

2025 OHRAB Regranting Opportunity Narrative- Due August 31

Special Collections, Dayton Metro Library

The purposes of applying for this grant opportunity were:

- *To arrange and describe the records of the Progressive Wolf Creek Neighborhood Association;*
- *To apply manual and digital preservation methods to stabilize the collection; and*
- *To provide access to the records in the Dayton Room and create a collection finding aid that will be available on our Dayton Remembers website.*

Due to the condition of the collection, funding was needed to hire a contractor to complete the processing of this collection.

The historical significance of the Progressive Wolf Creek Neighborhood Association (PWCNA) materials is great. Active circa 1966 – 2000, this West Dayton collective, primarily of African-Americans, organized themselves to improve, in myriad ways, their community.

The Progressive Wolf Creek Neighborhood Association fits into the story of Ohio's history and cultural heritage because this collective resided in West Dayton, which was and, essentially, still is racially segregated. Despite various discriminatory obstacles of district, economic and political aims rooted in racism, the Association worked diligently to protect and improve their neighborhood.

Its efforts included developing a housing plan that rivaled the suburbs. It sought to allow residents to remain in their own area while concurrently attracting new homeowners; add diversity of home structures; and draw new businesses to provide goods, products and services locally. PWCNA also created Little Eden Park, which later featured Little Eden Community Garden. Of significant note, the Association halted the entry of US-35 that would have devastated the West Dayton neighborhood.

In 2024, Special Collections of Dayton Metro Library (DML) acquired various types of content detailing the history of the Progressive Wolf Creek Neighborhood Association. Karen D. Brame, Information Services Librarian, Africana Archives Emphasis, and Rachael Bussert, Local History Librarian, both of Special Collections, met with then-owner of the former Holy Name School site, Isaac de la Matre, to do onsite appraisal of material.

They recovered approximately 15.5 cubic feet of material. This content is primarily housed within 9 record boxes, and other containers. It is comprised of materials such as architectural renderings, broadsides, drawings, a handmade felt flag, financial statements, letters of correspondence, maps, photographs, a plywood sign, and scrapbooks.

We anticipate that user groups who will utilize these materials are interested in African-American culture; civil rights; community organization; local history; neighborhood collaboration and political activism.

Actions, activities and/or steps have been sequentially made during this project and our progress and updates thus far are:

- *Hire independent contractor to process the collection*

Because of changes in staff of Special Collections, Library administration, notably Caitlin Wissler, Public Services Director, decided to create a new position, Archival Assistant, whose duties would include those of the consultant anticipated to work on this project. They will be involved with an aim of the grant, "Access, Arrangement and Description: identifying, organizing and improving access to historical records."

This collaboration was further developed between Lauren Tappel, Director of Institutional Giving of DML, and OHRAB. The posting for this position first appeared in July 2025 (please see attached for an example). Our hope is that this person will be working with us on this collection before the end of September.

- *Order supplies*

Supplies, such as Nitrile gloves, N95 masks, Hollinger metal edge storage boxes and mat folders for broadsides, are ordered.

- *Propose arrangement*

The proposed arrangement is pending review with the Archival Assistant. Brame has initiated a preliminary inventory of the collection.

- *Separate material to be catalogued for "Rare"*

Items have yet to be determined as rare. However, several items have been identified by Brame and Bussert as historically significant. These include:

- an almost-complete set of colored cardboard posters featuring the alphabet and aspects of the African-American community that was printed in 1972 by the Society for Visual Education, Inc. of Chicago;
- a colored paper poster saluting Juneteenth by Budweiser, no date given, and published by the ale corporation of Milwaukee; and
- another colored paper poster celebrating Juneteenth that features an image of African-American abolitionist and suffragist Sojourner Truth seated with President Abraham Lincoln standing beside her. This item was co-sponsored by "Friends of Milwaukee Branch NAACP" Juneteenth Day Committee and Pabst Brewing Company, June 19, 1982." (See attached images for support of these aforementioned items)

Two particular PWCNA items of great importance that are also viewed as historically significant are an architecturally-rendered housing soft board panel and the other is multi-layer, hand-painted plywood sign. These were selected because they reflect the cooperative work, determination and strength of the Progressive Wolf Creek Neighborhood Association.

The panel displays their commitment in both preserving the integrity of their neighborhood while simultaneously desiring to advance it. On the sign is one of the Association's resilient mottos, "WE WON'T MOVE!"

These will require significant preservation cleaning by Special Collections staff. It should be noted that additional cleaning, adhesive removal, and repainting of the sign are several tasks that will need to be addressed by a conservator.

- *Press release by Dayton Metro Library External Relations staff to local media outlets*
Dayton Metro Library has been active in disseminating news about being awarded the grant.

Please see the following links and attached images for support:

<https://www.facebook.com/DaytonMetroLibrary/posts/congratulations-to-our-special-collections-department-for-winning-the-ohrab-re-g/1094864052670352/>

<https://www.instagram.com/p/DJkIKQrPbDy/>

https://www.linkedin.com/posts/jeffreytrzeciak_congrats-to-a-great-and-well-deserving-team-activity-7327843247102324736-2wd6

<https://x.com/Daytonlibrary/status/1922004147802439884>

<https://myemail.constantcontact.com/The-Super-Mega-May-Edition.html?soid=1111662308375&aid=8996YlhTOhQ>

We at Dayton Metro Library are honored to share, via the 2025 OHRAB Regranting Opportunity Grant, about the passionate outreach and dedicated commitment of the Progressive Wolf Creek Neighborhood Association in Dayton, Ohio.

Karen D. Brame, M.A., M.A., GC. D&I, GC.DS
Rachael Bussert, MA, MLIS
Lauren Tappel, Director of Institutional Giving
Caitlin Wissler, Public Services Director