. This free community event takes place from Thursday, April 4 to Saturday, April 6, at the Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Library.

The program features more than 100 presenters across 26 sessions, panels, and presentations that focus on housing, LGBTQ+ history, community activism, among other timely topics. The event is free to all attendees, but online pre-registration is strongly encouraged. Whether you plan to attend all weekend, one day, or even just one panel, our free registration gives you access to the entire conference program. To see the detailed schedule and to register, visit [conference.dchistory.org](https://conference.dchistory.org).

"This year we are especially excited to recognize the 50th anniversary of the annual DC History Conference," said Laura Brower Hagood, DC History Center Executive Director. "This celebration of the District started just as the Home Rule Act of 1973 was passed, and the first municipal elections were held the following year, bringing us Mayor Walter Washington and the first DC Council. We're looking forward to reflecting on both of these anniversaries side by side."

Speakers represent various backgrounds and expertise, from university professors to filmmakers, from anthropologists to journalists, and from government leaders to community organizers. The three-day event opens on Thursday, April 4, with the Letitia Woods Brown Memorial Lecture. Speakers Vann R. Newkirk II and Jerusalem Demas, senior editor and staff

writer at *The Atlantic* respectively, will recognize the 50th anniversary of Home Rule and how the 1968 uprisings transformed Washington, DC, drawing from their extensive reporting on the ways that race and class shape our lives.

Independent historian Kyla Sommers, PhD, will close out the conference on Saturday evening with a keynote presentation *Crime Capital?: A History of Politicizing DC Crime and How Washingtonians Fought Back*. Her talk considers DC crime, how it dominates headlines today, and what we can learn from the past about what it takes to make DC a more equitable, safe, and democratic city.

Two panels on Friday, April 5 highlight the state of affordable housing in Washington, DC. *Winning with WISH: Tenant Organizing in Washington, DC, 1978-2003* explores how WISH (Washington Innercity Self Help), founded in 1978, created a way for low-income Washingtonians to organize around issues important to them. *Citizen Struggles to Improve Housing in Washington, DC, 1983 and 2023* will dive into how the housing struggles of 2023 compare to 1983.

Saturday, April 6 brings music lovers a panel highlighting the immeasurable impact of the Atlantis and the 9:30 Club on DC's local music scene. During *From Atlantis to the 9:30 Club*, hear from Bob Boilen, co-creator of the Tiny Desk Concert series at NPR; Dody DiSanto, creator of the 9:30 club; and moderator and punk legend Ian MacKaye on this one-of-a-kind panel.

Saturday continues with three panels cover LGBTQ+ history in Washington, DC including *The ANC Rainbow Caucus and 50 Years of LGBTQ+ Elected Officials* which features archivists and current ANC commissioners in conversation. Other panels include: *Queer Identity and Early DC Writers* and *50 Years of LGBTQ Pride Activity in the Nation's Capital*.

The panel *Progressive Black Feminist Organizing in DC From 1980-1990s* takes place on Saturday afternoon. Featuring influential organizers Linda Leaks and MacArthur Genius Award Winner Loretta Ross, it will reflect on the panelists' involvement in the Black feminist movement in DC from the 1960s through the 1990s.

The DC History Conference is supported by organizational partners and a volunteer planning committee. Partners include the DC Historic Preservation Office-DC Office of Planning, the DC Office of Public Records and Archives, the DC Preservation League, the Heurich House Museum, and the White House Historical Association.

More information on the conference schedule and speakers can be found at [conference.dchistory.org](https://conference.dchistory.org). Select sessions will be shared online following the conference.

###

## **About the DC History Conference**

The DC History Conference is an interdisciplinary, community conference considering the District's past, present, and future. Since the first conference in 1974, the conference organizers aim to provide a welcoming, educational, and stimulating forum for original research on and engagement with the history of the Washington, DC metropolitan area, including Maryland, Virginia, and the federal government. For more updates, follow us on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram (@dchistcon) and share about the conference using the hashtag # DCHistCon. For more information, visit [conference.dchistory.org](https://conference.dchistory.org).

## **Organizational Partners**

DC History Center, DC Historic Preservation Office, DC Office of Planning, DC Office of Public Records and Archives, DC Preservation League, DC Public Library, Heurich House Museum HumanitiesDC, White House Historical Association

## **Conference Sponsors**

HumanitiesDC, DC Public Library Foundation, EHT Traceries, Georgetown University Press, DC Preservation League, White House Historical Association

## **About the DC History Center**

Established in 1894 and located at the Carnegie Library in Downtown DC, the DC History Center is a community-supported nonprofit organization, which deepens understanding of our city's past to connect, empower, and inspire. It collects, interprets, and shares the history of our nation's capital through research and scholarship, adult programs, youth education, and exhibits. We seek to do this work as a welcoming and inclusive community that fosters curiosity and nurtures civic engagement to strengthen the District for all. For more information visit [dchistory.org](https://dchistory.org).

## **About the DC Public Library**

The District of Columbia Public Library is a dynamic source of information, programs, books, and other library materials and services that improve the quality of life for District residents of all ages that, when combined with expert staff, helps build a thriving city. The Library provides environments that invite reading, community conversation, creative inspiration and exploration, lectures, films, computer access and use, workforce and economic development, story times for children, and much more. DC Public Library provides services at the Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Library, 25 neighborhood libraries and in nontraditional settings outside of the library buildings. DC Public Library enriches and nourishes the lives and minds of all District residents, provides them with the services and tools needed to transform lives, and builds and supports communities throughout the District of Columbia. For more information, visit [dclibrary.org](https://dclibrary.org).

## **About HumanitiesDC**

HumanitiesDC connects curious people with bold questions to the powerful stories of our vibrant city. Through their partnerships, grantmaking, and public programs

HumanitiesDC helps Washingtonians build a rich community where all can engage in intellectual exchange, reflect on our connected stories and celebrate our various cultures. To learn more about HumanitiesDC, their grant opportunities, fellowships and programs including the Oral History Collaborative, community journalism, podcast storytelling, public events and more visit [humanitiesdc.org](https://humanitiesdc.org).