

“Equal Rights for All: Civil Liberties in the USA”
11th Annual Truman Library Teacher Conference, July 14-18, 2014
Harry S. Truman Library & Museum

Monday, July 14

8:00 - 8:30 Breakfast

8:30 – 9:00

Introductions and overview

Mark Adams, Truman Library

9:00 – 12:00

The White House Decision Center: Desegregation of the Armed Forces

Mary McMurray, Truman Library Institute

12:00 – 1:00 Lunch

1:00 – 2:15

Rethinking U.S. Labor History: Thoughts on the Recent Past and Future of the Field

Donna Haverty-Stacke, Hunter College, CUNY.

Dr. Haverty-Stacke will consider where labor and working-class history has been over the past quarter century and where it may be going in the future. Important changes in the field over the past twenty-five years have included efforts to impose some sort of synthesis over the seemingly balkanized works spawned by the new social history and struggles with the implications of the new cultural history for the meaning of labor and working-class history. Significant themes that have emerged in the works of current scholars (expressed in the essays collected in her co-edited volume, *Rethinking U.S. Labor History*), include: explorations of alternative working-class identities; the experiences of laborers who have not traditionally been considered workers; the significance of the state to the fate of unions; and, the insights into the lives, expectations, and struggles of workers that can be gained by going beyond the limits of the nation state.

2:15 – 2:30 Break

2:30 – 3:45 **Freedom to Serve**

Jon Taylor, University of Central Missouri

On the eve of America’s entry into World War II, African American leaders pushed for inclusion of more black soldiers in the war effort and, after the war, mounted a concerted effort to integrate the armed services. President Harry S. Truman’s decision to issue Executive Order 9981 in 1948, which resulted in the integration of the armed forces, was an important event in twentieth-century American history, and was an early victory on the road to civil rights.

3:45 – 4:45 **Teacher Research Session**

4:45 – 5:00 **Wrap up**

Tuesday, July 15

8:30 – 9:00 Breakfast

9:00 – 10:15

Disability Rights: An Overlooked Civil Rights Movement

Doris Fleischer, New Jersey Inst. of Technology

The disability rights movement –akin to the civil rights movement of African Americans and other racial and ethnic groups, women, and the LGBT community – sought to challenge the prevailing wisdom by redirecting the public mindset from the medical/charity model to the civil rights model of disability. Why is disability rights an overlooked civil rights movement? In the very well-received volume, *The Anatomy of Prejudice*, Elisabeth Young-Bruehl analyzes what she labels “the four prejudices that have dominated American life and reflection in the past half-century – anti-Semitism, racism, sexism, and homophobia.” No reference is made to disability discrimination. Misrepresented as involving issues other than discrimination, such as health, economic, technical, or safety concerns, prejudice based on disability frequently remains unrecognized. Perhaps this oversight stems from a collective fear of disability since everyone is subject to illness, accident, the declining powers of advanced age – all these forms of human vulnerability. “Handicapism,” better referred to as “ableism,” is the only “ism” to which all human beings are susceptible. Thus, the public’s avoidance of acknowledging the ever-threatening possibility – and after a certain age, probability -- of disability is not surprising. While critics of the 1990 Americans with Disabilities Act tend to overestimate the cost of fully implementing the law, they significantly underestimate the cost of disability discrimination, not only to individuals with disabilities (the largest minority in the U.S., 57 million and growing), but also to the wider society.

10:15 – 10:30 Break

10:30 – 11:45

The Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990

Lex Frieden, Professor of Biomedical Informatics and Professor of Rehabilitation, University of Texas, Health Science Center and Baylor College of Medicine
Shirley Hammond, Director of Education, George H.W. Bush Presidential Library and Museum

In 1990 the U.S.A. was the first nation in the world to adopt sweeping anti-discrimination legislation for people with disabilities. Lex Frieden, a chief architect of the Americans with Disabilities Act, presents the behind-the-scenes action of activists, legislators, and the executive office of the White House who united in a bipartisan coalition to make the ADA possible. Online ADA primary sources from the George H.W. Bush Presidential Library Archives will be provided.

11:45 – 12:45 Lunch

12:45 – 2:00

DePriest Tea Incident

Elizabeth Dinschel , Hoover Library

First Lady Lou Hoover’s invitation to Jessie L. DePriest to a White House tea party in 1929 created a storm of protest and indignation. This traditional act of hospitality toward the wife of the first black elected to Congress in the twentieth century created a political crisis for the president and first lady. This presentation examines the “tempest” from the perspectives of the first lady, the DePriests, and DePriest family descendants.

2:00 – 2:15 Break

2:15 – 3:30

A Stone of Hope: Prophetic Religion and the Death of Jim Crow

David Chappell, University of Oklahoma

Professor Chappell, the Rothbaum Professor of Modern American History, is a scholar of the American civil rights struggle. His books include *A Stone of Hope: Prophetic Religion and the Death of Jim Crow* and *Inside Agitators: White Southerners in the Civil Rights Movement*.

3:30 – 4:30 Teacher Research Session

4:30 – 4:45 Wrap up

Wednesday, July 16

8:30 – 9:00 Breakfast

9:00 – 10:15

Frames Refocused: Black and White Blinded Ex-GIs and Social Re-Orientation during the Second World War

Robert F. Jefferson, Jr., Ph.D., University of New Mexico

This session explores the rehabilitation and orientation training that sightless black and white soldiers received at the Old Farms Convalescent Hospital that was located in Avon, Connecticut, between 1945 and 1947. It illuminates the individual responses of black and white GIs to their new conditions, the evolution of their identities while undergoing recovery and rehabilitation, and the impact that the Connecticut facility and its unique training policies had on their ideas of race and readjustment to American Society at the time. It is my contention that as hundreds of newly blinded black and white soldiers streamed into the Old Farms facility during the period, touch became sight and a militant pro-independent outlook developed alongside an advanced progressive consciousness. As a result, the ex-GIs and the administrators who lived and worked at the center became a part of a group that not only encouraged black-white unity, but also offered them an entirely different interpretation of the way the world worked. Blindness, in short, offered them a new framework for understanding the strictures of racism and disability biases that divided Americans in wider society both prior to, during, and after the war. Indeed, for blinded black and white GIs who were assigned to the rehabilitation center, the fight for veterans' disability issues and racial equality soon became one and the same as they worked diligently to push a message of self-independence and inter-racialism long after the war had ended. The larger implications of their fateful encounters with each other have yet to be fully realized.

10:15 – 10:30 Break

10:30 – 11:45

Equality and Liberation: A History of U.S. Feminisms

Rory Dicker, Vanderbilt University

Many high school and college students today are very well aware of stereotypes associated with feminists, but few know much about what feminism really is, much less its history. In this talk, I will outline the three waves of feminism in the United States. I will begin by examining first-wave feminism, a period of feminist activity during the nineteenth and early twentieth century which focused primarily on gaining women's suffrage. I will talk about second-wave feminism, which started in the 1960s and lasted through the early 1980s; the extraordinary effects of this wave included everything from access to education and employment to reproductive rights. I will then discuss contemporary, or third-wave, feminism, which started in the early 1990s and arose in part from a backlash to the gains made by activists during the second wave. I will conclude by assessing the state of feminism today, considering whether feminism is necessary and useful or passé and outdated.

11:45 – 12:30 Lunch

12:30 – 1:00 Carpool to 18th & Vine

1:00 – 3:15

Tour of Negro Leagues Baseball Museum & Jazz Museum

3:30 – 4:30

Tour of Black Archives of Mid-America

4:30 – Optional Dinner (on your own) or carpool back to the Library

Thursday, July 17

8:30 – 9:00 Breakfast

9:00 – 10:15 **Human Rights in Our Own Backyard: Injustice and Resistance in the United States**

William Armaline, San Jose State University

This session examines human rights , drawing on literature and perspectives to interrogate assumptions of American exceptionalism. How do people in the U.S. address human rights? What strategies have they adopted, and how successful have these strategies been? Discussion will focus on the relationships between human rights and justice, the state and the individual, civil rights and human rights, and group rights versus individual rights.

10:15 – 10:30 Break

10:30 – 11:45 **Government surveillance of American citizens post 9/11: Constitutional?**

Gary Brunk, ACLU

In 2010 the Washington Post published a series of investigative reports that began with this quote: “The top-secret world the government created in response to the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, has become so large, so unwieldy and so secretive that no one knows how much money it costs, how many people it employs, how many programs exist within it or exactly how many agencies do the same work.” Today we still do not know all the answers to these questions, but thanks to the revelations of Edward Snowden enough is known to raise significant concerns among civil libertarians about unconstitutional violations of American citizens’ privacy. In this session we will explore what is known about the reach of national security surveillance and it’s implication for the balance of power, the rule of law and the health of our democracy.

11:45 – 12:45 Lunch

12:45 – 2:00 **Ike's Modern Republicanism and Civil Rights**

Kevin Bailey, Eisenhower Library

As he took office in January, 1953, one of Dwight D. Eisenhower's greatest presidential challenges was still unfolding. A national civil rights revolution was gathering momentum and the new president would soon meet and interact throughout the decade with leaders of the black civil rights community, including Roy Wilkins of the NAACP, Congressman Adam Clayton Powell, the National Urban League's Lester Granger, and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. The presentation will provide a brief overview of Ike's relationship with these civil rights leaders and a behind-the-scenes look at the passage of the important Civil Rights Act of 1957.

2:00 – 2:15 Break

2:15 – 3:30 **Exhibit Activity and Decision Theater 2.**

3:30 – 4:30 **Teacher Research Session**

4:30 – 4:45 **Wrap up**

Friday, July 18

8:00 – 8:30 Breakfast

8:30 – 9:45

“We got three kids missing down there.”

Amanda Melancon, Johnson Library

During the 1964 Freedom Summers, three civil rights workers went missing in Mississippi. Their disappearance and later deaths made national headlines. President Johnson worked with the FBI, press, and families of the missing workers to find them and discover the truth to what happened. Through telephone conversations, the president's daily diary, and other primary sources, teachers will analyze a controversial moment in the civil rights movement of the 1960s.

9:45 – 10:00 Break

10:00 – 11:15

Civil Rights: A personal perspective

Barb McGregor, Ford Library

Gerald Ford was the oldest of four boys in a close-knit family. His mother had three simple rules for her sons; “work hard, tell the truth, and always come to dinner on time.” Dorothy and Gerald Ford, Sr. taught by example as well. They were active in their church and community, and always willing to help others. It was in this setting that “Junie,” as he was called, began forming his beliefs about civil rights and equal rights. The strength of these beliefs would be tested throughout his life. In this session we will explore how he put his beliefs into action, from the gut-wrenching decision he had to make as an undergrad at the University of Michigan, to his voting record in Congress, and actions as President, concluding with a posthumous tribute recognizing his efforts on behalf of civil rights.

11:15 – 11:45 Teacher share lesson plans

11:45 – 12:15 Wrap up and evaluations
(Box lunch available)