

# MILESTONES

THE SONJA HAYNES STONE CENTER FOR RESEARCH IN BLACK CULTURE AND HISTORY

## MAKING THE GROUND TALK AND OTHER STORIES EXHIBITION BY BRIAN PALMER, PEABODY AWARD-WINNING JOURNALIST AND PHOTOGRAPHER

February 5 – May 20 | Robert and Sallie Brown Gallery and Museum

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### FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESK



Dear Stone Center Family,

As we welcome a new year, I remain grounded in the spirit of reflection and gratitude. Together, we've honored the past, met the present with bold creativity, and set our sights on a future where knowledge, culture, and justice are inextricably linked.

Our journey at the Stone Center is powered by your faith in our mission. Your presence—whether through your time, resources, or engagement—makes it possible for us to convene critical conversations, cultivate student brilliance, and fuel research

that bridges the academy and community.

As you consider your commitments in 2026, I hope you'll continue to invest in our work by making the Stone Center your giving priority. And don't forget—**GiveUNC is right around the corner!** With your help, we can show the university and the world just how strong our network is.

Together, we continue to build the world we want to live in.

With gratitude,

*Dr. Glymph*



**THE 2026 MCNEIL AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY MONTH LECTURE BY DR. THAVOLIA GLYMPH**

February 17 | 6:30PM  
Hitchcock Room



**Lecture Title:** Making “Actual Freedom”: The Civil War and Enslaved People’s Legal Consciousness

**Abstract:** This talk explores how enslaved people during the Civil War turned to the legal literary they had built-up during slavery to defend their right to refuge and freedom in Union military lines and forced the federal government to offer itself a “humanitarian shield” and “a sword of justice,” calling on the law as an instrument of that justice.

## THE 2026 MCNEIL AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY MONTH LECTURE BY DR. THAVOLIA GLYMPH, PEABODY FAMILY DISTINGUISHED PROFESSOR OF HISTORY AT DUKE UNIVERSITY

**February 17 | 6:30PM | Hitchcock Room**

Thavolia Glymph is Peabody Family Distinguished Professor of History at Duke University, Professor of Law and Gender, Sexuality and Feminist Studies, and Faculty Research Scholar at the Duke Population Research Institute. She is a historian of the 19th Century South and prize-winning author of *Out of the House of Bondage: The Transformation of the Plantation Household* (2008) which won the Philip Taft Labor History Award, was a finalist for the Frederick Douglass Book Prize, and listed in *The Atlantic Magazine* as one of “Five Books to Make you Feel Less Stupid About the Civil War.” Additionally, *The Women’s Fight: The Civil War’s Battles for Home, Freedom, and Nation* published in 2020, won eight book prizes with awards from the American Historical Association, the Organization of American Historians, the Southern Association for Women Historians, the Society of Civil War Historians, and the John L. Nau III Center for Civil War History, and was a finalist for the Lincoln Prize.

She is co-editor of two volumes of the award-winning documentary series, *Freedom: A Documentary History of Emancipation, 1861-1867* and the author of numerous articles and essays. She is currently completing three book projects.

Glymph is an elected member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and the Society of American Historians; past president of the American Historical Association and the Southern Historical Association; an Organization of American Historians Distinguished Lecturer, and a Duke Thomas Langford Lecturer.

She held the Rogers Distinguished Fellowship in Nineteenth Century History at the Huntington Library in 2023-24 and the John Hope Franklin Visiting Professor of American Legal History at Duke Law School in 2015 and 2018. Honors include the Distinguished Service to Labor and Working-Class History Award from LAWCHA and the Raymond Gavins Distinguished Faculty Award. She has served as a historical consultant for the National Museum of African American History & Culture, the International African American Museum, the National Constitution Center, the National Park Service, PBS documentaries such as *Mercy Street* and the film, *Harriet*, and has lectured nationally and internationally.



## SPRING 2026 EXHIBITION: MAKING THE GROUND TALK AND OTHER STORIES BY BRIAN PALMER, PEABODY AWARD-WINNING JOURNALIST AND PHOTOGRAPHER

Artist Talk | February 5 | 5PM | Brown Gallery

Exhibition On View | February 5 – May 20 | Brown Gallery

Brian Palmer is a visual journalist, writer, teacher, and artist based in Richmond, Virginia. His work has appeared in *Smithsonian* magazine, *Richmond Free Press*, *New York Times*, and other publications; and on PBS, BBC, and *Reveal*. Palmer began his journalism career as a fact-checker at the *Village Voice* newspaper. Before going freelance in 2002, he served in several staff positions: *US News & World Report* Beijing bureau chief; staff writer at *Fortune*; and on-air correspondent at CNN. Palmer has taught journalism and documentary at the Graduate School of Journalism at Columbia University, Baruch College, Hampton University, New York's School of Visual Arts (SVA), and most recently the University of Richmond.

Palmer has exhibited photographs at the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Virginia Museum of Contemporary Art, 1708 Gallery, Joel and Lila Harnett Museum of Art at the University of Richmond, and other venues. *Home/Grown*, a show in 2024 at the VMFA

with fellow photographer Susan Worsham, featured more than a decade's worth of his photographs from Virginia.

He has received a number of awards and honors: a Peabody Award with fellow journalist Seth Wessler for a *Reveal* radio investigation into public funding of Confederate sites (2018), a George Gund Foundation photography commission (2020), and a Ford Foundation grant for *Full Disclosure*, his documentary about US Marines in Iraq (2008).

Since December 2014, Palmer and his wife, Erin Hollaway Palmer, have been part of the volunteer effort to reclaim East End Cemetery, a historic African American burial ground in Henrico County, Virginia, from nature, neglect, and vandalism. As they reclaim the cemeteries with their hands—along with other volunteers—Palmer and Hollaway Palmer use their reporting and research skills, and their creativity to reveal the stories of people laid to rest at these sites during Jim Crow.

## THE 2026 WRITERS DISCUSSION SERIES

by Jaha Nailah Avery (UNC Law '13), Lawyer, Author and Reporter

March 26 | 3:30PM | Stone Center

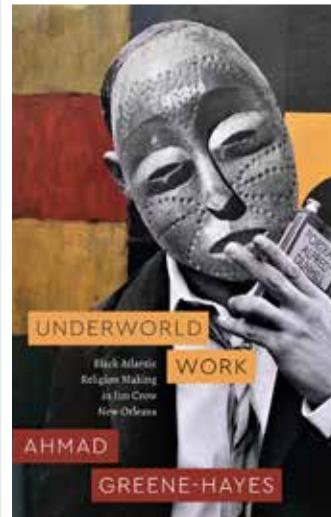


Jaha Nailah Avery is an African American woman and proud Southerner, whose family has roots in North Carolina stretching back over 300 years. Hailing from Asheville, North Carolina, she received her law degree from The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, where she studied constitutional and civil rights law. She spent several years in the startup tech space before embarking on her professional writing career, and her work can be found in *The New York Times*, *Rolling Stone*, *Vanity Fair*, and *Architectural Digest*.

Raised primarily by her grandparents, Jaha has always had a strong sense of identity and heritage and has a deep appreciation for history and oral tradition. An avid traveler, she has traveled across Africa, Europe, and Asia. She is a beginner harpist and is currently trying her hand at composing. She is a member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. and a Diamond Life member of the NAACP. Her aim is to always document, celebrate, and preserve the stories of Black people, communities, and history.

## THE 2026 AFRICAN DIASPORA LECTURE WITH DR. AHMAD GREENE-HAYES, ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF AFRICAN AMERICAN RELIGIOUS STUDIES AT HARVARD DIVINITY SCHOOL

January 29 | 6:30PM | Stone Center Library



The African Diaspora Lecture will be delivered by Dr. Ahmad Greene-Hayes, Associate Professor of African American Religious Studies at Harvard Divinity School and the Managing Editor of the *Journal of Africana Religions*. Dr. Greene-Hayes is an accomplished scholar, teacher, and mentor, and his research and teaching interests include 19th and 20th century African American religious history; race, sexuality, and religion in the Americas; interdisciplinary archive studies; and theories and methods in the study of religion and Black Studies.

Dr. Greene-Hayes' lecture will focus on his book *Underworld Work: Black Atlantic Religion-Making in Jim Crow New Orleans* (University of Chicago Press, 2025), which offers a rethinking of African American religious history that focuses on the development and evolution of Africana spiritual traditions in Jim Crow New Orleans. He has also published essays in the *Journal of*

*the American Academy of Religion*, the *Journal of Africana Religions*, *Nova Religio*, *GLQ*, and the *Journal of African American History*, among others. His second book project entitled, *Little Richard's Witness: Liner Notes on Black Religion and Sexuality*, is set to be published by Penguin Random House in the Significations Black biography series edited by Dr. Henry Louis Gates, Jr. in 2027, and he is also working on his third book project engaging spiritual encounter in the archive.

Dr. Greene-Hayes has held prestigious fellowships from Yale's Institute of Sacred Music in 2024-25, Yale's LGBT Studies program, the American Society of Church History, and Princeton University's *The Crossroads Project: Black Religious Histories, Communities, and Cultures*, to name a few. In 2022, he was inducted into the Martin Luther King Jr. Collegium of Scholars at Morehouse College, and in 2023, he was inducted into the Society for the Study of Black Religion. Greene-Hayes is currently a member for the Historical Studies Jury for the American Academy of Religion's Awards for Excellence in the Study of Religion, and he is also a steering committee member for the Religion and Sexuality Unit of the AAR. From 2019-2024, he served as an advisory board member for the LGBTQ Religious Archives Network and as a steering committee member of the Afro-American Religious History Unit at the AAR, of which he is the incoming co-chair for 2026-2029.

He earned his Ph.D. in Religion with certificates in African American Studies and Gender and Sexuality Studies from Princeton University, and his B.A. in History and Africana Studies, with highest honors, from Williams College.

## BOOK TALK BY VIRGINIA MCGEE RICHARDS ON THE INNER PASSAGE: AN UNTOLD STORY OF BLACK RESISTANCE ALONG A SOUTHERN WATERWAY

*Co-sponsorship with the Center for the Study of the American South*

April 16 | 3:30PM | Hitchcock Room

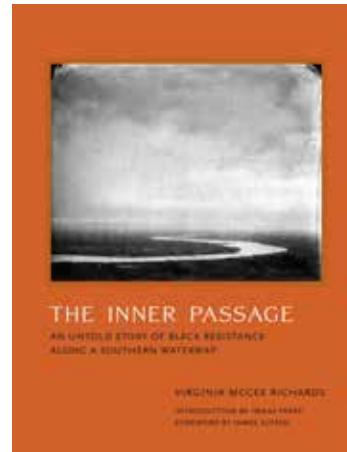
Ginna McGee Richards is a photographer, researcher and former environmental lawyer whose work is rooted in nature and a sense of place. Born and raised in North Carolina, she examines the contradictions embedded in southern land and culture. This intimate connection to land and history forms the foundation of her artistic practice.

Her critically acclaimed photographic series, *The Inner Passage* traces a largely undocumented network of 17th and 18th century canals built by Black enslaved laborers. Through years of fieldwork and archival research, she uncovered the environmental and human histories encoded in these waterways. Working with the wet-plate collodion process and a mobile darkroom in remote marshlands, Richards creates images that echo the fluid, unstable terrain they depict. "I want people to read the work as a visual poem," she says, "to feel the land telling its own story."



Richards' photographs and research were featured in *Smithsonian Magazine* (March 2022) in the article *What the Haunting 'Inner Passage' Represented to the Enslaved*, which received the American Society of Magazine Editors' award for excellence in print and digital journalism. Her photographic work also received the Gold Medal Prize at the Lowell Thomas Competition (March 2022) and has been exhibited at the North Carolina Museum of Art, The Light Factory in Charlotte, and the National Underground Railroad Freedom Center in Cincinnati, Ohio.

Her work was previously highlighted in the *UNC Carolina Alumni Review* feature *Uncharted Waters, Uncharted Ground* (August 2020). Richards is currently a Photojournalism Fellow at Anderson Ranch in Aspen, Colorado (2021–present), where she works under the mentorship of James Estrin of *The New York Times* and Ed Kashi. Richards lives and works



in the American South.

**Book Description:** A deeply moving photographic and narrative history of a southern waterway that the enslaved were forced to build—but which they ultimately used as a means of escape. In this book, Virginia McGee Richards documents the lost narrative of the Inner Passage through 60 extraordinary photographs of landscapes altered by slavery and portraits of Lowcountry descendants, along with an essay describing her discovery of this untold history. In an accompanying essay, Imani Perry writes about her own journey on the Inner Passage, putting Black resistance to enslavement and Southern history into an immediate context. James Estrin brings decades of insight into photography and the power of visual storytelling to his affecting foreword. Together, these words and images offer a powerful living map of history.

## IN THEIR OWN WORDS



### MOORE UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM (MURAP)

"In Summer 2005, I completed the Moore Undergraduate Research Apprenticeship Program (MURAP). It changed my life! I entered UNC for graduate school in 2006 and graduated in 2009. I love MURAP, so I returned to serve on the summer staff in 2015, 2017, 2018, and 2019. The Stone Center housed MURAP every year. The Stone Center feels like home."

- Kimberly Annette Hardy, Ed.D

### COMMIVERSITY YOUTH PROGRAM (CYP)

"I've been coming to CYP since I was in 1st grade. My favorite part of CommUniversity is going on fun field trips and the sweet snacks. I miss it when we have to take breaks."

- CYP Scholar



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## WHAT'S HAPPENING AT THE STONE CENTER?

1. View our new Events Page: <https://stonecenter.unc.edu/upcoming-events>
2. Subscribe to our *Stepping Stones* e-newsletter on our homepage: [www.stonecenter.unc.edu](http://www.stonecenter.unc.edu)
3. Follow our social media platforms
4. Email us at [stonecenter@unc.edu](mailto:stonecenter@unc.edu)
5. Phone us at 919-962-9001



### Answer Key to Stone Center Crossword Challenge

Thank you to everyone who submitted entries for the Stone Center Crossword Challenge in the Fall 2025 issue of *Milestones* Magazine. We appreciate your participation and enthusiasm. Scan for the answers.



Scan to take a one-minute welcome tour of the Stone Center.



Scan to look at our year's key highlights in our Fiscal Year 2025 Impact Report.



## STAY IN TOUCH

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 @sonja-haynes-stone-center-unc-chapel-hill

**SUSTAINABILITY.  
PERPETUITY.  
SUPPORT.**



The Stone Center