

# HAMPTON UNIVERSITY MUSEUM

*Talks and Thoughts  
for  
Friends of the Museum*

Fall 2025



## FROM THE DIRECTOR



I am pleased to introduce new staff for the Hampton University Museum as we move into almost one year of reopening the museum after our REFRESH!

The University Museum was closed from January 2024 until January 2025 for renovations and restoration. During this time, the entire second floor was reimagined by our former curator of collections, Mr. Kenlontae Turner. At the same time Mr. Turner also created the John Biggers: Dance of Creation exhibition that will be on display until early April 2026.

With our REFRESH the Museum welcomed some new employees. First to arrive during our closure was Parker Watson. Mr. Watson serves as one of two Collection Inventory Assistants. A graduate of Christopher Newport University where he majored in history with a minor in Museum Studies, and he also recently completed his Master's degree in public history from Liberty University. We also welcomed Mr. Victor Perrotti as our Digital Outreach Coordinator. An educator, Mr. Perrotti, has a degree in Graphic Design with a specialization in Multimedia and a Master's in education. He previously worked for the University in our Academic Technology Mall.

Our newest employees are Mr. Boyd Smith and Ms. Brittany N. Waller just began working October 2025. Mr. Smith comes to the Hampton University Museum all the way from Colorado to serve as the Associate Curator and Director of Membership & Community Programs, serving primarily as the Museum's educator. The former Founding Curator of Exhibits and Collections at the United States Olympic & Paralympic Museum, Smith has a Bachelor of Fine Arts from University of North Carolina Pembroke and a Master of Fine Art from Purdue University. We are looking forward to continuing our footprint in education as well as expanding our outreach. Ms. Brittany Waller has come to the Museum to work on inventory of our collection with Mr. Watson. A seasoned Museum professional, Waller has worked at the Virginia Museum of Contemporary Art (VA MOCA) in several capacities. She also worked at the Suffolk Center for Cultural Arts and has degrees from Savannah College of Art and Design in Fashion and a Master of Arts in Exhibition Design from George Washington University.



Parker Watson

Collections Inventory Assistant



Victor Perrotti

Digital Outreach Coordinator



Boyd Smith

Associate Curator and Director  
of Membership &  
Community Programs



Brittany Waller

Collections Inventory Assistant

Sincerely,

Dr. Thaxton-Ward  
Director, Hampton University Museum



# THE INTERNATIONAL REVIEW OF AFRICAN AMERICAN ART



NEEDS YOUR INPUT

Through the generous funding of The Terra Foundation for American Art we are currently conducting an assessment of the IRAAA with the aim of future revival.

Please scan the QR code or choose the link to complete the survey. Thank you for your feedback and continued support.



[IRAAA Survey](#)

## COLLECTIONS INVENTORY

I have been working on the project to inventory the Hampton University Museum collection. It was time for an update. Most of the fine Art collection has been completed although we need to input some detailed information.

I was hired in October 2024 and began to go through all the works on paper that were in solander boxes. What an intriguing task to see such a variety of art. After completing that task I began to work on the African collection. Case by case, I am measuring, checking accession numbers, completing a condition report, and taking a rapid shot of each piece. From there the information is entered into our database, PastPerfect. This is a lot of detailed work because I am also scanning the original, paper, accession card, and all related information on the object.

Our collection spans many different eras of history and has many stories to tell from the various ethnic groups.

I look forward to continuing the work.

Parker Watson  
Collections Inventory Assistant



On display until April 2026

## DIGITAL OUTREACH

We are proud to unveil our newly redesigned [website](#). If you haven't visited lately, take a look at our fresh new design. Here you will find a wealth of information to prepare for your visit to the museum. Learn about Hampton University's history, the museum's collection and our publication: [International Review of African American Art \(IRAAA\)](#). Please take the IRAAA survey by scanning the QR code below. Make sure to check out our latest blog post: [William Henry Johnson: Evolution of an Artist](#).

William Henry Johnson's work is also profiled on our YouTube channel. On our channel are two recently converted VHS videos that are included in our John Biggers Dance of Creation exhibition. They are [John Biggers' Journeys — A Romance \(1995\)](#) and [John Biggers' Lecture \(11-04-96\)](#). If you learn something new, leave us a like.

This past July, I (along with Dr. Thaxton-Ward) was able to represent Hampton University Museum at the [Association of African American Museums](#) in Charleston, SC. I attended multiple sessions given by museums from across the country. The sessions helped reinforce the idea that museums play a key role in accurately telling the stories of marginalized people. The preservation and documentation of artifacts at museums act as a bulwark against revisionist history. Hampton University Museum strives to elevate understanding and appreciation of art, history and culture.

Follow us on [Instagram](#).

Victor Perrotti  
Digital Outreach Coordinator

## ADMINISTRATIVE

The Hampton University Museum's Laurel Tucker Duplessis Gift Shop is your go-to stop for unique museum-branded merchandise and one-of-a-kind souvenirs!



Our new, I "heart" Hampton University Museum, long-sleeve t-shirts are in stock.

Awaken your inner chef with our Hampton University Museum aprons, or toast to the upcoming fall semester with a selection of wines from Seven Springs Farm & Vineyard, Legendary Vineyards (LVE), and Gemma di Luna. Don't forget to purchase from our assortment of wine glasses and wine bags for an added touch of elegance!

Gift Shop hours are from Monday to Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Orders can also be made through the Museum's On-Line Store or in person. Please call our main number at (757) 727-5308 or email Deanna Brooks, Administrative Assistant, at [deanna.brooks@hamptonu.edu](mailto:deanna.brooks@hamptonu.edu) if you have any additional questions.

Deana Brooks  
Administrative Assistant



**31st Annual Holiday and KWANZAA MARKETPLACE**



## DONORS



Michael Todd, Esq.

T. Michael Todd, Esq., is a distinguished attorney, art collector, and civic leader whose donation of works from his personal collection to Hampton University reflects a lifelong dedication to education, cultural heritage, and community advancement.

A native of Charlotte, North Carolina, Mr. Todd's appreciation for art began during his formative years at Myers Park High School in Charlotte, which hosted one of the state's leading art programs under the guidance of Dean Barber. Although initially considering art school, he was drawn to the law as a means of contributing to social change during the Civil Rights era. He earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Science from Duke University and a Juris Doctor degree from Vanderbilt University Law School, where he was an Earl Warren Fellow.

Mr. Todd has served the legal profession and the community for more than four decades. He founded and currently leads the Law Offices of T. Michael Todd, PLLC, in Charlotte, North Carolina, following earlier service as a District Court Judge for the 26th Judicial District of North Carolina. His professional and civic leadership includes serving as President of the John S. Leary Association of Black Lawyers and as Vice Chairman of the Fayetteville State University Board of Trustees. He has also served on the boards of the Charlotte Mint Museum of Art, Opera Carolina, and the Arts & Science Council, among many others.

An avid collector of African and African American art for more than 45 years, Mr. Todd's collection includes works by renowned artists such as Jacob Lawrence, Romare Bearden, Verna Hart, Charles Alston, and John Biggers. His collection has been exhibited at the Tampa Museum of Art, the Newark Museum of Art, the South Carolina Museum of Art, the Charlotte Mint Museum of Art, and the Harvey B. Gantt Center for African-American Arts and Culture. His gift to Hampton University continues his commitment to sharing and preserving Black artistic expression for future generations.

Mr. Todd's connection to Hampton University is deeply personal: two of his nephews, Guila Todd and Melvin Todd are proud Hampton alumni. Guila Todd, a 1999 graduate with a degree in Political Science, serves as Director of Government Affairs and Public Policy for the American Counseling Association in Washington, D.C. Melvin Todd, also a Political Science graduate, is a practicing attorney in Virginia specializing in personal injury litigation.

Through his generosity and vision, T. Michael Todd affirms the power of art to educate, inspire, and connect communities—values that resonate profoundly with Hampton University's enduring legacy.



Romare Bearden, Study for La Primavera, n/d  
collage and watercolor on board





Booker T. Washington gestures toward the Emancipation Oak with the William R. and Norma B. Harvey Library in the background on the Hampton University campus.

## HISTORIC VIGNETTES

Booker T. Washington was the primary leader of the African American community during his adult years. Washington was born into slavery in Franklin County, Virginia in 1856. At the age of sixteen, he made his way to Hampton Institute, where he worked as a janitor to pay his tuition. He graduated in 1875. In 1881, Washington was selected as the first leader of Tuskegee Normal and Industrial Institute. He was the principal, until his death in 1915. During his time at Tuskegee, Washington kept close contact with Hampton Institute and often credited his experiences there as being some of the most important influences upon his life.

Hampton University President (Emeritus 1978 – 2022) Dr. William R. Harvey spearheaded an effort to memorialize Booker T. Washington on the Hampton University campus. In 1983, Ed Hamilton was commissioned by Hampton University to create a lasting memorial to Hampton University's most distinguished alumnus, Booker T. Washington.

Ed Hamilton was born in Cincinnati, Ohio in 1947. He studied at Louisville's Art Center and Spalding University. Hamilton was originally a painter but after meeting sculptor, Barney Bright, Hamilton became Bright's apprentice.

After creating the Booker T. Washington statue, Hamilton went on to create the following statues: Joe Louis, La Amistad Memorial, The Spirit of Freedom, Abraham Lincoln. Hamilton's career has spanned over 45 years. According to his website, "Hamilton's commissioned monuments, plaques and personal works tell the story of America and shows the rich diversity represented in our culture."

In the preliminary stages of the project, Mr. Hamilton worked closely with Hampton University Museum's Archivist, Fritz Malval. Mr. Hamilton was able to research historical photographs of Booker T. Washington kept in the archives collection. Booker T. Washington's physical stance in a photo taken during his speech at Cotton States and International Exposition in Atlanta, September 18, 1893; inspired Mr. Hamilton to reproduce this posture in the creation of his statue.

Mr. Hamilton worked for over a year, creating a 9-foot-high clay model at his Louisville, Kentucky studio. He was forced to remove part of his studio ceiling to accommodate the size of his creation. Upon completion, the statue was cut into segments and sent to a Detroit, Michigan foundry for casting. The work was

then assembled and finished by Mr. Hamilton. In 1984, the 2,000-pound bronze statue was shipped to Hampton University and placed in its permanent location on the Hampton University campus, facing the direction of the Emancipation Oak.



Ed Hamilton works diligently on his clay representation of Booker T. Washington that would serve as the model for the bronze cast. The finished bronze statue weighs 2,000 pounds and stands 9 feet tall. The statue is located at the east end of Hampton University's campus, within the Memorial Garden. Photograph: Keith Williams 1983.





HAMPTON UNIVERSITY  
EST. 1868  
**MUSEUM**

