

DR. BETTYE COLLIER-THOMAS CAREER NARRATIVE

Bettye Collier-Thomas, Professor of History at Temple University, is the first African American to have received a PhD in History from the George Washington University (1974). Appointed by Joseph Duffy, head of the National Endowment for the Humanities, as a Special Consultant to the division of Public Programs (1977-1980), she developed NEH's first program of technical assistance to black museums and historical organizations; became a founder and officer of the National Association of Black Museums and organized the First National Conference on Black Museums (1980). Appointed by President Reagan to the National Afro-American History and Culture Commission (1986), she wrote the final report to Congress recommending the establishment of a national black museum in Washington, DC on the National Mall. In 1975 she with Nancy Foye Cox co-founded Women's History Week in the District of Columbia and at the invitation of President Jimmy Carter was invited to the White House to witness the President's signing of a proclamation to that effect.

Collier-Thomas is the founder and served as executive director of the Mary McLeod Bethune Memorial Museum and the National Archives for Black Women's History (1977-1989) (designated by Congress a National Historic Site and now managed by the National Park Service). With the support of NEH, she organized the much praised conference -- "Black Women: A Research Priority: The First National Scholarly Research Conference on Black Women in America," held in Washington, D.C., November 12-13, 1979. In 1989 she became the inaugural director of the Center for African American History and Culture at Temple University, a position she held until 2001.

A specialist in social, cultural, and political history, Collier-Thomas's research focuses on women and African Americans in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. She is the author/editor of seven books, including include *Jesus, Jobs, and Justice: African American Women and Religion* (2010); *Daughters of Thunder: Black Women Preachers and Their Sermons, 1850-1979* (1998); *Sisters in the Struggle: African American Women in the Civil Rights-Black Power Movement* (2001) and *A Treasury of African American Christmas Stories, Vols. 1 and 2* (1997, 1999). She is currently completing "'In Politics to Stay': African American Women's Political Activism in the Modern Era."

Collier-Thomas is the recipient of numerous honors, book prizes, awards, grants and fellowships – most notably ASALH's Carter Godwin Woodson Distinguished Scholars Medallion; and the U. S. Department of the Interior's Civilian Conservation Service Award; and an Honorary Doctorate of Divinity by Eastern University's Palmer Memorial Seminary. She has received grants and fellowships from the National Endowment for the Humanities; Ford Foundation, Rockefeller Foundation, and Lilly Endowment; National Humanities Center; Princeton University's Center for Religion; Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars.

Her long-term commitment to community service has included serving on over twenty-five local, state, and national boards and commissions including the ASALH Executive Council, the Bethune Council House National Historic Site, the Pennsylvania Humanities Commission, the New Jersey Governor's Commission and Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority's Archives Committee.