



# HISTORICAL SOCIETY *of* WASHINGTON, D.C.

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## **LONNIE BUNCH TO RECEIVE VISIONARY HISTORIAN AWARD FROM THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF WASHINGTON, D.C.**

*Award to be presented Thursday, May 26  
at the Historical Society's 122nd Anniversary Celebration*

**WASHINGTON, D.C.:** The Historical Society of Washington, D.C., is honored to announce that **Lonnie G. Bunch III** is the third recipient of the **Visionary Historian Award**. The Visionary Historian award is presented to an individual whose lifetime body of work represents the highest achievement in the study of Washington, D.C. history.



Mr. Bunch is the founding director of the Smithsonian's National Museum of African American History and Culture, and author of several books including *Call the Lost Dream Back: Essays on Race, History and Museums* (2010), *Slave Culture: A Documentary Collection of the Slave Narratives* (2014), and *Memories of the Enslaved: Voices from the Slave Narratives* (2015). With more than 30 years of experience in the museum field, Mr. Bunch is regarded as one of the nation's leading figures in the historical and museum community.

"Under Lonnie Bunch's visionary leadership, the new National Museum of African American History and Culture gathers the local concerns that make up the national story. The Historical Society of Washington, D.C. has always connected local history to the national story because so often Washington DC not only reflects local concerns but also reflects national responses to those concerns. In addition, the members of the Historical Society applaud Lonnie Bunch for not only giving the world access to the new museum's stirring and important stories of our shared past. But give local local Washingtonians a front-row seat each and every day," said John Suau, Executive Director of the Historical Society of Washington, D.C.

"So often America is celebrated for its ability to forget. This award from the Historical Society of Washington, D.C. symbolically recognizes the importance of remembering, and the power of paying close attention to this country and how it grew. Looking deeply, we see her as a Work in Progress and marvel at how her past has been shaped by the work and the dreams of ALL her people," said Lonnie Bunch.

Born in Newark, NJ in 1952, Bunch's interest in history began at a very young age. As a child, his grandfather showed him a book containing 19<sup>th</sup> century photographs with unidentified African American children. Wanting to give a voice to all those labeled "anonymous," Bunch went on to study history, receiving both his undergraduate and graduate degrees in the subject from American University.

Bunch began his museum career as an Education Specialist at the Smithsonian's National Air and Space Museum in 1978. From 1983 to 1989, Bunch served as Curator of History for the California Afro-American Museum in Los Angeles, organizing several award-winning exhibitions, including "The Black Olympians, 1904-1950." Mr. Bunch returned to the Smithsonian in 1989 when he became Supervising Curator at the National Museum of American History. In 1992, he became Assistant Director for

Curatorial Affairs at NMAH, and in 1994 he was promoted to Associate Director for Curatorial Affairs, leading a team of 200 and developing the major permanent exhibit “American Presidency: A Glorious Burden.” Bunch also served as the President of the Chicago Historical Society from 2001 to 2005 where he launched a celebrated exhibition and program on teenage life titled “Teen Chicago” and created the innovative program entitled “Out at CHS” which explored the history and impact of the LGBT community.

In July 2005, Mr. Bunch was appointed Director of the National Museum of African American History and Culture, the 19<sup>th</sup> to open as part of the Smithsonian Institution.

Among his many accolades, Bunch was appointed to the Commission for the Preservation of the White House by George W. Bush in 2002 and reappointed by Barack Obama in 2009. He has been named one of the 100 most influential museum professionals of the 20<sup>th</sup> century by the American Alliance of Museums, one of the 150 most influential African Americans by *Ebony Magazine*, and Black Entertainment Television (BET) selected Mr. Bunch to receive its Honors for Outstanding Service to American Education and named him one of their ICON Men for his work mentoring young African American men.

The Visionary Historian Award recipients include Kathryn Schneider Smith in 2014 and Dr. James Goode in 2015. The event will take place Thursday, May 26, 2016 from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. in the Carnegie Library at 801 K Street NW. Mayor Muriel Bowser and Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton are invited guests.

This year’s Anniversary Celebration will also mark the closing of the auction of artwork in the exhibit *For the Record: Changing D.C.*, a juried art competition in which local artists were asked to capture images of our changing cityscape.

Tickets to Historical Society’s 122nd Anniversary Celebration and Visionary Historian Awards are available now at [dchistory.eventbrite.com](http://dchistory.eventbrite.com).

Historical Society members: \$50; General admission \$75

### **About the Historical Society of Washington, D.C.**

The Historical Society of Washington, D.C., is a community-supported educational and research organization that collects, interprets, and shares the history of our nation's capital. Founded in 1894, the Historical Society serves a diverse audience through its collections, public programs, exhibitions, and publications. The Historical Society’s galleries and research library, located in the historic Carnegie Library at Mt. Vernon Square, are open Tuesday through Friday, 10 a.m. – 4 p.m.

### **About the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture**

Scheduled to open on Sept. 24, 2016, the 400-square foot building with 12 exhibition galleries is being built on a five-acre--tract adjacent to the Washington Monument on the National Mall in Washington, D.C. at a cost of \$540 million. While construction and the installation of exhibitions are moving forward, the museum is hosting public programs, publishing books and presenting exhibitions in its gallery at the Smithsonian’s National Museum of American History. Its newest publication, is *Double Exposure: Through the African American Lens*, the first in a series of four books showcasing the museum’s extensive photography collection. An array of interactive programs and educational resources is available on the museum’s website at [nmaahc.si.edu](http://nmaahc.si.edu).