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Hecimovich is Part of Second Class of W. E. B. Du Bois Research Institute Fellows

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Hecimovich is Part of Second Class of W. E. B. Du Bois Research Institute Fellows

Quick Facts

- Hecimovich is one of four educators selected for a Sheila Biddle Ford Fellowship appointment among an incoming class of 23 Fellows for 2014-15.
- The Sheila Biddle Ford Fellowship is intended to bring “emerging as well as established scholars, writers, and artists to the W. E. B. Du Bois Research Institute.”

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Gregg Hecimovich

ROCK HILL, S.C. – [Gregg Hecimovich](#), chair of Winthrop University’s [Department of English](#), will spend the 2014-15 academic year in residence as a [Sheila Biddle Ford Fellow](#) at [Harvard University’s W. E. B. Du Bois Institute](#) at [The Hutchins Center for African and African American Research](#) in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Hecimovich is one of four educators selected for a **Sheila Biddle Ford Fellowship** appointment among an incoming class of 23 Fellows for 2014-15. The **Sheila Biddle Ford Fellowship** is intended to bring “emerging as well as established scholars, writers, and artists to the W. E. B. Du Bois Research Institute.”

Other endowed fellowship appointments at **The Hutchins Center** are designed to assure that the incoming class is comprised of a wide array of experts in **African and African American Studies** to invite interdisciplinary investigation and cutting-edge collaboration.

“We are delighted to welcome one of our most distinguished and diverse class of Fellows of the W. E. B. Du Bois Research Institute, housed in The Hutchins Center,” said [Henry Louis Gates, Jr.](#), the Alphonse Fletcher University Professor and director of the newly launched Hutchins Center for African and African American Research.

Hecimovich will work on his book “**The Life and Times of Hannah Crafts: The True Story of The Bondwoman’s Narrative**,” which identifies America’s first, black female novelist as Hannah Bond “Crafts.” His book will tell the story of her life and the search for her identity.

Hecimovich learned of the novel after Gates purchased a manuscript in 2001 at auction titled “[The Bondwoman’s Narrative by Hannah Crafts a Fugitive Slave Recently Escaped from North Carolina](#).” Gates authenticated it, and then published it in 2002 to great fanfare. The work became an instant New York Times bestseller. Gates identified the slave author’s probable master as John Hill Wheeler, but he did not locate the mixed-race, fugitive slave named Hannah Crafts. **Hecimovich and his Winthrop students** identified the author and unknown details about her life.

Organizers said this incoming class is strong in all fields and particularly in the fields of literature, music, art history and the visual arts. Other Fellows will pursue such interesting projects as: a memoir of Black Panther Eldridge Cleaver; biographies of legendary trumpeter-composer Woody Shaw, Nelson Mandela and Toussaint Louverture; DNA studies to reconsider the racial history of Cuba; hip-hop in Senegal; the circulation of the black body in the global art economy; African American folktales; and the dramatic outcome of the Mau Mau torture trial in the British High Court.

Originally created in 1975 as the **W. E. B. Du Bois Institute**, the Du Bois Research Institute has

annually appointed scholars who conduct individual research for a period of up to one academic year in a variety of fields within African and African American Studies. It is now at the heart of **The Hutchins Center for African and African American Research**.

The Institute accepts established and emerging scholars from both the humanities and social sciences, and occasionally from fields such as engineering and the medical sciences.

Fellows conduct their research by using resources from Harvard's extensive library system, as well as from the Institute's research projects, including the Black Potomac Valley Project, the Black Patriots Project, the Dictionary of African Biography, AfricaMap, the African Art Database, the Image of the Black in Western Art Research and Photo Archive, the Timbuktu Library Project, the African AIDS Initiative International and the Working Group on Environmental Justice. Du Bois Research Institute Fellows are participants in a range of activities of the Institute including colloquia, public conferences, lectures, readings and workshops.

[View the complete list of scholars.](#)

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