



March 11, 2022

Department of Africana Studies
Kenneth P. Dietrich School of Arts and
Sciences
Office of the Chair

Yolanda Covington-Ward, PhD.
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Dear Mr. Ronald Saunders,

My name is Dr. Yolanda Covington-Ward and I am the Chair of the Department of Africana Studies at the University of Pittsburgh. It is my pleasure to inform you that the Department of Africana Studies would like to formally recognize the Edna B. McKenzie Branch of the Association for the Study of African American Life and History (ASALH) with an award in the category of “*Community Contributions to the Department of Africana Studies.*” The awards ceremony is part of a set of events commemorating the 50th Anniversary of the Department of Africana Studies, under the umbrella theme of *Reckoning and Re-Envisioning: Africana Studies at 50 and Beyond.* The awards are in recognition of individuals and organizations that have made significant contributions to our department, acted as allies, or made valuable contributions to Black communities in the region.

On January 15, 1969, Black students at the University of Pittsburgh staged a sit-in and takeover of the computer center in the Cathedral of Learning. Their protests and list of demands, which were also supported by the larger Black community in Pittsburgh, led to the founding of what is now the Department of Africana Studies (first called Black Studies, then the Department of Black Community Education, Research, and Development). In seeking to celebrate 50 years of the department’s growth and achievements, we wanted to recognize the many people and organizations that have made our department’s success possible.

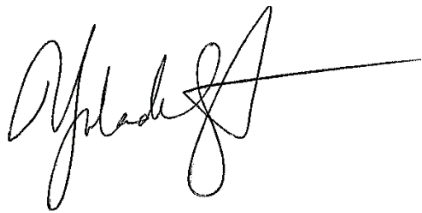
The awards ceremony will take place on **Saturday, April 2, 2022.** This is an in-person event which will take place in room 232 Cathedral of Learning on the University of Pittsburgh Oakland campus. There will be a keynote lecture by Dr. Mark Anthony Neal (Duke University) from 4-5:30 pm, which you can learn more about here: <https://calendar.pitt.edu/event/dr-mark-anthony-neal-keynote-speech-awards-ceremony#.YiuDZnrMK70>. **The awards ceremony will start at 5:30 pm, following the keynote lecture.**

Please let me know if you or someone from your organization will be able to attend this event in person. Please reply here to RSVP:

https://pitt.col.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_9An8xvm1VLdBXnw. If you cannot attend

in person but are interested in recording some brief remarks, please contact our department coordinator Julie Burns at jmb415@pitt.edu.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Yolanda Covington-Ward', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Yolanda Covington-Ward
Department Chair
Associate Professor
Department of Africana Studies
Secondary Appointment, Department of Anthropology