



Smithsonian
Anacostia Community Museum

Curators Biographies

Reclaiming the Edge: Urban Waterways and Civic Engagement

Gail S. Lowe, PhD, is the senior historian of the Smithsonian's Anacostia Community Museum conducting research for museum projects, exhibitions, and publications, and consulting with the collections department on the museum's archives. Lowe also curates exhibitions and serves as the museum's publications editor. At present, she is co-curator of the exhibition currently on view *Reclaiming the Edge: Urban Waterways and Civic Engagement* and the historian and project manager for the Urban Waterways initiative.

She is the museum's specialist on African American religious and spiritual traditions. She served as curator of the groundbreaking exhibitions, *Speak To My Heart: Communities of Faith and Contemporary African American Life* and of *Banding Together: Schools Bands as Instruments of Opportunity*. Lowe was co-curator of *Separate and Unequaled: Black Baseball in the District of Columbia*, currently on view indefinitely at the museum and *Jubilee: African American Celebration*.

Lowe conducted research for the museum's 40th anniversary exhibition, *East of the River: Continuity and Change*, and edited the accompanying volume of essays by the same name, *East of the River* (2010). Along with Louise Daniel Hutchinson, Lowe compiled the Anacostia Museum publication *Kind Regards of S. G. Brown* (1983). She co-authored *A Different Drummer: John Kinard and the Anacostia Museum, 1967–1989* (published December 1993) with Zora Martin-Felton.

A native Washingtonian, Lowe holds a bachelor's degree from Harvard University/Radcliffe College, a master's from Yale University, a master's in library science from The Catholic University of America, and a PhD in American Civilization from The George Washington University. Lowe has presented papers at a variety of scholarly and professional conferences and was a member of the D. C. Historic Preservation Review Board for thirteen years.

John R. Wennersten is an historian-journalist currently living on Capitol Hill in Washington. He is Professor Emeritus of American History at the University of Maryland, Eastern Shore.

A nationally recognized writer and consultant on Chesapeake Bay affairs, his scholarly and freelance work regularly appears in national and regional periodicals, such as the US News & World Report, Washington Post, Baltimore Sun, The Progressive, Nation, and Mother Earth News. He is a regular reviewer for the Maryland Historical Magazine. The Maryland Humanities Commission recently selected him as a Maryland Millennial Scholar. Wennersten received the Maryland Writer's Award from the Maryland Arts Council for his book *The Oyster Wars of Chesapeake Bay*. His book, *Maryland's Eastern Shore, A Journey in Time and Place*, is widely used by readers and scholars with an interest in the Chesapeake Bay region.

His most recent book *Global Thirst: Water and Society in the 21st Century*, focuses on water problems worldwide—pollution, drought, dying rivers and the privatization of water utilities—and sustainable water options. He also authored *Anacostia: The Death and Birth of An American River* which is an environmental history of the Anacostia River in Washington, D.C. This once-ruined river has been at the center of three centuries of conflict, controversy and argument about architecture, planning, environmental safety, and race relations in our nation's capital. Wennersten's academic achievements include tenured professorships at the University of Maryland, Eastern Shore, and Tokiwa University, Mito, Japan. He also held a visiting scholar appointment at Cambridge University and two Fulbright professorships at the National University of Singapore and University of Hong Kong.