

## Florida Humanities and Duke Energy Award Grants to Lake Wales History Museum to Create New African American Archive



**LAKE WALES, Florida** – The Lake Wales History Museum has been awarded a Community Project Grant of \$5000 from Florida Humanities and \$10,000 from Duke Energy to create a new Lake Wales African American Archive and Exhibit. The project will include conducting new research, collecting oral histories, and securing new donations to establish the archive. Emmanuel George, a Florida historian, has been hired to conduct intensive research for six-weeks from March 2 – April 15, 2021. His research will be the basis of a new, original African American exhibit at the museum in the fall of 2021. Additionally, the museum will enhance the

museum's permanent exhibit with more African American history from this research.



The African American experience has been underrepresented in the telling of Lake Wales history, and this project seeks to preserve and share the full history of the African American experience in Lake Wales within the larger context of its history. The museum seeks to increase the inclusivity of the history of Lake Wales and reflect that in the stories they tell, which should include the African American community, its residents, pioneers, and experience in every aspect of the permanent and temporary exhibits.

“Almost one-third of Lake Wales residents are African American, and we must interpret and share more history of African Americans in Lake Wales. We have taken a pledge to be a museum that is equitable and inclusionary of all people, and we must reach out to those communities who have been underrepresented in the past. It's a work in progress, but we're doing it, and will keep doing it,” states Jennifer D'hollander, museum director.

Emmanuel George is a Florida native, born in Miami to parents from Dominica. His passion for local black history began when he read Kitty Oliver's book titled, “Race and Change in Hollywood Florida.”

“I became passionate about wanting to learn as much as I could about black history, and I'd speak to the elders in the community as much as possible,” states George.

Since then, Emmanuel started the Black Broward Film Project, and produced Sistrunk-A-Fair, which featured black artists and pioneers from Broward County. His goal is to bring the history of other black communities in Florida forward. His work in Delray Beach, Florida includes researching, preserving and sharing the history of historically black communities like Hallendale, Liberia and NW Dania Beach, all in south Florida. Today, he is working to help the Lake Wales History Museum do the same, and he will be gathering information and speaking with folks in the community.

The Lake Wales new African American Archive project aims to be a repository of photographs, films, documents and objects of the history and people of Lake Wales' Northwest community and beyond. The museum is researching former businesses of Lincoln Avenue and how people earned a living, what leisure and entertainment activities did people enjoy, and personal segregation and integration experiences in Lake Wales. The information gathered will fill an important gap in the community's historical record and will support future research and education about the community. A culminating exhibit is planned to showcase the community's African American history in the fall of 2021, entitled, "Voices of Lake Wales."

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### **About Florida Humanities**

The Florida Humanities sponsors community based projects, facilitates important conversations among Floridians, and shines a spotlight on Florida's history, art, and culture. Established in 1973, we are an independent, nonprofit affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities. For over forty years we have developed and funded public programs that tell the stories of both Florida and those unique individuals that call this state their home. For more information, visit [www.floridahumanities.org](http://www.floridahumanities.org).

### **About the Lake Wales History Museum**

The Lake Wales History Museum is open Wednesday - Saturday from 10 a.m. – 5 p.m. Admission is free. Parking is free and the first floor is accessible for persons with disabilities, wheelchairs and strollers. For more information contact the Lake Wales History Museum, 325 S Scenic Highway, Lake Wales, Florida 33853; 863-676-1759 or visit [www.lakewalesfl.gov/museum](http://www.lakewalesfl.gov/museum).