

## Joint Statement of the Regional Collecting Initiative on Ferguson

The death of local teenager Michael Brown, Jr. and the social protests it sparked have forever changed our region. As institutions representing various aspects of the community—education, culture, and civic societies—we believe that the work of capturing and preserving this historic moment is a responsibility we all share and falls within the missions of our respective organizations. As this movement continues to unfold, we are compelled to work together to collect content (images, artifacts, stories, oral histories, documents) that centers the local perspective within the narrative.

The work of libraries and cultural heritage institutions is often entrusted by their citizens to steward the intellectual and creative capital of their communities. It is our hope that the people of the surrounding areas who are engaged in the creative and social justice work of this movement see our spaces as places that inspire confidence when entrusting their content to us. Joined together as a collective of institutions made up of individuals from different St. Louis communities, this collecting initiative exemplifies that we all have a stake in making sure that our individual and collective stories are represented in all of their diversity and complexity. We collect, preserve, organize, and make accessible to the larger community that which has been shared with us, continually enhancing its ability to serve as an evolving public record.

The events of the past year have called for systemic and tangible change within our region and our country. Understanding that everyone has their part in helping to effect this change, our role as libraries and cultural heritage institutions is to ensure that the people and their experiences are not forgotten. Through this collective, we are committed to building better relationships with the people, organizations, and communities that we serve.

We are now working to create synergy regarding the different collecting initiatives of materials related to events in or in the name of Ferguson, Shaw, and #BlackLivesMatter that each institution has engaged in for the past year. These materials show the development of a movement that stems from the unfortunate death of Michael Brown, Jr. and supports the healing of the Ferguson community and surrounding area. Our intent is to use these collections to create opportunities for engagement and learning, and we are committed to making these collections broadly available for the benefit of all. [Visit our Resources page](#) for links to our respective projects and materials we have made available for community use.

We are committed to the long-term preservation of these community materials, which will take years to fully realize. In the spirit of building community partnerships to address these large challenges, we welcome any interested organizations to [join our efforts](#).

Signed,

- Harris-Stowe State University, Barbara Noble, Director of Library Services
- Missouri History Museum, Christopher Gordon, Director, Library & Collections
- Missouri Humanities Council, Dr. William S. Belko, Executive Director
- Saint Louis University, David Cassens, Dean of Libraries
- University of Missouri–St. Louis, Christopher Dames, Dean of Libraries
- University of Missouri–St. Louis, Dr. Kathleen Nigro, Department of Sociology, Gerontology, and Gender Studies
- Washington University in St. Louis, Chris Freeland, Associate University Librarian