



ASSOCIATION FOR THE STUDY OF AFRICAN AMERICAN LIFE AND HISTORY®

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Karen Cook Bell **Class of 2026**

Current Employer:

Bowie State University

Professional Background:

I have 25 years' experience in higher education and public history as a professor, administrator, and archivist at the National Archives. My areas of specialization include slavery, the Civil War and Reconstruction, and women's history. I am currently Chairperson of the Department of History and Government at Bowie State University in Bowie, Maryland, and a member of Iota Gamma Omega Chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc.



Major Accomplishments:

I am Professor of History and the University System of Maryland Wilson H. Elkins Endowed Professor. I am Founding Director of the Du Bois Center for the Study of the Black Experience at Bowie State University. My scholarship has appeared in the Journal of African American History; Journal of Women's History; Georgia Historical Quarterly; Passport; U.S. West-Africa: Interaction and Relations (2008); Before Obama: A Reappraisal of Black Reconstruction Era Politicians (2012); Converging Identities: Blackness in the Contemporary Diaspora (2013); and Slavery and Freedom in Savannah (2014). I have published Claiming Freedom: Race, Kinship, and Land in Nineteenth Century Georgia (University of South Carolina Press, 2018), which won the Georgia Board of Regents Excellence in Research Award. My current book, Running from Bondage: Enslaved Women and Their Remarkable Fight for Freedom in Revolutionary America, is published with Cambridge University Press and was a finalist for the Pauli Murray Book Prize for Best Book in African American Intellectual History; Honorable Mention for the Letitia Woods Brown Book Prize; and winner of the Afro-American Historical and...

ASALH MISSION

To promote, research, preserve, interpret and disseminate information about Black life, history and culture to the global community.



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Genealogical Society International Book Award. I am editor of Southern Black Women's Struggle for Freedom during the Civil War and Reconstruction which is under contract with Cambridge University Press and Co-editor of the Broadview Edition of Twelve Years a Slave. My writings have also appeared in the Washington Post and Ms. Magazine. I am a contributor for Black Perspectives, the blog of the African American Intellectual History Society and a former AAUW Dissertation Fellow.

Previous Service to ASALH:

I am a member of the ASALH Prince George's County, Maryland Truth Branch. I was elected to the Executive Council in 2013. I have volunteered to chair sessions at ASALH, organize panels, and presented at ASALH over the past twenty years.

What I Hope to Accomplish as an Executive Council Member of ASALH:

As a member of the Executive Council Class of 2026, I will work diligently with the ASALH leadership to promote the study of Black History at all education levels in fulfillment of the mission that Dr. Carter G. Woodson established for ASALH. As was the case in Dr. Woodson's lifetime, the battlefield for teaching Black History is once again in the K-12 classrooms across the nation. I will work to enhance innovative programming such as ASALH TV and ASALH Podcasts and contribute to the development of educational resources.

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