

# Memorandum



CITY OF DALLAS

DATE April 11, 2014

TO Honorable Members of the Quality of Life & Environment Committee: Dwaine R. Caraway (Chair)  
Sandy Greyson (Vice Chair), Adam Medrano, Rick Callahan, Carolyn R. Davis, Lee M. Kleinman

SUBJECT Special Presentation: The Black Academy of Arts and Letters & the University of North Texas Archive  
Preservation Partnership

On Monday, April 14, 2014, The Black Academy of Arts and Letters (TBAAL) and the University of North Texas will brief the committee on a new collaboration to preserve and promote the TBAAL archive collection.

The attached letter provides additional information.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Joey Zapata".

Joey Zapata  
Assistant City Manager

## Attachment

c: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council  
A.C. Gonzalez, City Manager  
Warren M.S. Ernst, City Attorney  
Craig D. Kinton, City Auditor  
Rosa A. Rios, City Secretary  
Daniel F. Solis, Administrative Judge  
Ryan S. Evans, Interim First Assistant City Manager

Jill A. Jordan, P.E., Assistant City Manager  
Forest E. Turner, Assistant City Manager  
Charles M. Cato, Interim Assistant City Manager  
Theresa O'Donnell, Interim Assistant City Manager  
Jeanne Chipperfield, Chief Financial Officer  
Shawn Williams, Interim Public Information Officer  
Elsa Cantu, Assistant to the City Manager – Mayor & Council

March 19, 2014

Mr. Curtis King  
The Black Academy of Arts and Letters  
Dallas Convention Center Theater Complex  
650 South Griffin Street  
Dallas, TX 75202

Dear Mr. King,

This proposal will establish a framework for an on-going collaboration and partnership between the University of North Texas Libraries (UNT) and The Black Academy of Arts and Letters (TBAAL). This partnership will recognize the important cultural history and artistic contribution of TBAAL while also creating a national model for the preservation, perpetuation, cultivation and promotion of African American cultural history and artistic contribution within institutions of higher education. This document should be understood as a proposal for an ongoing course of collaboration rather than a contract binding on either party.

#### **Planning and Pilot Project (within 6 months)**

- Archivists from UNT will conduct a survey of the TBAAL archive and produce a written report with specific recommendations for preservation and accessibility of the collection.
- Finalize and execute a document outlining terms of ownership and transfer of the TBAAL historic archive to UNT.
- Utilizing photos and biographical information in the TBAAL archive, UNT will mount the “Dallas/Fort Living Legends” exhibit on-line through the UNT Library Exhibits portal. This exhibit will serve as a pilot project and demonstration of both the capabilities of UNT Libraries and the significant importance of the TBAAL archive to the community.
- UNT leadership will work with TBAAL to present information regarding this partnership to the Dallas City Council and Dallas' Cultural Affairs Commission.

#### **Preservation of the TBAAL Archive (1-2 years)**

- Transfer the TBAAL archive to secure, environmentally sound facilities at UNT.
- Begin implementation of recommendations for the preservation of the TBAAL archive.

- Follow accepted archival standards for the preservation of papers, photographs and audio/visual materials.

#### **Access to the TBAAL Archive (2-5 years)**

- Create a detailed on-line finding aid for the collection.
- Facilitate free scholarly and research use of the collection.
- UNT will refer requests for publication, recording and broadcast use to TBAAL.

#### **Digitization of TBAAL Archive (ongoing)**

- UNT Libraries will work with TBAAL to raise funds to digitize the TBAAL archive and make the collection available on-line through the UNT Digital Library.

#### **Outreach and Education Initiatives (ongoing)**

- TBAAL and UNT Libraries will pursue mutually beneficial opportunities for raising awareness of the TBAAL archive, making further contributions to the archive and utilizing the archive for educational purposes such as:
  - Creation of online and physical exhibits
  - Utilizing additional archival photos, celebrity memorabilia, documents and other materials, UNT will mount with TBAAL major exhibits on-line through the UNT Library Exhibits portal. The exhibits will serve as a major city, state and national community engagement model for diverse collaborations and cross-cultural partnerships.
  - Pursuit of teaching and learning opportunities in conjunction with UNT performing, literary, visual and cinematic arts programs, North Texas public and private middle and high schools (Dallas Independent School District, Fort Worth ISD, etc.)
  - Recording oral histories with significant artists, scholars and Living Fellows (Mari Evans, Harry Belafonte, Sidney Poitier, Maya Angelou, Sonia Sanchez, Diahann Carroll, etc.) of the defunct New York based Black Academy of Arts and Letters and/or TBAAL associates
  - Creation of books, pamphlets, brochures and major and/or mini-documentaries focused on the cultural history and artistic contribution of TBAAL
  - Symposium, lectures, performances and speaking opportunities in North Texas (Denton, Dallas, Fort Worth, etc.), State of Texas and the US

#### **Fundraising (ongoing)**

- UNT and TBAAL understand that projects undertaken will be largely determined by available funding. Both parties agree to:

- Seek foundation, corporate and individual support for projects to benefit the TBAAL archive
- Seek local, regional and federal support for the TBAAL archive
- Establish an endowment to be named for TBAAL Founder and President Curtis King, the proceeds from which to be directed to the ongoing preservation, perpetuation, digitization and support of the archive.
- Produce promotional literature to encourage donations and use of the Curtis King Endowment
- Produce a list of high profile event(s)/projects related to preservation, access, digitization and outreach that funders may choose to support
- Establish a "Friends of UNT and TBAAL Archive Collection"

### **Links**

UNT Special Collections: <http://www.library.unt.edu/special-collections>

Archival Finding Aids: <http://findingaids.library.unt.edu/>

UNT Library Exhibits Portal: <https://exhibits.library.unt.edu>

UNT Portal to Texas History: <http://texashistory.unt.edu/>

University of North Texas Libraries (<http://www.libraries.unt.edu>)

1155 Union Circle #305190

Denton, Texas 76203-5017

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Martin Halbert". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "M" and a long, sweeping underline.

Martin Halbert

UNT Dean of Libraries