



# BOOK REVIEWS

## ***Retirement Places Rated: What You Need to Know to Plan the Retirement You Deserve* by David Savageau**

Where should library people retire? Have you ever considered Iowa City? The LCPA invited David Savageau to be the keynote speaker at our annual membership meeting last year. The author of several books on the hot topic of retirement planning delivered a brief but helpful talk on some of the most important considerations in making such important decisions. "I've got about twenty minutes to map out your future happiness," he began and then swung into action.

Most people already have preconceptions of where the good places are to retire, even if they've never actually been to those places. California, Florida, and Arizona are all well-known destinations, but Savageau used maps to point out all the other areas we could imagine, including all of the latest hot spots like New England and the Pacific Northwest. However, he proposed that we consider more than geography and think purposefully about what we actually want to be doing when

we get to the place.

"What we think about where we retire may not be right. Some preconceptions may be out of date." Like what? "Line dancing and early bird specials."

Savageau went on to tell the audience that they were part of a special retirement group, that he calls the "the pension elite" and the "creative class." This class of people may be sought out by local governments. "You're in a very good position," he added. "These cities are in the business of attracting people."

College towns are ideal. They have excitement, opportunities for interaction with younger people, and many more options for varied activities and interests. Of course, they offer academics, which opens things up for all kinds of learning experiences: law degrees, pilots licenses, clown colleges, and many other possibilities. They also have superior health care and hospitals, more complete public transportation systems, and "a wide range of hous-

ing options, with the option to become a landlord, assuming your tenant is a grad student studying for the priesthood," Savageau joked.

He recommended quaint New Hampshire and Vermont college towns, which offer the best of two lifestyles that could ultimately lead to a more satisfying retirement: peaceful and active. A similar situation exists in Apalachicola, part of the forgotten coast of Florida. It's more out of the way, as it's the last part of Old Florida, with few tourists to cramp the relaxed setting. "It's got the visible past that you're going to want, that natural splendor, but there's nothing going on, and it's not too hot," he said.

For the sophisticates, he mentioned the bigger cities like Indianapolis, Kansas City, Houston, and Baltimore might be more to their liking, offering one final tip. "Ask the cab drivers where all the energetic and creative older people go. They know."

☐ Rob Spalding, HLCD

## ***Lights of the Spirit: Historical Portraits of Black Bahá'ís in North America, 1898–2000* edited by Gwendolyn Etter-Lewis and Richard Thomas.**

Wilmette, IL: Bahá'í Publishing, 2006. xiii, 338 p. ISBN 1931847266, LCCN \$14.95

## ***Alain Locke: Faith and Philosophy* by Christopher Buck**

Los Angeles: Kalimát Press, 2005. xv, 302 p. (Studies in the Bábí and Bahá'í Religions; v.18). ISBN 189068838X, LCCN \$29.95

The Bahá'í Faith has been concerned, since its earliest days, with establishing the unity of humanity and the elimination of racial prejudice. Bahá'í writings characterize racism as one of the "triple gods" in the "desecrated temple of mankind," calling it the "most vital and challenging issue" facing the American nation. There has been a surprising lack of academic and public interest in the contributions Bahá'ís of African descent have made to the religious and social life of North America since the first African-American became a Bahá'í in 1898. The most significant work in recent years on an African-American Bahá'í was Gayle Morrison's ground-breaking social biography of Howard University-edu-

cated lawyer Louis G. Gregory [*To Move the World: Louis G. Gregory and the Advancement of Racial Unity in America* (Wilmette, IL: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1982), LCCN 81022763]. However, just as Bahá'í studies have been generally marginalized, so too have authors been prone to leave out the Bahá'í affiliations of famous African-Americans such as Alain Locke, Margaret Danner, Coralie Franklin Cook, Robert Hayden, Robert Abbott, and Dizzy Gillespie, as though such an affiliation was insignificant.

Two recent books will help to remedy this situation. These books carry an added attraction in that many of the principals they chronicle have an association with

Washington, D.C. The volume by Etter-Lewis and Thomas chronicles both the social impact of Black Bahá'ís on their faith community and the lives of individual African-American believers who arose at crucial times to advance the well-being of their people and their religion.

Bahá'u'lláh, the prophet-founder of the Bahá'í Faith, called people of color "the pupil of the eye"—in it "is seen the reflection of that which is before it, and through it the light of the spirit shineth forth." Despite the Bahá'í principle of the oneness of humanity and the elimination of racial prejudice, early African-American Bahá'ís had to overcome the structure of racism around them—a structure that

affected white Bahá'ís, particularly in segregated cities such as Washington. They did this by keeping the Bahá'í principles before the community, working tirelessly for the social betterment of their people, and writing eloquent and thoughtful communications to 'Abdu'l-Bahá (Bahá'u'lláh's son, head of the Bahá'í Faith from 1892 to 1921) about the race situation in America. 'Abdu'l-Bahá responded with strong encouragement to them and admonishments to the wider community.

Chapters in the book deal with the development of the American Bahá'í community, race and gender in the struggle for equality, the global expansion of the Bahá'í Faith, and Black Bahá'ís in Canada. Several individuals receive particular attention, including: Elsie Austin, first black woman to become Assistant Attorney General of the state of Ohio; Coralie Franklin Cook, a Howard University professor whose insightful letter to 'Abdu'l-Bahá about race in America is printed in the book for the first time; Zylpha Mapp Robinson, who carried out mission activities for the Bahá'í Faith throughout Africa and founded a national women's organization in Uganda at the age of 80; and Erma Hayden who stood up for civil rights in segregated Birmingham, Alabama.

There are a number of respected biographies of Alain Locke, the father of the Harlem Renaissance and preeminent social philosopher of the African-American experience. Virtually all of them either deny Locke's membership in the Bahá'í Faith or treat it as a minor influence on Locke's life and thought. Christopher Buck has finally done the necessary historical research to definitively document Locke's more than three decades of adherence to the religion and his involvement in the American Bahá'í community's efforts to establish equality and harmony among the races.

Leonard Harris, a Purdue University professor who has written or edited numerous works on Locke, writes in his foreword to this book that Locke's philosophy demonstrates independence of mind. Such intellectual independence, he states, is what "makes it possible for any individual

### LCPA Nomination Form For the Vanguard Award for 2006

The Vanguard Award recognizes, commends, and encourages outstanding, innovative, or sustained contributions to the Library of Congress Professional Association (LCPA). This prestigious award will be presented in February at the annual Thank You Reception/Luncheon.

The Vanguard Award will be given to an individual who has:

- Made a single, specific, significant contribution that has made an impact on the work or function of LCPA over time, or
- Demonstrated commitment to LCPA and has achieved distinction in endeavors relating to its projects and activities, or
- Provided exceptional time and energy towards many different LCPA activities over the years, or
- Made other significant contributions to the growth of LCPA.

In previous years, this highest LCPA award has been presented to: Sarah Rouse (1993), Peter Vankevich (1994), Tim Carlton (1995), Phil De Sellem (1996), Eniko Basa (1997), Vanessa Cieslak (1998), Sara Striner (1999), Shirley Loo (2000), Robert Handloff (2001), Barbara Conaty (2002), Reid Graham (2003), and Joanna Roussis (2004).

Please help the Awards Committee by nominating that special individual who has been laboring on behalf of the many projects and activities of LCPA. Please submit nominations to Reid Graham, Mail Stop 4182 LS/ELAD/HAS by COB Friday, December 8, 2006. Nominations may also be submitted by email (rgraham).

**Name of Nominee:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Description of Nominee's Contribution to LCPA:**

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**Your Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Division:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Mail Stop:** \_\_\_\_\_

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# LCPA EVENTS

TBD	Annual Membership Meeting, Contact Reid Graham (rgraham)
December 6	LCPA Arts and Crafts Exhibit Opening, Contact Valerie Mwalilino (vmwa) or Vejune Svtelis (vsvo)
TBD	Thank You Luncheon (Date TBA), Contact Nuzhat Khatoon (nkha)

## *(Bahá'í Faith book review continued from page 11)*

to join the Bahá'í Faith," the kind of mental freedom necessary to resist racist and ethnic hatred and vehement nationalism. Locke resisted the limitations the American culture placed on African-Americans, graduated from Harvard, became the first black Rhodes Scholar, and embraced a little-known prophet whose teachings he kneaded into his philosophy.

Buck's view of Locke is that there is a deep interpenetration of Locke's Bahá'í Faith and his philosophies of democracy, culture, and black aesthetics. Locke brought the Bahá'í spirit of unity in diversity and universality to bear on his philosophical development, and it is reflected in his essays. Locke also used his experience as a black man to highlight the deeper implications of the Bahá'í teachings on racial unity that many early American Bahá'ís had difficulty exemplifying.

According to the Bahá'í census conducted by the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States and Canada in the 1930s, Alain Locke became a Bahá'í in 1918. Locke himself completed and signed the census card. Locke's location in Washington, D.C., put him in the

thick of racial issues. Washington, D.C. was a segregated southern city. Locke struggled with the influence of segregation on the attitudes of individual Bahá'ís.

White Washingtonian Bahá'ís were nevertheless the first to institute a concerted effort to reach African-Americans. In part, this was at the urging of 'Abdu'l-Bahá. Joseph and Pauline Hannen were the most exemplary of these early Bahá'ís to demonstrate their freedom from prejudice. Pauline Hannen herself told the story of walking down the street while contemplating 'Abdu'l-Bahá's firm instructions about loving all and treating them with kindness. She saw a black woman carrying several packages whose shoes were untied. Hannen knelt down in front of the woman and tied her shoes. Such an act was greeted with unrestrained shock and criticism by the white people who witnessed it, and the black woman was astonished.

'Abdu'l-Bahá objected strenuously to attempts by some white Bahá'ís to create segregated meetings. It was out of these efforts and as a result of the "Red Summer" of 1919 when racial violence took place in several cities, that 'Abdu'l-Bahá charged

the American Bahá'ís to take the lead in interracial activities by holding race amity conferences and founding a national Race Unity Committee. Alain Locke featured prominently in these activities. He was on the Bahá'í Race Unity Committee for several years. In part, Locke's concerns about the variable Bahá'í focus on this topic led him to alternate between engagement and inactivity.

Nevertheless, he made a Bahá'í pilgrimage and assisted Shoghi Effendi, the Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith from 1921 to 1957, with the translation of Bahá'u'lláh's *Kitáb-i-Íqán* (Book of Certitude). Buck provides extensive reviews of Locke's Bahá'í and philosophical essays, demonstrating their interrelationships and the common themes that led to Locke's honorary title as the "father of multiculturalism."

Both of these books go a long way toward correcting the historians' failure to note the important role played by the Bahá'í Faith and prominent African-American Bahá'ís in the struggle for racial equality in the United States.

☐ William P. Collins, Copyright Office

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