



African American Redress Network Annual Report 2023

*Howard University Thurgood Marshall Civil Rights Center
Columbia University School of International and Political Affairs*



THURGOOD MARSHALL
CIVIL RIGHTS CENTER
HOWARD UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF LAW

| | |
|--|----------|
| About the African American Redress Network | 3 |
| Our Approach | 3 |
| Financial Year 2023 Goals | 4 |
| Funders | 5 |
| Special Acknowledgement | 5 |
| What We Do | 6 |
| Advancing Research | 6 |
| Identify and ArcGIS map document local redress efforts | 6 |
| Legal Advocacy | 7 |
| School of International and Public Affairs (SIPA) coursework | 7 |
| Historic Preservation Research | 8 |
| International Research | 8 |
| Advancing local efforts | 9 |
| Africatown, Alabama | 9 |
| Brown Grove Community, VA | 10 |
| Harris Neck | 1 |
| Freemantown | 1 |
| FirstRepair | 1 |
| Reparation Strategy Session | 1 |
| Public Dialogue and Awareness-raising Events | 1 |
| UN Side Event | 1 |
| Develop capacity | 1 |
| Brown Grove Retreat | 1 |
| Virginia Coalition | 1 |
| • Women's Summit, VA | 1 |
| Social Media and Communications | 1 |
| Communications | 1 |
| Students | 1 |
| Columbia University | 1 |
| Barnard College | 1 |
| Howard University | 1 |
| Other universities | 1 |
| Other HBCU | 1 |
| Intern Continued Success: | 1 |
| Consulting | 1 |
| Steering Committee Biographies | 1 |

About the African American Redress Network

The African American Redress Network (AARN) works to advance the movement for reparations for people of African descent. AARN differs from other initiatives in collaborating with existing reparative justice organizations who seek research, legal advocacy, capacity building, education, and technical assistance to advance their work. AARN is known for its pivotal role in helping to secure reparations in Evanston, Illinois alongside former Alderman and founder of FirstRepair, Robin Rue Simmons.

AARN is a purposeful collaboration between a historically Black college/university (HBCU), Howard University's Thurgood Marshall Civil Rights Center at the School of Law, and a predominantly white institution (PWI), Columbia University's School of International and Public Affairs. AARN's Steering Committee places Black voices at the forefront with representatives from legacy organizations such as N'COBRA, the National African American Reparation Commission, local reparation leaders such as GU272 representatives, and members from both Howard and Columbia universities.

AARN uses a human rights framework to analyze the gross wrongs of enslavement, dispossession, and institutionalized anti-Black violence. Our model draws inspiration from United Nations General Assembly [Resolution 60/147](#) and [guidance by the International Commission of Jurists](#) to define reparations and inform our advocacy. Using an international human rights framework and desired-based research protocol (Levi, 2020; Karuka, 2017) that recognizes the self-emancipatory praxis and knowledge creation of Black communities, AARN works alongside members to co-produce reparation policies and practices.

Student researchers are vital to AARN. Since its inception in 2018, there have been a total of 45 AARN interns from universities across the US. In addition to AARN's work in Evanston, IL, AARN advanced reparation efforts in Brown Grove, Virginia; Englewood and West Garfield Park, Illinois; the Colored School #4, Chelsea, New York; Africatown, Alabama, Freemantown, GA, New Orleans, IL, and the Black Veterans Project. Collaborations with these communities have resulted in the co-production of impact studies, archival and genealogical research, historiographies, environmental justice resolutions, cultural heritage preservation, economic calculus, public education campaigns and more. These deliverables, co-designed with community organizations, are vital to the advancement of reparation efforts. In addition, AARN holds regular reparations strategy sessions across the US in collaboration with FirstRepair and the International Center for Transitional Justice (ICTJ).

Our Approach

- While there are many initiatives dedicated to racial justice, AARN grounds our approach within an international human rights framework, as it provides unique advocacy and programming opportunities in an inherently multidisciplinary field. Descendant and survivor communities are placed at the forefront of research and policy making.

- Historical human rights violations influence contemporary injustices against African Americans and individuals of African descent. AARN believes that addressing these past wrongs is essential to achieving justice and human rights for all people.
- Nobody can do this work alone. AARN values the importance of collaboration, recognizes the need for multiple approaches to advance the goal of racial justice, and acknowledges and respects the work of the many dedicated advocates in this space.
- AARN is committed to supporting these varied efforts and to pursuing advocacy, research, and education rooted in the expertise of those who have experienced structural and acute injustice and who are committed to pursuing redress. AARN is committed to avoiding the trap of an ivory-tower approach; therefore, we center the experiences of community partners and grassroots leaders in our advocacy efforts.

Financial Year 2023 Goals

The FY2023 goals of AARN were as follows:

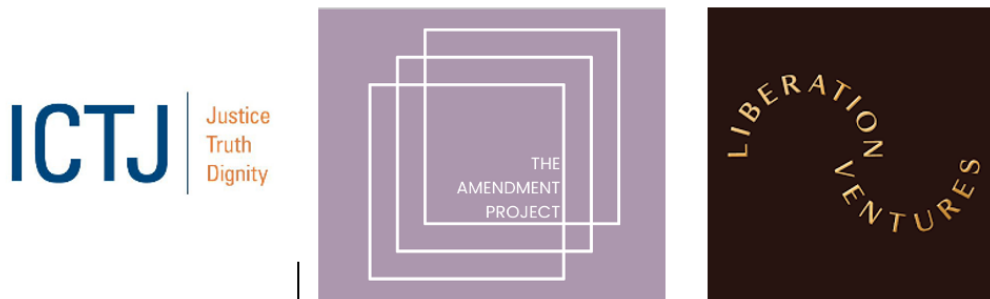
- ***Advance research***
 - ***ArcGIS map.***
 - Descendant/community-led
 - Legislation efforts related to reparations task force and truth telling commissions
 - University Coursework related to reparations at both universities.
 - Academic and Social movement conference
- ***Advance local reparation efforts*** through capacity-building, legal advocacy research, technical assistance, and public history events.
- ***Organize public dialogue and awareness-raising events*** with a cross-sector representation of activists, educators, government officials, and researchers to raise awareness of redress and racial justice.
- ***Expand our social media and Communications Campaign***

Funders

AARN is especially grateful to our funders. Their support has expanded our work. Funding went directly to community members for their expertise and time. Learn more in the section on *Advance local reparation efforts.*

Funding

Our work is supported by individual donors and grants from Liberation Ventures, International Center for Transitional Justice, and The Amendment Project.



Special Acknowledgement

AARN works alongside other national reparation leaders. We are proud to include the following organizations as supporters and collaborators:



ORGANIZATIONS

- Reparations4Slavery
- Fund for Reparations Now
- International Center for Transitional Justice
- C.H.E.S.S. Africatown, Alabama
- N'COBRA
- NAARC
- FirstRepair
- Global Research and Consulting
- Black Veterans Project
- The Reparations Project
- Witness Project
- Coming to the Table RVA
- Local Progress
- Resolutions Addressing Systemic & Structural Racism

What We Do

Advancing Research

Identify and document local redress efforts via ArcGIS mapping.

In 2023, AARN expanded the existing redress map to actively record efforts led by descendant individuals and groups, beginning with the South Atlantic region. AARN interns collected historical redress data pertaining to local African descendant individuals and groups. This involved delving into information on reparations and US racial justice from about 173 historical contexts, examining the impact and forms of reconciliation and repair, and studying the contributions of leading organizations and partnerships in this area. The goal was to shed light on actions that often went unnoticed by the public. Interns meticulously researched and gathered data on these active individuals and organizations that were working diligently to address historical injustices. In addition to data collection and organization, interns reached out to institutions to gain a wider picture on the region. The project has been extremely challenging and demonstrated the hegemonic tendencies of news coverage. AARN is continuing this work with a goal to complete the remapping project in 2025.

The mapping of local initiatives identified efforts within an international human rights framework. Five reparation categories were used to identify reparations efforts: satisfaction, compensation, guarantees of non-repetition, rehabilitation, and restitution (ICJ, 2006). For “full and effective reparations,” the ICJ stated that policies should include all five categories of repair. Below is a description of each category based on the General Assembly resolution 60/147 (2005) and ICJ, (2006, 2018).

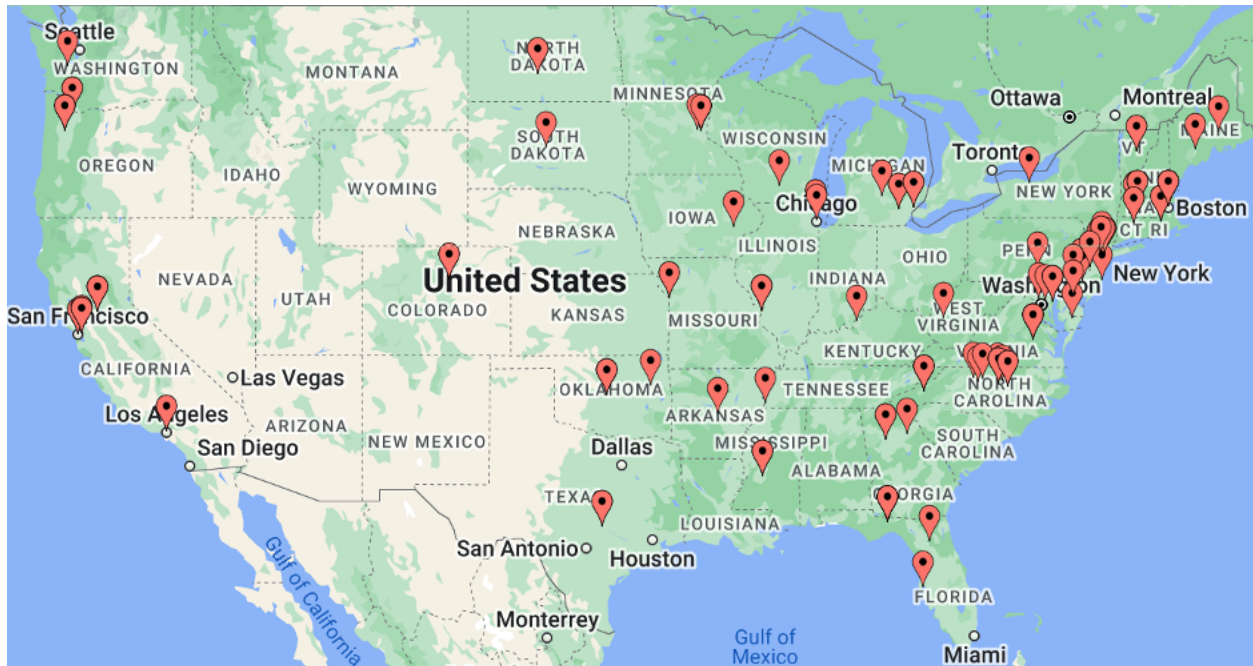
Satisfaction. Satisfaction depends on the nature of the human rights violations: examples include “public apologies, judicial and administrative sanctions, commemoration and memorialization.”

Restitution. Restitution allows for restoring the ‘original situation’ before the victim suffered violations. This includes “liberty, identity [...] restoration of employment and return of property.”

Compensation. Compensation is a monetary transfer to the victim, proportional to the damage done and based on an economic assessment of the “gravity of the violation [...] such as lost opportunities, loss of earnings and moral damage.”

Rehabilitation. Rehabilitation includes medical and social services, mental health support, and legal assistance.

Guarantees of non-repetition. Guarantees of non-repetition allow for protection against similar breaches in the future, most notably by administering tailored law enforcement, public dedication to human rights promotion, or the implementation of tailored psychological and social services.



Note: Reparations and Task Force Legislation since 1993-2023

Mapping in 2023 also examined legislation related to reparations task force and truth commissions over the past 40 years. This effort was completed and is now [live on our website](#). Findings from the new mapping project demonstrated the continued growth in local and state initiatives and legislation. Since 2020, there have been 147 legislative bills created to advance reparation efforts either through the formation of a task force, commission, or truth-seeking initiative. Of these 147, ten failed, one is currently in committee (August 2023), three were introduced, five referred and two withdrawn resulting in 116 efforts passed. California, Massachusetts, Minnesota, New Jersey, and North Carolina represented the states with the most legislative action.

Legal Advocacy

Under the leadership of AARN Co-founder Justin Hansford, students at Howard University School of Law presented a report, “Acknowledging Black America in the Discussion for Sustainable Development Goals,” at the First Session of the UN Permanent Forum for People of African Descent in December 2022. The report was the culmination of the Movement Lawyering Clinic’s Black Audit Project that graded 13 U.S. cities based on their progress toward achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for Black citizens.

A team of Howard law students, led by Darin E.W. Johnson, also published the inaugural report on Transitional Justice Mechanisms in the United States on the AARN website. Written for Prof. Johnson’s Spring 2023 class on International Criminal Law and Transitional Justice, this report describes truth and reconciliation commissions and reparations initiatives proposed or undertaken in the United States and includes nearly ninety initiatives that collectively reflect a growing acknowledgement of the importance of transitional justice mechanisms in addressing

long-standing community harms.

Howard University is also assisting Brown Grove in advocating for environmental justice. Prof. Carlton Waterhouse and Maggie Ellinger-Locke, experts in environmental law and redress for historic injustices, are examining the legality of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) assessment for the approval of building the Wegmans distribution center in Brown Grove.

School of International and Public Affairs (SIPA) coursework

Spring 2023, Columbia University's School of International and Public Affairs. The course, *The Debate on US Reparations*

Professor Linda Mann's course, "The Debate over US Racial Reparations," offered a thought-provoking exploration of racial redress in the United States. The course provided an examination of the complexities surrounding the topic of racial reparations, delving into the profound historical injustices that have deeply impacted the Black community, such as enslavement, Jim Crow, redlining, segregation, and contemporary racism. This comprehensive exploration allowed students to gain a deeper understanding of systemic racial injustice and recognize the urgent need for reparations to reconcile historical wrongdoing and denounce racism. Community engagement and restorative justice practices served as core themes to the course to highlight the vital role of engaging the Black community as decision-makers and experts in the reparations process. By prioritizing descendants' voices and perspectives, reparations can be achieved in a manner that honors their autonomy and addresses their distinct needs. This course displayed how meaningful reparations require not only financial restitution, but also an acknowledgment of historical wrongs, a formal apology, institutional change to prevent future harms, and other tangible measures that contribute to recognition and reconciliation. Specific case studies at the local level, such as AARN's work in Evanston and Freemantown, served as real-world examples on the practical implementation of reparations and the significance of community engagement. By analyzing these case studies, students were introduced to a comprehensive model for repair that encompassed essential principles in addressing historical injustices and advancing racial justice. The course challenged students to critically analyze the impact of systemic racism and advocate for comprehensive redress by examining historical injustices, emphasizing a holistic approach to reparations, and highlighting community engagement and restorative justice practices.

Black Audit Project, Howard University Thurgood Marshall Civil Rights Center (TMCRC)
School of Law, Under the instruction of Prof. Justin Hansford

This Black Audit Project sought to examine specific city sites based on the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDS). Students engaged in ways to democratize data collections by collaborating with community researchers. By using the SDG framework to analyze Black American experiences An Audit of US Black Communities sought to link national discussions on inequity and anti-Black racism to global discourse on basic human rights. While some cities in the United States have heralded their success, data is limited to that of the general population,

obscuring economic, educational, and health inequity as experienced by marginalized groups. A summary of their findings is accessible on the TMCRC [website here](#).

Historic Preservation Research

In addition to previously mentioned research efforts, AARN engaged with:

- [Chelsea School no. 4](#) and historian Eric Washington to designate the school as an Individual Landmark
- [Harris Neck Community](#) to preserve the community's culture, environment, and green spaces.
- [Descendants of the St. Louis University Enslaved](#) (DSLUE) to honor and memorialize their ancestors through reparations.

Chelsea School no. 4

On May 23, 2023, the NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission designated Manhattan's (former) Colored School no. 4, now changed to Chelsea School no. 4, as an individual landmark. AARN had engaged with Erik Washington and other community organizations to push the "Save Former Colored School No. 4" campaign through social media outreach. In 2022, AARN utilized their TikTok and Instagram pages to create educational videos on the school for audiences to sign the petition. AARN is thrilled to have contributed to the push for the designation of Chelsea School no. 4.

International Research

In 2020, AARN piloted The Transatlantic Redress Network, an initiative with the goal to continue AARN mapping efforts to include instances of the Dutch case. Universities from Spain, Netherlands, and U.S. engaged in mapping local reparation efforts within an international human rights framework. In June 2022, AARN presented alongside the University of Spain (Barcelona), and the University of Amsterdam at [Beyond Nuremberg: The Global Search for Accountability](#) at the NIOD Institute for War, Holocaust and Genocide Studies Amsterdam. Following the conference, universities from Italy, Belgium, Denmark, and Canada expressed interest in furthering this project.

Conferences

- UN Side Event
- UDC - Descendant film and discussion
- Mills Conference
- San Francisco
- DC Historical Society

UDC Descendant Film and Discussion

On April 18th, 2022, AARN collaborated with the Oral History Club at the University of the District of Columbia (UDC) to hold a screening and Q&A panel for the film *Descendant*. The Panel featured Director of Community Engagement and Strategic Planning, Corey Shaw Jr, Director of Community Research, James Lennox, and Co-Founder Linda Mann. The film documents, at length, Africatown, Alabama's connection with a lost history of enslavement, self-liberation, and perseverance. Coinciding with many events occurring in Washington, DC's celebration of Emancipation Day, this event

shed light on another community grappling with realities of partial freedom. In attendance were UDC Oral History Club members, faculty, and members of the public. The audience was often vocally shocked by the events of the film, the permissiveness of racism, and erasure of history. As the film ended many people seemed grief stricken about what could be done today to assist.

The Q&A panel was preceded by a brief explanation of the work conducted by AARN in Africatown, Alabama alongside community organizations. The panelists detailed the extensive research and oral histories that were intentionally produced to revitalize the Lantern Walk. When faced with a question on how the revival of a historical tradition was of any help, Linda Mann made it abundantly clear that the Lantern Walk is a multi-functional element of the revival of the community itself. On one hand, it is a reminder to the community of the pedigree from which they come from—perseverance, determination, and autonomy. From the macro perspective, the Lantern Walk is also a beacon to the country—and to the world—that Africatown has survived and will build a future where they can reach new heights. The event serves as an open hand, welcoming those who wish to walk alongside residents to restore a community to join the coalition. Overall, many people were challenged by notions of reparations in the face for the historical narrative in Africatown. More critically, they struggled to grapple with the fact that Washington, DC’s emancipation was functionally reparations to enslavers for “lost property”. After extensive discussion between participants and panelists, the panel was lauded with praise and applause for having brought the event together.

Advancing local efforts

AARN provided technical assistance to several local redress efforts this year. Below is a description of those efforts listed in alphabetical order. AARN’s technical assistance focused on the specific needs and priorities identified by the local redress organizations. AARN provided assistance with research and offered expertise from the AARN network. The aim of AARN’s technical assistance was to maximize the quality and impact of local reparations efforts through administrative, management, policy development, and capacity building support.

Africatown, Alabama

AARN and the International Center for Transitional Justice (ICTJ) are working in collaboration with the Clean, Healthy, Educated, Safe & Sustainable Community ([C.H.E.S.S.](#)) and the [Mobile County Training School Alumni Association](#) to develop and implement a heritage preservation initiative, the Africatown Lantern Walk. The inaugural Lantern Walk will take place in November 2022 and is ongoing. The objective of this project is to create the Africatown Lantern Walk. The Lantern Walk was a traditional event held at the close of the school year at the Mobile County Training School (MCTS). This event took place prior to 1961 when the school, which is located in the heart of Africatown, was still segregated. The purpose of the Lantern Walk was to pay homage to community members and descendants who helped pave the way for graduates.

The Lantern Walk is part of C.H.E.S.S.’ efforts to develop several preservation heritage events. Africatown has a unique history in US enslavement practices. Their arrival to Mobile, Alabama came over 40+ years after transatlantic slave trade was ruled illegal across the globe. The enslaved peoples arrived in the U.S. onboard the Clotilda in 1860. To hide the evidence, the ship was burned and sunk in the Mobile River.

To prepare for the Lantern Walk, AARN works with Africatown community members to compile information on trailblazers and significant historical sites. AARN student researchers conducted oral history interviews to better understand the significance of the local school, churches, and Africatown's historical cemetery. In the future, student researchers will conduct business outreach to community-based institutions to support the Lantern Walk event in Fall 2022.

Brown Grove Community, VA

AARN's work in Brown Grove, Virginia demonstrates capacity building, cross-government engagement, legislative advocacy, and historical and cultural preservation. AARN has worked alongside the Brown Grove Preservation Group (BGPG) from Hanover County, Virginia since 2020. Brown Grove is a predominantly Black community that was settled by freed slaves in the 19th century. For decades, their historic land and private property has been and continues to be threatened by private industrial development, including the construction of a concrete plant, local airport expansion, interstate 95 and the building of a truck stop. Such environmental racism and disregard for the community resulted in widespread displacement from homes and land, inspiring the formation of the Brown Grove Preservation group (BGPG). BGPG membership consists of descendants and concerned members of civil society who are seeking accountability, repair, and the preservation of their historic land. The Brown Grove Community land includes African American cemeteries, a segregation-era schoolhouse, and a 150-year-old, Black-led Baptist church.

In November of 2021, AARN and ICTJ collaborated to organize a community-led, goal-setting retreat in Brown Grove. Over the course of two days, community members of the Brown Grove Preservation Group (BGPG) engaged with the obstacles to their success and other community-based organizations (CBOs) who were primed for collaboration and allyship.

One of the key goals identified by BGPG during the weekend event was an embargo on industrial development. Using the stakeholder analysis, the community targeted specific political officials and bodies which were ripe for their input. Members of BGPG began attending comprehensive plan meetings, lobbying their representatives to preserve their historic community. Seeing that the officials were not interested in engaging with the premise of their efforts, BGPG turned to AARN and RASR to begin the process of seeking a State Historic Designation. Brown Grove had several wins during 2022. Brown Grove was designated a Rural African American Historic District by the Virginia Department of Historic Resources. Historical research and testimony by Diane Drake, a resident of Brown Grove was pivotal in the designation. AARN authored a letter in support of Brown Grove designation. Brown Grove is pursuing a similar designation from the National Park Service. As of now, that designation is on track for approval. AARN student research was also used as part of the Virginia (VA) Environmental Justice Collaborative et al. amicus brief to support a legal challenge at the VA Supreme Court.

AARN succeeded in securing a meeting with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPAD) in Spring 2022. The EPA Region 3 Office visited Brown Grove and witnessed the industrial encroachment and environmental injustices experienced by the community. The team on-site affirmed the federal commitment to environmental justice and assisted BGPG with their efforts. A Title VI complaint was filed by a community member claiming on the grounds of racial discrimination. The EPA took this claim seriously and the VA Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) is engaged in the informal resolution process with members of BGPG. On both fronts of engagement, the EPA was absent for a significant period of time. However, in 2023 the EPA has reengaged with BGPG and their coalition to advance their goals of environmental justice and restoration. The outcome of this process is yet to be determined, but the community remains positive as significant power players align themselves with their just cause.

The community action campaign, born of the 2021 retreat, also terminated further commercial development of a fencing company warehouse and prevented a landfill expansion that would have exacerbated existing harms and loss. Most significantly, BGPG and AARN are now deeply engaged in collaborative negotiations with the county government, Region 3 of the Environmental Protection Agency, and the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality to secure future protections for the historic Brown Grove community. AARN researchers continue to meet with BGPG on a bi-weekly basis, working together to perform legal and historical research, co-create PowerPoint presentations, monitor local issues, and communicate with governmental officials.

Harris Neck

Over the past year, AARN continued to collaborate with the Harris Neck Land Trust. AARN has held weekly meetings with Winston Relaford, the Land Trust's Chair of the Board of Directors, and Dave Kelly, a longstanding member of the Harris Neck Land Trust. The primary focus of these meetings has been to discuss strategy and receive updates on the Land Trust's latest efforts. AARN assisted in strategizing how to best engage with legislators at both the local and national level. The Harris Neck Land trust is a dynamic and exceedingly well networked organization, holding extensive connections with legislative staff members and political advisors. AARN looks forward to continuing our work with Winston Relaford and the Harris Neck Land Trust.

Freemantown

AARN has been engaged with the Freemantown Historical Foundation (FHF) and Angela James to coordinate organizing efforts around the preservation and reinvigoration of a community in Rome, Georgia. The city of Rome is the largest metropolitan area in Floyd County, Georgia. It is home to dairy farms, agriculture, a bustling downtown corridor, and the largest private college in the United States—Berry College. Berry has a history that is contested by the descendants of Freemantown: the ancestors of the FHF board members and Angela James lived on land that is now owned by Berry College. There were two communities, Freemantown

and Possum-Trot, on sections of the land owned by Berry College, but the local historical context surrounding the acquisition of thousands of acres of land by the school's founder is largely absent. The school presented a public facing narrative that focuses on the mission of Martha Berry, founder, to educate poor children, resulting in the lost history of Freemantown's community. As a result of initial engagement with the community, AARN's Director of Community Engagement and Strategic Planning, Corey Shaw Jr, and Director of Projects and Public Affairs, Erica Ivins, were invited to attend the Freemantown Family Reunion in Georgia.

Reparation Strategy Session

In collaboration with FirstRepair and the International Center for Transitional Justice (ICTJ), AARN hosts monthly strategy sessions focusing on reparations at the local and regional levels. Each strategy session features updates and announcements from AARN's four regions (South, East, West, and Midwest), as well as a guest speaker with experience in the space of reparations. The strategy sessions are a key site for resource-sharing and collaboration among AARN-affiliated organizations working toward racial redress. AARN is currently designing new ways to support regional leaders and keep track of organizations' needs for 2023-2024.

Public Dialogue and Awareness-raising Events

UN Side Event

Spearheaded by AARN's steering committee member and representative of the UN Permanent Forum on the People of African Descent (PFPAD), Justin Hansford, the UN Side Event in 2023 showcased the UN sustainable goals in the context of the work in the US and global reparations. AARN significantly contributed to the organization for the event, distributed promotional materials through various social media platforms, and presented at the event, highlighting the significance of supporting local efforts and community engagement in doing reparations work. The video of this [presentation can be viewed here](#).

Workshop: "Reparations Is Not a Four-Letter Word"

In July 2023, AARN, in collaboration with the Virginia Reparations Coalition, hosted a workshop on the advancement of reparations and reparative initiatives through the human rights framework. The workshop covered strategies such as grassroots organizing and legislative options to further the cause of reparations.

Social Media and Communications

Communications

Over the past year, AARN has made a dedicated effort to increase its communication campaigns, from email newsletters to social media to brochures. Director of Projects and Public Affairs, Erica Ivins, kept our network up to date on current events happening in each of our partner communities across the country. These biweekly and monthly emails have been very well received, highlighting the wonderful work of local organizers to funders and other communities alike. AARN regularly responds to communications submitted through its website's intake form. Most of the communications are requests to be added to AARN's listserv from individuals and organizations working

toward racial redress in the U.S. The listserv serves as a point of connection among the geographically diverse individuals and organizations in the redress movement, and it often features important news or highlighted events. AARN also responds to requests for meetings and partnerships with organizations working in the space of reparations.

In fall of 2022, all AARN's social media platforms, including Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook, took on a unified aesthetic. This style was achieved by using Canvas to craft graphic designs, allowing AARN to highlight reparations news, historical events, and the ongoing work of our partner communities. In addition to these more stylized posts, Erica consistently updated the Linktree in all social media bios — all articles, petitions, and websites mentioned on our social media posts were linked here to increase accessibility for our followers.

Erica also created social media toolkits for AARN-sponsored events, including the Africatown Lantern Walk, the UN reparations side event, and other collaborations with First Repair. Many of these toolkits were shared across community and partner organizations, which generated a lot of public reception, feedback, and attention. In November 2022, our Instagram coverage of the Africatown Lantern Walk generated over 50 new followers — including Participant, the production company that helped direct the Netflix documentary *Descendant* (2022). In May 2023, our advertisement of the UN side event received a nationwide response that resulted in hundreds of people registering online. Moving forward, AARN will continue to develop tool kits that our partner organizations in communities can share out across their respective networks to generate or support, awareness, and interest in the local reparation's movement. Our communications strategies over the last academic year have proven to be extremely important in expanding the reach of our network.

Students

AARN technical assistance and communications would not be possible without the significant contributions and dedication of an exemplary volunteer, student group. Since Fall 2020, AARN has had a consistent student team of 7 research interns.

Columbia University

Erica Ivins, Human Rights, MA, Columbia University, 2023
Safia Southey, Human Rights, BA, Columbia University, 2021
Jessia Avila, Human Rights, MA, Columbia University, 2024
Jana Brown, Human Rights, MA, Columbia University, 2023
Amanda Geist, Human Rights, MA, Columbia University, 2024

Barnard College

Irene Jang, Political Science and Russian Studies, BA, Barnard College, 2024

Howard University

Charkera Ervin, School of Law, Howard University, 2023
Layton Rodwell, School of Law, Howard University, 2023

Other universities

Wendi Zhou, Philosophy and History, BA, University of Washington, 2023

Other HBCU

James Lennox, Political Science, BA, University District of Columbia, 2023
Corey Shaw, Political Science, BA, University District of Columbia

Intern Continued Success:

Wendi Zhou, accepted to the University of Oxford's BPhil in Philosophy program.
Erica Ivins, Harvard
Corey Shaw, Empower DC, Director

Consulting

The Global Research Consulting (GRC) group from Yale University continued their services for AARN during the 2022-2023 academic year. Following discussions with AARN members, GRC consultants provided recommendations on how to effectively rethink the organizational structure of AARN to best strengthen communication between steering members and interns, the two founding institutions, Howard University and Columbia University, and amongst group members.



Steering Committee Biographies



Justin Hansford was recently elected as the UN delegate for the Permanent Forum on People of African Descent (2022-2024). He is a Professor of Law and the Executive Director of the Thurgood Marshall Civil Rights Center at Howard University, where he has become recognized as a leading scholar and activist in critical race theory, human rights, and law and social movements. Prof. Hansford co-authored the Ferguson to Geneva human rights shadow report and accompanied the Ferguson protesters and Mike Brown's family to Geneva, Switzerland to testify at the United Nations.



Linda J. Mann, PhD, co-founder, and Research Director of AARN. She also works as an adjunct professor at Columbia University's School of International and Public Affairs. Mann is currently the Executive Director at the John Mitchell Jr. Program, Carter School for Peace and Conflict Resolution, George Mason University. Previously she served as the Executive Director at Northeastern University School of Law, Director of Clinical Experiences at Marymount University in Arlington, VA, and VP of Research for the Georgetown Memory Project. Mann's research focuses on the analysis of historical injustices and contemporary reparations based on the voices of those wronged to determine their restorative justice potential.



Dr. Elazar Barkan is Professor of International and Public Affairs at Columbia University and Director of SIPA's Human Rights and Humanitarian Policy Concentration. Barkan also works as Director of Columbia's Institute for the Study of Human Rights. He is also the founding Director of the Institute for Historical Justice and Reconciliation (IHJR) in The Hague. Barkan served on ISHR's board of directors before becoming ISHR's co-director in 2007 and director in 2008. Previously, Professor Barkan served as chair of the History Department and the Cultural Studies Department at the Claremont Graduate University, where he was the founding director of the Humanities Center. Professor Barkan is a historian by training and received his PhD from Brandeis University in Comparative European History and BA from Tel Aviv University.

Barkan's research interests focus on human rights and on the role of history in contemporary society and politics and the response to gross historical crimes and injustices. His human rights work seeks to achieve conflict resolution and reconciliation by bringing scholars from two or more sides of a conflict together and employing historical methodology to create shared narratives across political divides and to turn historical dialogue into a fundamental tool of political reconciliation. Barkan's article, "Historians and Historical Reconciliation," in October

2009 *American Historical Review*. Professor Barkan's other research interests include refugee repatriation, comparative analysis of historical commissions, shared sacred sites, and the question of human rights impact, specifically about redress and transitional justice.



Dr. Mario Beatty is an Associate Professor of Afro-American Studies, received his B.A. degree in Black World Studies at Miami University, Oxford, Ohio, his M.A. degree in Black Studies at The Ohio State University, and his Ph.D. degree in African American Studies at Temple University. He has taught at Morris Brown College, Bowie State University, and he served as Chairperson of the Department of African American Studies at Chicago State University from 2007 to 2010.

Beatty served as an educational consultant for the School District of Philadelphia from 2004 to 2007, where he helped to write curriculum and to train teachers in the novel, district-wide mandatory course in African American history. He currently serves as President of The Association for the Study of Classical African Civilizations (ASCAC). His research interests include the Ancient Egyptian language, history, wisdom literature, astronomy in Ancient Egyptian religious texts, comparative analyses of African cultures, the image and use of ancient Africa in the African American historical imagination, the theory and practice of African American Studies, and Pan-Africanism.



Dr. Greg Carr is a professor of Afro American Studies at Howard University. Carr holds a PhD from Temple University. His research focus is on pan-African historiography and instructs courses on Africana Studies normative theory, Africana intellectual history, classical African history, and African American nationalism. Greg's publication include: *Towards an Intellectual History of Africana Studies: Genealogy and Normative Theory* (Durham, NC: Carolina Academic Press, 2007), and *You Don't Call the Kittens Biscuits: Disciplinary Africana Studies and The Study of Malcolm X* (Durham, NC: Carolina Academic Press, 2007). As the School District of Philadelphia's First Resident Scholar on Race and Culture (1999-2000).

Dr. Carr developed educational policymaking and curriculum frameworks for African American History courses now required for secondary education students in Philadelphia.



Dr. Michael L. Blakey is a National Endowment for the Humanities Professor of Anthropology, Africana Studies, and American Studies, and Founding Director of the Institute for Historical Biology at the College of William & Mary. Blakey advised the award-winning “Race: Are We So Different?” exhibition of the American Anthropological Association. He has served as President of the Association of Black Anthropologists and a member of the editorial board of *American Anthropologists*. Blakey represented the United States on the Council of the 4th World Archaeological Congress in South Africa. He is a member of the Scholarly Advisory

Committee of the National Museum of African American History and Culture of the Smithsonian Institution, where he previously held the position of Research Associate in Physical Anthropology at the National Museum of Natural History from 1985 to 1994. He was Scientific Director of the New York African Burial Ground Project from 1992-2009.

Blakey has taught at Spelman College, Columbia, Brown, La Sapienza, and Howard University, where he founded the W. Montague Cobb Biological Anthropology Laboratory. He was director of the Remembering Slavery, Resistance, and Freedom Project sponsored by the Virginia General Assembly from 2010 to 2015. He recently published *The Skeletal Biology of the New York African Burial Ground*, written with Lesley Rankin-Hill. His other writings cover bioarchaeology, publicly engaged archaeology, and scientific racism. He is currently working on a monograph on race and racism in science and society. His awards include an honorary Doctor of Science from York College, CUNY. He earned his B.A. from Howard University and his M.A. and PhD in anthropology from University of Massachusetts-Amherst. He has also completed courses at Oxford and London Universities.



Kamm Howard is a Chicago businessman and activist. He currently owns retail and office spaces that house the businesses of 17 Black entrepreneurs in the Roseland community.

In 2016, Kamm helped organize the United Nations Working Group of Experts for People of African Descent visit to the United States, which resulted in recommendations for the United States to amend centuries of gross human rights violations against people of African Descent with reparations.

Kamm has been a member of the National Coalition of Blacks for Reparations in America (N’COBRA) for 17 years and Kamm has led N’COBRA as its National Male Co-Chair since 2017. He has worked closely with both the late Rep. John Conyers and Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee to move HR 40 through Congress. Kamm also aided Alderman Robin Rue Simmons in creating a municipal reparations program in Evanston, Illinois and in June 2020, Kamm worked to create the City of Chicago Subcommittee on Reparations. Kamm also recently authored the manual, “Laying the Foundation for Local Reparations: A Guide for Providing National Symmetry for Local Reparations Efforts.”

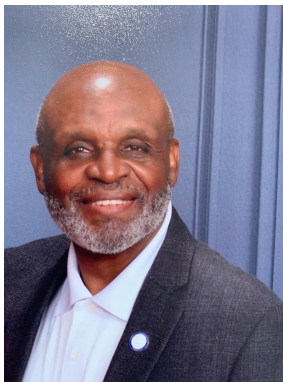
Kamm has spoken on reparations in both Ethiopia and South Africa.



Mélisande Short-Colomb serves as the Research and Community Engagement Associate, Laboratory for Global Performance and Politics, Georgetown University and is a founding member of the GU272 Advocacy Team. She also serves on the Georgetown Memory Project's Board of Advisors, as well as Council Elder of the GU272 Descendants Association. Ms Short-Colomb received a 2019 Fr. Bunn Award for journalistic excellence for commentary in support of the "GU272 Referendum to Create a New Legacy."

Short-Colomb is a descendant of two families sold in 1838 by the Society of Jesus. Short-Colomb wrote and performed a one person show, titled *Here I Am*. The play includes her personal story of discovering she was descended from slaves sold for the benefit of Georgetown and her attendance at the same institution. *Here I Am* also including archival excerpts which give voice to the slaves, Jesuits, and others around the time of the sale. Short-Colomb also speaks frequently about the GU272 and reparations. She has testified before the InterAmerican Commission on Human Rights, lectured at the [Brooklyn Historical Society](#), and has given a [TEDx talk](#). Short-Colomb has been published in the [Washington Post](#), [The New Yorker](#), and the [AARP Journal](#). Short-Colomb appeared in a [Full Frontal with Samantha Bee](#) episode on reparations, among other television appearances.

From New Orleans, LA, Short-Colomb began studies at Georgetown in August 2017, one of two undergraduate students from recognized descendant families. Short-Colomb retired from a lengthy culinary career to attend Georgetown. Her family includes four adult children and four-granddaughters, and scores of newly identified cousins.



Anderson Flen is the Vice President of Africatown C.H.E.S.S. Flen was born in Magazine Point, Alabama (Africatown) and is a 1968 graduate of Mobile County Training School (MCTS). The culture and history of the descendants of the slave ship Clotilda, the founders of Africatown, affected his entire education.

Flen works to ensure local churches have the support necessary to better serve the community and share their stories. Flen served 30 years as Director of Health Promotions and Planning in the North Georgia Health District until his retirement in 2015. In this role, Flen collaborated with government and community organizations representing academia, business, non-profits, healthcare, and religious institutions. Flen has played a foundational role in the formation of all the current community organizations in the Africatown Community, including the Mobile County Training School Alumni Association (MCTSAA), the Africatown Heritage Preservation Foundation (AHPF), the Africatown Community Development Corporation (ACDC), and C.H.E.S.S.

Flen served as the first Alumni Association President of the newly reorganized MCTSAA, now a 501-c3 non-profit. In 2016, Flen worked on the Africatown Connections Blueway Project with the National Park Service (NPS)



Dr. Valethia Watkins is Director of the Women’s Studies Graduate Certificate Program and Associate Professor of Africana Studies in the Department of Afro-American Studies at Howard University. She earned her Ph.D. in African American Studies at Temple University and a Law Degree at The Ohio State University College of Law. Dr. Watkins previously served as an educational consultant for the School District of Philadelphia, where she assisted in the writing and training of teachers in a district-wide required course in African American history.

Dr. Watkins is the former National Secretary for the Association of Black Women Historians. She serves as a member of the editorial board of *The Compass: Journal of the Association for the Study of Classical African Civilizations*, where she has also published her work. Dr. Watkins has also published in journals such as *The Journal of Pan African Studies*, *Phylon: The Clark Atlanta University Review of Race and Culture*, *The African Journal of Rhetoric*. Her research interests include Black Women’s Intellectual History, Africana Gender Studies, the Politics of Race and Racism in American Feminist Thought, and conceptualizing Africana Studies approaches to the study of gender. Dr. Watkins has lectured on the Racial Politics of the Woman Suffrage movement and Black Women’s History across the United States and internationally in countries such as Ghana, Egypt, and Great Britain.

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