

The Love Lady & the Professor

A PITTSBURGH CIVIL RIGHTS STORY

By David S. Rotenstein

Frances Barnes was known as Pittsburgh's "Love Lady" and her husband Roland was the University of Pittsburgh's first Black full professor.¹ The couple arrived in Pittsburgh on a wave of civil rights protests sweeping through the city and nation. Their experiences before and after they moved to the city in the late 1960s are an important yet little-known chapter in Pittsburgh's civil rights history that revolves around housing, employment, and education. The Barnes' story offers a very personal perspective on housing discrimination and the moment in time when the University of Pittsburgh sought to reverse decades of racially biased employment, admission, and curriculum decisions. This article introduces 21st century

readers to a couple who devoted their lives to education and to civil rights.

For much of its history, Pittsburgh has attracted African Americans looking for opportunities denied them in the deep South. Whether it was people fleeing slavery before the Civil War or tenant farmers during Reconstruction and afterwards seeking an escape from debt peonage and Jim Crow terrorism, Pittsburgh's mills and other industries opened up new lives for working class Blacks in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. During the civil rights era, Pittsburgh offered middle-class Blacks some of those same opportunities.



Roland E. Barnes.
University of Pittsburgh Library
System, University Archives.

In 1961, Roland and Frances Barnes signed a contract to buy a home in a new subdivision in Montgomery County, Maryland, just outside of Washington, D.C. When the developer discovered that the Barneses were African American, he returned their deposit along with a letter cancelling the contract. That act triggered a series of events, including litigation that went all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court, and the ultimate decision by the family to leave Maryland for Pittsburgh.

Roland and Frances Barnes were professional educators. Both held doctorates; Montgomery County had recruited Roland to become the principal of a new elementary school and Frances was hired by the school system's central office. Their story from more than 50 years ago resonates today as

the nation continues to struggle against structural racism, housing discrimination, and re-segregating schools.

The Barnes saga is a common narrative found in the histories of cities and suburban neighborhoods throughout North America. It also is a story of missed opportunities for one community and the benefits gained by another. Montgomery County's failure to embrace anti-racism and civil rights and Pittsburgh's slow but steady march towards change set the stage for a pivotal episode in both communities' histories. The Barnes' story became part of Pittsburgh's civil rights history when Roland joined the University of Pittsburgh's faculty at a time when Pitt was reeling from its own racial unrest. Frances left education and became active in civil rights

and housing issues, making an enduring mark across a wide swath of Pittsburgh's civic landscape.

This article explores the events that led to Roland and Frances Barnes moving to Western Pennsylvania in 1969 and their subsequent lives in Pittsburgh. It draws from research into suburban gentrification and the erasure of Black history. I found references to the Barnes' legal case while collecting sources on housing discrimination in Montgomery County and I followed its threads to Pittsburgh. Pushed away from Montgomery County, the story of Roland and Frances Barnes offers twenty-first century Pittsburgh residents a new perspective into the city's own history of discrimination and reconciliation.



Northwest Washington, D.C., row where Frances and Roland Barnes owned a home, 1955-65.

Photo by David Rotenstein.

Frances and Roland Barnes

Roland Edward Barnes (1920–1997) was born in Lenoir County, North Carolina. His father, Roland A. Barnes (1893–1962), was a mail clerk who in the 1930s moved the family to Washington, D.C. The younger Barnes attended District of Columbia public schools and in 1941 he graduated from Miner Teachers College (later, D.C. Teachers College and the University of the District of Columbia). In early 1942, Barnes became a Second Lieutenant in the U.S. Army and he served overseas in Asia. After World War II, he returned to Washington and began teaching in D.C. public schools.

Frances Johnson Barnes was born in 1920 in Culpeper, Virginia, and grew up in Washington, D.C. She graduated in 1941 from Howard University and became a public-school teacher. Roland and Frances had known each other since elementary school, their daughter Sylvia Craig said in a July 2019 interview. The couple clandestinely married in the spring of 1940 in Arlington, Virginia, while both were still undergraduates. The Baltimore Afro-American reported on it a year later, in the summer of 1941, the week after Frances graduated.²

While Roland was serving in the army, Frances enrolled in Columbia University's Teacher's College. She graduated in 1943 with a master's in education and returned to Washington to teach Romance Languages at Howard University. In the late 1940s, after their first daughter was born, they moved to New York City. Roland also enrolled in Columbia University and in 1949 earned his master's degree in education. When the U.S. entered the Korean War, Roland was teaching in a Manhattan elementary school. He was recalled to active duty and he served in Japan as a chemical school instructor. Before shipping out, Roland appeared in a radio game show where he won \$100.³ Frances returned to work in 1951 as a nursery-school teacher. In 1954, she embarked on a long career in special education, first teaching children with mental disabilities in New York City's public schools.

The Dream Home Nightmare

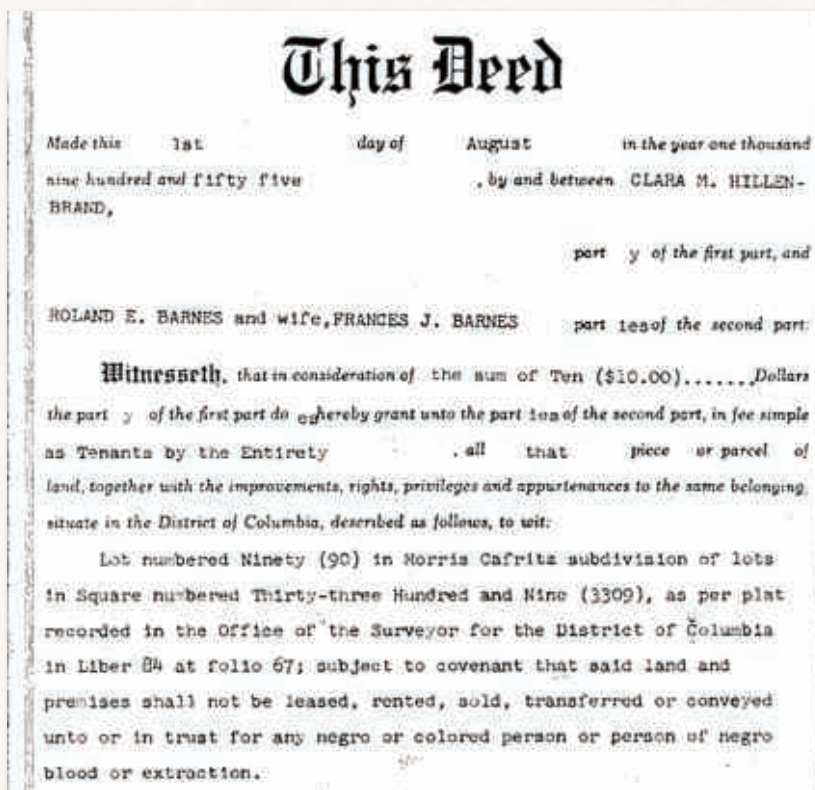
In 1961, Montgomery County completed a new elementary school in an expansion program designed to complement the Southern jurisdiction's desegregation efforts begun after the U.S. Supreme Court in 1954 decided *Brown v. Board of Education*. The new school was located near Rockville, Montgomery County's seat, and several rural unincorporated African American hamlets established during Reconstruction and the early twentieth century. Montgomery County Public Schools hired Roland E. Barnes as Travilah Elementary School's first principal.⁴ To sweeten the offer, the school system hired Frances to work with visually handicapped students.

Roland and Frances Barnes had been living in New York City when Montgomery

County recruited him. Roland had completed his education doctorate in 1959 at Columbia University, after being awarded a Fellowship in Educational Administration. The couple taught in the District of Columbia's public schools. Frances taught "atypical children" in the District's high schools and helped develop curricula for secondary education. Roland taught elementary and junior high school students and he served as a science consultant to school staff. While Roland was completing his doctorate, Frances was one of the first recipients of a fellowship created under a 1958 federal law intended to expand training programs for teachers of "mentally retarded children."⁵ During their brief return to New York City for Roland's doctoral studies, he worked as a teaching assistant and Frances taught in the public schools.

Deed with racial covenants transferring ownership of Washington property to Roland and Frances Barnes, 1955.

D.C. Recorder of Deeds.



Frances and Roland were intimate with discriminatory housing. The first home that they owned in Washington included a racially restrictive deed covenant: "Said land and premises shall not be leased, rented, sold, transferred or conveyed unto or in trust for any negro or colored person or person of negro blood or extraction."⁶ Though unenforceable in the courts since 1948, the covenant in the 1955 deed to their home was a constant reminder of Reconstruction's unfulfilled promise to provide African Americans equal protections and rights under the law.

The Barnes home was more than 20 miles away from the couple's new Montgomery County jobs and each workday required a 44-mile roundtrip commute. Weary of the daily drive, in October 1961, Roland and Frances visited a new subdivision, fashionably named "Georgetown Hill." They made an offer to buy a new tract home that was under construction. They signed a contract with the developer's

agent to buy the house and left a \$1,000 deposit: \$200 in cash and a note for \$800.

The developers subsequently discovered that the Barneses were Black. "Two days later the deposit was returned by the realtor with a notation that 'this deal cannot be consummated at this time,'" the couple testified in the lawsuit that followed. *The Chicago Defender* effectively summarized the situation, "In school-conscious Montgomery County, principals are usually considered highly desirable neighbors, but Barnes is a Negro."⁷

After three years and appeals that went to the U.S. Supreme Court, Roland and Frances Barnes lost their case and it became a forgotten footnote in American housing history despite being the first complaint filed under a new executive order issued by President John F. Kennedy prohibiting housing discrimination.⁸

The Barnes case exposed the obstacles to finding housing many middle-class Blacks

faced during Jim Crow and the civil rights era (and continue to experience). The barriers to housing for African Americans willing and able to buy homes in cities and suburbs remained high, despite a series of Supreme Court decisions starting with the 1916 *Buchanan v. Warley* decision ruling racial zoning unconstitutional to the 1948 *Shelley v. Kraemer* case invalidating racially restrictive deed covenants like the one attached to their Washington home.⁹

Redlining, steering, and exclusionary amenities (e.g., memberships to private clubs) all contributed to maintaining segregated housing in the 1950s and '60s. States and counties began passing open housing laws during this period. The Fair Housing Act of 1968 worked in concert with these more localized efforts driven by antiracism advocates to create more suburban housing opportunities for African Americans.¹⁰ Yet, America's suburbs fiercely resisted integration.¹¹

Montgomery County, Md., suburban home that Roland and Frances tried to buy in 1961.

Photo by David Rotenstein.



A Negro Principal Files Suit to Crack 'Real Estate Curtain' in D. C. Suburbs

By Thomas R. Kendrick
Staff Reporter

More than one year, Roland E. Barnes, principal of an elementary school north of Rockville, decided that driving 44 miles each day to and from his home in the District made little sense. He attempted to buy a house near his place of work.

In school-conscious Montgomery County, principals are usually considered highly desirable neighbors, but Barnes is a Negro. Although he quickly found his "dream house" and signed what he believed was a formal contract to buy it, Barnes and his family still live at 319 Allison st. n.w.



ROLAND E. BARNES

The suburban-style home he chose on a hillside in the pleasant new community of Seven Locks Meadow is occupied by a white family, as are all other homes in the neighborhood. But Barnes is determined to crack what he feels is "a real estate curtain" facing all Negroes who want to live in Washington suburbs.

Files Suit

Yesterday, he filed suit in Federal Court in Baltimore for an injunction forcing developers to comply with a second agreement by giving him the house as another compensation to it in the same subdivision. He also seeks \$20,000 in damages for breach of contract.

Named as defendants in the complaint are A. Sind & Associates of 8228 Farnham st., Silver Spring, Md., and the firm of H. A. Sind & Associates, 1111 North Bethesda rd., Bethesda.

A. Sind & Associates were Barnes, 42, both a director and the leaders of "Georgetown Hill" in North Bethesda where position at Queens College in New York City in July of 1960

... charges contract breach.

The section is now part of Seven Locks Meadow which is being developed by several firms.

Morris D. Schwartz, vice president for Sind and Cohen, said he had not seen the complaint, but denied the dispute was a racial matter.

"They maintain we didn't meet the terms of an agreement to provide an equivalent house," Schwartz said, "and after inspecting several model houses we did." He added that his clients had offered to build another house in the same place.

By Check and Note.

According to the complaint, Barnes and the agent, acting for A. Sind & Associates, signed three copies of a sales contract which specified the house would be built and available by March 15, 1962.

Barnes made a deposit by check and note of \$3,000.

at the request of the Montgomery County Board of Education. His African st. home had been leased to a white family.

French Elementary School, over which Barnes presides, has about 300 pupils, of whom 25 are Negroes. It is about a 15-minute drive from Seven Locks Meadow.

Barnes' wife, Frances, is also employed by the Montgomery School Board as a specialist on children with defective vision. She drives to work separately and transports the couple's two daughters, ages 9 and 13, who attend County schools. Her office in Rockville is about five miles from Seven Locks Meadow.

On Oct. 1 last year, according to the complaint, Barnes read an advertisement in The Washington Post inviting the public to examine and purchase homes in "Georgetown Hill." Barnes

expanded and found sales were being handled by T. K. Learner's Harmony Corp., a real estate agency.

Barnes recalls he received "very courteous treatment" from a Harmony employee and decided to buy a \$20,000 home.

Schwartz said, "and after inspecting several model houses we did." He added that his clients had offered to build another house in the same place.

By Check and Note.

According to the complaint, Barnes and the agent, acting for A. Sind & Associates, signed three copies of a sales contract which specified the house would be built and available by March 15, 1962.

Barnes made a deposit by check and note of \$3,000.

Aug. 31. Sind requested and was given a \$3,000 cash deposit, which he still holds, Barnes said.

On July 31, Barnes recalled, Cohen telephoned to ask "us to come out and pick out a house for the house, it's thought he meant the one we had chosen and we had said."

Instead, the suit said, Cohen showed them a second house and lot. Barnes refused to consider the lot "as any sense equivalent," resulting the offer "only an insult."

Cohen then offered "us to enter house near his own," Barnes recalls, "telling us he would love to have us as neighbors but not customers."

The second lot was about one-third smaller than the first, had no natural growth

of trees, was twice in elevation and crowded by other houses instead of being set apart, the suit said.

On August 21, Barnes offered to accept a third house in the project if certain landscaping improvements were made. The suit charged that the defendants had ignored this offer and refused to arbitrate despite repeated requests and are now liable for damages of \$100 a day from August 21 according to the agreement.

Yesterday, Chief Judge Rogers ordered a hearing set for November 15. The judge, writing as a referee by Barnes' counsel, also enjoined A. Sind & Associates from selling the third house until the suit is heard.

A sampling of opinion in

ABOVE: Washington Post, October 26, 1962.

Proquest.

RIGHT: Barnes v. Sind petition, U.S. Supreme Court denial, 1965.

National Archives, Records of the Supreme Court of the United States.

No. 419

IN THE
SUPREME COURT OF THE UNITED STATES
OCTOBER TERM, 1965

ROLAND E. BARNES, Petitioner,

v.

ABRAHAM S. SIND AND ISRAEL COHEN, ET AL,
Respondents.

PETITION FOR A WRIT OF CERTIORARI TO THE
UNITED STATES COURT OF APPEALS FOR THE
FOURTH CIRCUIT

JOSEPH L. RAY, JR.,
JOHN SLAND,
DANIEL H. FOLLETT,
1625 K Street, N. W.,
Washington, D. C.,
Attorneys for Petitioner.

RECEIVED
AUG 3 - 1965
OFFICE OF THE CLERK
SUPREME COURT, U. S.

The demographers Eunice and George Grier in the 1960s and '70s produced several comprehensive studies of housing and race. Based in Montgomery County, they regularly consulted for federal agencies and local planning departments. Their studies of African American suburbanization in Montgomery and neighboring Prince George's counties revealed the earliest in-depth profiles of well-educated middle-class Blacks seeking and finding suburban homes. Their work built on decades of research, including a 1958 study they completed for the New York State Commission Against Discrimination. The Griers explored the housing ecosystem created by large corporations hiring well-educated African Americans who then experienced difficulties finding homes in the communities where they were recruited despite a 1945 state law barring discrimination. The Grier's

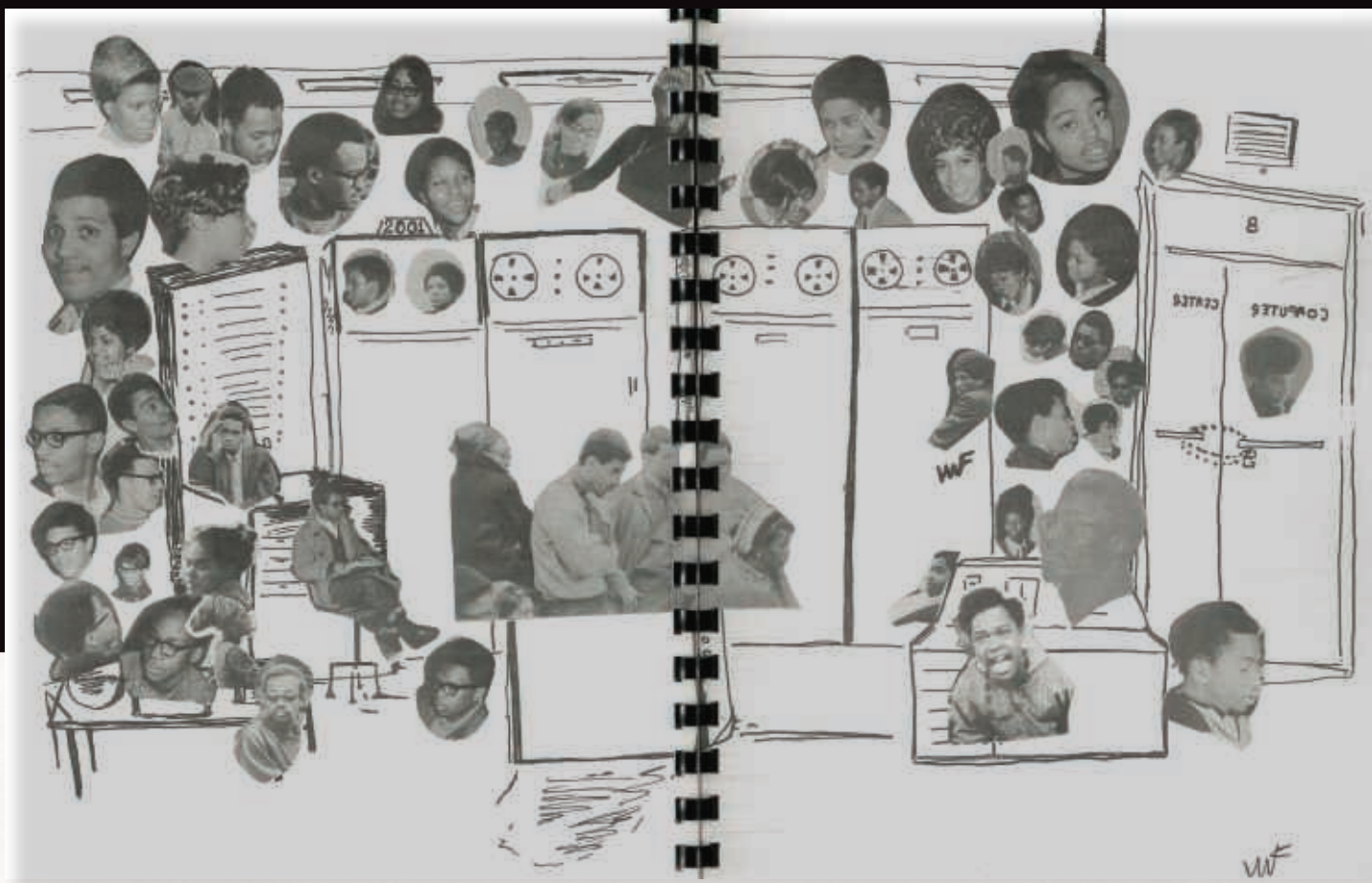
45-person sample included architects, dentists, teachers, and engineers—essentially, Frances and Roland Barnes's peers.

Most of the people in the Grier sample had moved to upstate New York because of job opportunities. The Griers documented people who experienced difficulties finding housing they wanted and many found themselves steered towards cramped, Black-segregated areas and the Griers enumerated the costs to the homeseekers and to the communities. Salient to the Barnes case in Montgomery County, the Griers wrote,

Several respondents, occupying positions for which there is a critical shortage of trained personnel, said they intended to leave as soon as they could line up jobs elsewhere. Important to the community and the employer, as well as to the individual worker, was the reduction in on-the-job efficiency during the search for housing.¹²

As the Barnes litigation worked its way through the courts, Roland and Frances took a leave of absence from Montgomery County Public Schools. From July 1963 to July 1965, Roland was part of a Columbia University teaching team based in Kabul, Afghanistan.¹³ The couple returned to the United States and Montgomery County where they bought a home in Kensington. Roland became the director of staff development for Montgomery County Public Schools. A short biography explained, "In this position he helped to implement one of the first university-school system student teaching centers in the East and originated a TV program for orientation of new student teacher supervisors."¹⁴

Roland left Montgomery County Public Schools permanently a year later when he accepted a job with the U.S. Agency



In January 1969, the University of Pittsburgh's Black Action Society occupied the school's Computer Center. The protest to force action on demands for more Black faculty and students and curriculum changes led to Pitt hiring Dr. Roland Barnes. This collage appeared in the Black student publication, *As-Salaam-Alaikum*.

University of Pittsburgh Library System, University Archives.

for International Development. He and Frances traveled to Quito, Ecuador, where he worked first as an education development officer and then as the USAID Ecuador's Human Resources Division Director. That was the position that he held when Pitt recruited him in July 1969. Neither Roland nor Frances appear to have left any accounts detailing why they left Montgomery County, though their experience with the lawsuit and the county's vigorous embrace of Jim Crow likely were major factors. As late as 1968, for example, residents of the county's most dense suburb, Silver Spring, touted its appeal to people moving there from neighboring Washington: "They love it because Negroes, so far, have been safely left behind at the District line. Virtually everybody says so, one way or another."¹⁵

Protest-Era Pittsburgh

African American history in Pittsburgh runs deep. Its stories are found in the steel mills, railroads, and construction crews that built the city. Economic opportunities and the desire to escape Jim Crow's terrorism in the South brought several waves of Blacks to Pittsburgh between the first decade of the twentieth century and the Cold War. Some of these migrants found work alongside immigrants from Eastern and Southern Europe; others became entrepreneurs in segregated Pittsburgh, or they ended up living off the books, unemployed or making money in an informal economy that included numbers gambling, bootlegging, and music.¹⁶

Pittsburgh didn't escape the racial unrest that swept through American cities during the civil rights era. Dr. Martin Luther King's

assassination on April 4, 1968, unleashed the city's African Americans' pent up anger over segregation. The assassination provided Pittsburgh Blacks with a catalyst to resist racism in housing, employment, and education. Violent demonstrations in the Hill District, North Side, and Homewood neighborhoods began April 5 and lasted almost a week. Though Pittsburgh became a data point in historians' analysis of the events of 1968 in such cities as Washington, Newark, and Detroit, locally the unrest accelerated some civil rights advances while further damaging race relations in a region struggling with deindustrialization.¹⁷

Nationally, a century-long campaign by the NAACP to eradicate segregation had three prongs: housing, education, and public accommodations. *Brown v. Board of Education* in 1954 ended legal segregation in schools;

Shelley v. Kraemer made racially restrictive deed covenants unenforceable in the courts; and, states and local jurisdictions had begun passing laws prohibiting discrimination in businesses on the basis of race. Congress in 1964, 1965, and 1968 passed laws protecting voting rights, housing, and civil rights generally. Pittsburgh already had on its books laws prohibiting housing discrimination (1958), employment (1953) and public accommodations (Pennsylvania Equal Rights Law of 1935). Despite these small advances, segregation in Pittsburgh persisted.¹⁸

Pittsburgh likewise contributed an important chapter in housing history and civil rights. In 1967, African American realtor Robert M. Lavelle sued the Greater Pittsburgh Multilist, Inc. The licensed realtor claimed that he was denied membership and access to its metropolitan listing services solely on the basis

of race. Lavelle, backed by the NAACP and the Urban League of Greater Pittsburgh, won his case on appeal. The case opened up large areas of metropolitan Pittsburgh to aspiring middle-class Black homeowners like Frances and Roland Barnes.¹⁹

Also in the 1960s, the Pitt campus was a microcosm of race relations nationally and locally.²⁰ Roland Barnes arrived at Pitt under circumstances similar to those that brought him to Montgomery County: An educational institution was struggling to shed segregation. Pitt's desegregation efforts came to a head in early 1969 when the university's Black Action Society, founded a year earlier, occupied Pitt's computer center, an overlooked but pivotal moment in the city's history.

More than 40 students staged a sit-in in the eighth-floor Cathedral of Learning facility and they delivered a list of demands

to chancellor Wesley Posvar that included recruiting more Black students and faculty.²¹ Posvar accepted most of the demands and embarked on a nationally recognized program to dismantle racism in the university. With regard to recruiting additional Black faculty members, Education School Dean Paul Masoner sent Posvar a memo dated March 12, 1969, outlining that school's efforts to resolve what Masoner described as "problems of racial and social injustice." Masoner outlined 11 recommendations, including "That a vigorous program for the recruitment of black faculty members and that in addition a plan for recruitment and training of promising black faculty members be established in order to overcome the present serious shortage."²²

The line connecting the Black Action Society's resistance movement and Barnes's hiring is crystal clear. On March 31, 1969,



Blacks Cool It At Office 'Barge-In'

By DAVID MARRIS
Staff News Editor

The campus has finally been awakened to the severity of a grave problem, and this is the admission of the Black students on this campus. The Black students of this campus have taken and debated numerous times with the Chancellor, and different members of the administration and faculty, in hopes of getting more answers and solutions to their problems.

The Chancellor, on the other hand, has changed his answers and solutions to the safety of administrative red tape.

My philosophy of this crisis, is very, very realistic. I guess many would say I am in the past of slavery. You see, I have the same idea about people — about human beings. They are in going to one day, very soon, to die.

I hope... I pray that humanity is going to one day see that understanding, and good will towards man.

Other is the only thing that is going to keep our world alive. Because of this philosophy, and my love for all people, not just my own Black race, I will save the love and compassion, not to my world, but to the world. I will have patience, but the natural inclination of my race.

I wish to ensure the future of our race, and to be able to reach out to many people — of our being able to reach their hearts and understand the respect of love.

I wish to ensure the future of our race, and to be able to reach out to many people — of our being able to reach their hearts and understand the respect of love.



Campus Wakes-Up; Understanding Needed

By DAVID MARRIS
Staff News Editor

The campus has finally been awakened to the severity of a grave problem, and this is the admission of the Black students on this campus. The Black students of this campus have taken and debated numerous times with the Chancellor, and different members of the administration and faculty, in hopes of getting more answers and solutions to their problems.

The Chancellor, on the other hand, has changed his answers and solutions to the safety of administrative red tape.

My philosophy of this crisis, is very, very realistic. I guess many would say I am in the past of slavery. You see, I have the same idea about people — about human beings. They are in going to one day, very soon, to die.

I hope... I pray that humanity is going to one day see that understanding, and good will towards man.

Other is the only thing that is going to keep our world alive. Because of this philosophy, and my love for all people, not just my own Black race, I will save the love and compassion, not to my world, but to the world. I will have patience, but the natural inclination of my race.

I wish to ensure the future of our race, and to be able to reach out to many people — of our being able to reach their hearts and understand the respect of love.

I wish to ensure the future of our race, and to be able to reach out to many people — of our being able to reach their hearts and understand the respect of love.



Students' First Reactions 'Differ'

By DAVID MARRIS
Staff News Editor

The campus has finally been awakened to the severity of a grave problem, and this is the admission of the Black students on this campus. The Black students of this campus have taken and debated numerous times with the Chancellor, and different members of the administration and faculty, in hopes of getting more answers and solutions to their problems.

The Chancellor, on the other hand, has changed his answers and solutions to the safety of administrative red tape.

My philosophy of this crisis, is very, very realistic. I guess many would say I am in the past of slavery. You see, I have the same idea about people — about human beings. They are in going to one day, very soon, to die.

I hope... I pray that humanity is going to one day see that understanding, and good will towards man.

Other is the only thing that is going to keep our world alive. Because of this philosophy, and my love for all people, not just my own Black race, I will save the love and compassion, not to my world, but to the world. I will have patience, but the natural inclination of my race.

I wish to ensure the future of our race, and to be able to reach out to many people — of our being able to reach their hearts and understand the respect of love.

I wish to ensure the future of our race, and to be able to reach out to many people — of our being able to reach their hearts and understand the respect of love.

University police gave signal to 'move out'

Pittsburgh home bought by the Barnes couple in 1971.

Photo by David Rotenstein.



Posvar released a memorandum to all of the school's deans, campus presidents, directors, and department chairmen. Its subject heading: Racial Injustice. "If we are to meet our commitment, we must be willing to experiment boldly, to face frustrations cheerfully, and to expend our resources without clear assurance of an adequate return," Posvar wrote.²³

The risky investment Posvar was introducing was Pitt's plan to recruit highly qualified Black faculty—a class of educators in short demand in the United States. Posvar applied basic economics in his appeal to Pitt's leadership to recruit African American PhDs: "I have suggested previously that in our efforts to add black persons to our faculty we should be willing to pay higher salaries than we would pay to white persons of similar qualifications." Posvar added, "Those higher salaries may be necessary simply because there are few such individuals available."²⁴

Dr. and Dr. Barnes Arrive in Pittsburgh

Roland E. Barnes became one of the returns achieved through Posvar's response to the Black Action Society. Though Barnes's salary remains unknown, his July 1969 hiring as a

professor in Pitt's School of Education made him the university's first Black full professor.²⁵ New Pittsburgh Courier columnist Hazel Garland connected Posvar's 1969 integration initiatives to Barnes's recruitment. Garland contextualized Pitt's (and Carnegie-Mellon University's) integration efforts with those of major corporations headquartered in the city: "In order to get the kind of people needed, the schools recruited Blacks from all over the country. In that group were Dr. Roland Barnes and his wife, Dr. Frances Barnes."²⁶

Though Pitt recruited Barnes in 1969, he and Frances kept their Montgomery County home for another two years before buying a stylish brick double house in Point Breeze near Mellon Park. For the couple's first years in Pittsburgh, they rented apartments in Oakland and Shadyside.²⁷ Nearby Point Breeze, along with Bloomfield, Homewood, and Penn Hills, was one of the neighborhoods where middle-class Blacks were able to buy homes in transactions brokered by African American realtors in the wake of the landmark 1967 Multistate case.²⁸

The Pittsburgh move wasn't conflict-free. The couple's attempt to buy their home in 1974 was a painful reminder of their

experience a decade earlier in Maryland and it included racist resistance from their new neighbors. Frances recalled in an undated manuscript, "When it was learned that a Black couple was negotiating to buy a house in 'their neighborhood,'" she wrote, "a petition was circulated for signatures to pressure the seller not to go through with the deal." Frances added, "It is the house where I now live."²⁹

Roland began teaching classes in educational leadership and community relations. He also joined Pitt's University Task Force in Education for the Pittsburgh Model Cities Program. Pittsburgh was one of 75 cities nationwide that in 1967 and 1968 received U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development funds to redevelop distressed urban neighborhoods in a holistic program that included housing and social services, including education and healthcare.³⁰ During his first years at Pitt, Barnes also worked as a consultant to the Pittsburgh and the Ashtabula County, Ohio, school systems.³¹

As a Pitt faculty member, Roland Barnes taught graduate students and focused most of his professional energies on consulting work done through the university's School of Education. Despite his frontline experience in

civil rights issues, Barnes left a small academic footprint during his years at Pitt and there is no evidence that he engaged with Pitt's Black Action Society as an advisor, sponsor, or speaker at any of the organization's events.³²

In 1971, Pitt established a new unit in its education school: The Center on School Desegregation and Conflict. According to its initial grant application, the center's focus was to provide technical assistance to school systems struggling to desegregate and the tools available to improve community relations and resolve conflicts. Barnes was named a co-director, along with Dr. James E. Mauch. Paul Masoner, the Education School dean, described the two men as "persons who we know can deal with such problems with confidence and sensitiveness."³³ Fresh from his personal legal battle over housing in rigidly segregated Montgomery County and as an actor in desegregation efforts in public schools and higher education, Barnes was uniquely qualified for the new position.

The center's initial scope was limited to Pennsylvania; within a decade it was working with school systems throughout the Mid-Atlantic. It was one of 19 similar programs throughout the United States. "Our center is unique in that part of the program is aimed at the dimension of conflict," Barnes was quoted in the center's first newsletter published in 1972.³⁴ He went on to author several articles on school administration and conflict resolution, and also wrote a booklet published in 1974 by Pitt titled, *Understanding the Nature of Conflict: A Neglected dimension in Educational Administration*. Barnes remained at the center until his retirement from the university in 1983.

During her early years in Pittsburgh, Frances Barnes worked as a curriculum consultant for Pittsburgh's school system. She had just received her Columbia University

education doctorate when the couple moved to Pittsburgh. By January 1970, she was working with administrators on special education programs on integrating students with disabilities. Working with visually impaired students in Pittsburgh's schools, she was able to resume what she had done with Montgomery County's students a decade earlier.³⁵ Frances became active in civic affairs and the arts. She compiled two books, collections of essays and poetry. She also wrote for the *Pittsburgh Homewood-Brushton News and Shoppers Guide*, a Black-owned newspaper published in the 1970s and '80s. Frances also was a featured speaker at events throughout the city. Though she never joined her husband on Pitt's faculty, Frances did become the first African American to become president of the University of Pittsburgh Women's Association.³⁶

In 1980 Governor Richard Thornburgh nominated Frances Barnes as one of the first two citizen "consumer" members of the Pennsylvania Real Estate Commission. Established in 1929 to regulate the real estate industry and protect consumers, the Pennsylvania Legislature had repealed the old law and passed a new one reconstituting the oversight commission, which had previously

been accused of being a captive regulator (e.g., controlled by the industry it regulated), to include public or consumer members who did not hold real estate licenses.³⁷

Frances Barnes served two five-year terms and part of a third; she eventually chaired its education committee. In April 1987, during the National Association of Realtors observation of "Realty Week," Barnes received several honors, including a resolution from the United Way of Allegheny County recognizing Barnes as a pathbreaker in her advocacy for "adequate housing for the disadvantaged black people in our community." Mayor Richard Caligiuri declared April 22, 1987 as "Dr. Frances Johnson Barnes Day" and it was celebrated with an honorary luncheon at the Top of the Triangle restaurant in the U.S. Steel Building (now UPMC).³⁸

Barnes also served on Pittsburgh's Commission on Human Relations and was on the board of directors for the United Way of Allegheny County. In the 1990s, Barnes joined the Action Housing—Pittsburgh's board of directors and she served as the nonprofit's assistant treasurer and vice president. Frances described herself as a "professional volunteer" in a 1997 interview with *Post-Gazette* reporter Monica Haynes.³⁹

Frances Barnes in the *Press*, August 31, 1988.

STANDING OUT

Her message: All you need is love

By Tawanda Williams

The Pittsburgh Press

It was a summer day in 1978 when Frances Barnes, a two-time writer, hearted the most beautiful words of her life.

"Mommy! Mommy! There's the Love Lady!" called a little girl, who recognized Mrs. Barnes from a television program.

"She's everybody's mother," The Love Lady said. "It was the greatest compliment of my life," said Mrs. Barnes.

For several weeks last summer, Mrs. Barnes had been on local radio and television programs promoting her first book, "Love — From Black Girl to Black Woman."

On those programs, she did not read poetry from the book and expounded on her theory that love should be the center of our life.

"I want people to see love as a part of their life. When love is your center, you think love, you feel love and it becomes a part of your whole being," she said.

Mrs. Barnes, who lives in Point Breeze, recently completed the groundwork for establishing a "Black Love Scholarship Fund" at Duquesne University, her alma mater.

The fund will provide annual scholarships to researchers "committed to the study of the nature of love and ways in which people can be taught to love themselves and to love others."

She has donated \$1,000 to the fund and intends to raise another \$10,000 from July salary and foundation grants by next year.

Mrs. Barnes said that as a child growing up in Washington, D.C., she was attracted by love.

"Love is a way of life for me. There was always a lot of kissing and hugging in my house. I remember my grandfather pointing me up and holding me with his hands for minutes. We never forget to say 'I love you,' she recalled.

Mrs. Barnes said she always brings up the subject of love in her work as a volunteer for several groups, including the United Way, Health and Welfare Planning Association and the Council of Better Housing Bureau.

She believes the answer to the world's complex problems is love.

Mrs. Barnes said that if all the world's problems, politicians and leaders learn to love each other, the world would be a better place.

"If there was love among us, we wouldn't have war or rape, murder, we would have peace," she explained.

Because of her belief in the philosophy, she has lived a happy life, she said.

Mrs. Barnes said that if all the world's problems, politicians and leaders learn to love each other, the world would be a better place.

"Love takes discipline, faith, courage and commitment," Mrs. Barnes said.

Mrs. Barnes said she wants to develop an international center based on the results of research coming from her scholarship fund.

Her project has been greeted with enthusiasm from Howard University officials.

"We are very happy that Mrs. Barnes has decided to pursue this project. It has never been done before. It is definitely a subject that needs attention," said Lawrence Jones, dean of the school of divinity.

Visitors to Frances Barnes' home have little trouble figuring out what's important to her



Frances J. Barnes, Action-Housing Pittsburgh Annual Report, 1998-99.

HHC Detre L&A, Action-Housing Inc., 1997-0542.

Frances became known as the “love lady” because of her many media appearances promoting her two books on love among Black women and men. She frequently told reporters the story of a young girl who saw Barnes on television: “Mommy! Mommy! There’s the Love Lady,” Barnes recalled. “Now everybody calls me ‘The Love Lady.’”⁴⁰ *Post-Gazette* reporter Haynes wrote in 1997, “She treasures that moment along with the time that then-mayor Richard Caliguiri declared it Frances Barnes Day.”⁴¹

Her two edited volumes inspired a 1988 play, *Still I Rise*, produced by Pitt’s Black Action Society.⁴² Though love was her public message, Frances continued to struggle with racism and conflict in her personal life. In 1981, she and Roland divorced. In 1987, Frances alleged that the chairman of the Pennsylvania Real Estate Commission had removed her as the education committee chair; she resigned in 1992 before her term ended.⁴³ Her tenure on the Pittsburgh Commission on Human Relations was likewise cut short in 2004 after she accused commission leadership of bias and fraud.⁴⁴

A Legacy as Pittsburgh Pathbreakers

Frances remained in the Point Breeze home until 2016 when she moved to an assisted care facility. After his retirement from Pitt, Roland moved back to his native North Carolina. He died in Raleigh in 1997 and was buried in Arlington National Cemetery.⁴⁵ Daughter Sylvia was already grown and attending college when Roland and Frances moved to Pittsburgh. She moved back to Montgomery County 10 years ago after moving away in 1964 for college and living elsewhere. The couple’s other daughter was a teenager in 1969. She attended the University of Pittsburgh and she still lives in the Pittsburgh area.⁴⁶

Roland and Frances Barnes’s story reveals a personal side to the struggles that educational systems and the Black middle class faced during the civil rights era. It underscores the costs that some communities (e.g., Montgomery County, Maryland) paid when talented African Americans were discouraged from making their homes there and the benefits accrued to others (e.g., Pittsburgh) where good homes and good jobs were found. They were denied housing in the Washington suburbs and some of their new Pittsburgh neighbors didn’t want them there in the early 1970s. It wasn’t because of their middle-class incomes, their graduate educations, or their prestigious jobs. “It was a matter of the color of our skin!,” Frances Barnes recalled.⁴⁷

The Barnes’ story also adds new dimensions to the role that Black activism played in transforming the University of Pittsburgh from a segregated school into an institution with a legendary Black Studies Program and diverse student body with teachers drawn from a wide array of ethnic and racial backgrounds. Roland Barnes’s recruitment and his contributions to Pitt’s work beyond the classroom during his time there enhance the generalized narratives documenting how visionary Pitt chancellor Wesley Posvar’s approach to resolving campus conflict contributed to making

Pittsburgh a more inclusive and culturally enriched city during the last decades of the twentieth century.

I am grateful for the generous assistance I received from Sylvia Craig, Roland and Frances Barnes’s oldest daughter. The staff at the University of Pittsburgh’s University Archives assisted in locating records related to Roland Barnes and his tenure with the school as well as records related to the civil rights movement that led to the university hiring Barnes in 1969. I accept full responsibility, however, for any errors and omissions contained in this article. 🌟

David S. Rotenstein is a Pittsburgh public historian and folklorist who writes about gentrification and African American history. Dr. Rotenstein previously has written about Pittsburgh’s livestock and leather industries and he is researching the history of numbers gambling in the city. Dr. Rotenstein teaches in Goucher College’s graduate historic preservation program.

¹ The word “Black” is used interchangeably in this report to denote people of African descent or African Americans. Its capitalization and the use of lower-case “white” to denote people of European descent is intentional and in keeping with contemporary linguistics and cultural studies conventions. L.H. Burnett, “To ‘B’ or Not to ‘B’: On Capitalizing the Word ‘Black,’” *Society for US Intellectual History* (blog), April 23, 2016, <https://s-usih.org/2016/04/to-b-or-not-to-b-on-capitalizing-the-word-black/>; Merrill Perlman, “Black and White: Why Capitalization Matters,” *Columbia Journalism Review* (blog), June 23, 2015 www.cjr.org/analysis/language_corner_1.php; Lori L. Tharps, “Opinion | The Case for Black With a Capital B,” *New York Times*, December 21, 2017, sec. Opinion, www.nytimes.com/2014/11/19/opinion/the-case-for-black-with-a-capital-b.html; Robert S. Wachal, “The Capitalization of Black and Native American,” *American Speech* 75, no. 4 (December 1, 2000): 364–65. It is also the house style of the History Center.

² “Secretly Wed,” *Afro-American* (1893–1988); Baltimore, Md., June 28, 1941.

³ “‘Mr. Big’ Of Harlem Wins \$100,” *New York Amsterdam News* (1943–1961), City Edition; New York, N.Y., December 29, 1951.

⁴ Roland E. Barnes personal file, University of Pittsburgh Archives and Special Collections (Pitt Archives); Special to the Defender, “Battle Of Suburb Waged In Fight For D. C. Home,” *Chicago Daily Defender* (Daily Edition) (1960–1973), Chicago, Ill., November 1, 1962; “Biggest Project in School Building Plan Approved,” *The Washington Post and Times Herald* (1954–1959), Washington, D.C., January 8, 1959, sec. Sports.

⁵ Frances Johnson Barnes papers, collection of Sylvia

- Craig; P.L. 85-926, "An Act to Encourage Expansion of Teaching in the Education of Mentally Retarded Children Through Grants to Institutions of Higher Learning and to State Educational Agencies."
- ⁶ District of Columbia Recorder of Deeds, Book 10487, page 447, August 1, 1955.
- ⁷ Defender, "Battle Of Suburb Waged In Fight For D. C. Home."; The Supreme Court of the United States, October Term, 1965, No. 419, *Roland E. Barnes, Petitioner, v. Abraham S. Sind and Israel Cohen, et al.*, Respondents.
- ⁸ Anthony Lewis, "Bias Is Charged in F.H.A. Housing: Negro in Maryland Submits Pending Lawsuit as Proof Lawsuit Is Pending Clause Used Before," *New York Times*, December 14, 1962; Mary Stratford, "FHA Gets First Complaint under JFK Housing Order," *Afro-American (1893-1988); Baltimore, Md.*, December 22, 1962.
- ⁹ Jeffrey D. Gonda, *Unjust Deeds: The Restrictive Covenant Cases and the Making of the Civil Rights Movement, Justice, Power, and Politics* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2015); David M.P. Freund, *Colored Property: State Policy and White Racial Politics in Suburban America, Historical Studies of Urban America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007); Richard Rothstein, *The Color of Law: A Forgotten History of How Our Government Segregated America*, Kindle edition (New York: Liveright Publishing Corp., 2017).
- ¹⁰ Eunice Grier, "Characteristics of Black Suburbanites," Black Suburbanization in Metropolitan Washington (Washington: Washington Center for Metropolitan Studies, 1973), 29.
- ¹¹ Anne Braden, *The Wall Between*, 2nd ed (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1999); Thomas J. Sugrue, "Jim Crow's Last Stand: The Struggle to Integrate Levittown," in *Second Suburb: Levittown, Pennsylvania*, ed. Dianne Suzette Harris (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2010), 175-99.
- ¹² Eunice Grier and George W. Grier, eds., *In Search of Housing: A Study of Experiences of Negro Professional and Technical Personnel in New York State* (New York: State Commission against Discrimination, 1958), 8-9, <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=uiug.30112067081734&view=1up&seq=5>.
- ¹³ Roland E. Barnes Faculty Information sheet, Pitt Archives; "Barnes Takes New Job in Afghanistan," *The Washington Post, Times Herald* (1959-1973); Washington, D.C., June 5, 1963, sec. City Life.
- ¹⁴ Biographical Sketch, Dr. Roland E. Barnes, Pitt Archives.
- ¹⁵ David S. Rotenstein, "Producing and Protesting Invisibility in Silver Spring, Maryland," in *Demand the Impossible: Essays in History as Activism*, ed. Nathan Wuertenberg and William Horne (Washington, D.C.: Westphalia Press, 2018), 89-111; Judith Viorst, "Q. Is There a Silver Spring, and If so, Why?," *Washingtonian*, July 1967.
- ¹⁶ John E. Bodnar, Roger D. Simon, and Michael P. Weber, *Lives of Their Own: Blacks, Italians, and Poles in Pittsburgh, 1900-1960*, The Working Class in American History (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1982); Joe W. Trotter, "Reflections on the Great Migration to Western Pennsylvania," *Western Pennsylvania History*: 1918-2018 78, no. 4 (1995): 153-158-158; Joe William Trotter and Jared N. Day, eds., *Race and Renaissance: African Americans in Pittsburgh since World War II* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2010); Laurence Glasco, "Taking Care of Business: The Black Entrepreneurial Elite in Turn-of-the-Century Pittsburgh," *Pittsburgh History* 78, no. 4 (1995): 177-82; Laurence Glasco, "Double Burden: The Black Experience in Pittsburgh," in *City at the Point: Essays on the Social History of Pittsburgh*, ed. Samuel P. Hays, Pittsburgh Series in Social and Labor History (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1989), 69-110; Mark Whitaker, *Smoketown: The Untold Story of the Other Great Black Renaissance*, First Simon & Schuster hardcover edition (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2018).
- ¹⁷ Alyssa Ribeiro, "'A Period of Turmoil': Pittsburgh's April 1968 Riots and Their Aftermath," *Journal of Urban History* 39, no. 2 (2013): 147-71; Ralph W. Conant, "Rioting, Insurrection and Civil Disobedience," *The American Scholar* 37, no. 3 (1968): 420-33; Monica Haynes, "MLK Riots: When Patience Ran out, the Hill Went up in Flames," *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, April 2, 2008, www.post-gazette.com/life/lifestyle/2008/04/02/MLK-riots-When-patience-ran-out-the-Hill-went-up-in-flames/stories/200804020235; Emily Ruby, "1968: The Year That Rocked Pittsburgh," *Western Pennsylvania History* 96, no. 1 (2013): 18-32.
- ¹⁸ Joe T. Darden, *Afro-Americans in Pittsburgh: The Residential Segregation of a People* (Lexington, Mass: Lexington Books, 1973); Roy Lubove, *Twentieth-Century Pittsburgh: Government, Business, and Environmental Change*, vol. Volume 1 (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1995), 142-76; Allen Dieterich-Ward, *Beyond Rust: Metropolitan Pittsburgh and the Fate of Industrial America*, Politics and Culture in Modern America (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016), 172-77; Trotter and Day, *Race and Renaissance*.
- ¹⁹ Trotter and Day, *Race and Renaissance*, 102-3; Rodney Brooks, "Dwelling in the House of Lavelle," *Black Enterprise*, June 1984, 150.
- ²⁰ Ibram Rogers, "The Black Campus Movement and the Institutionalization of Black Studies, 1965-1970," *Journal of African American Studies* 16, no. 1 (March 2012): 29-30.
- ²¹ Black Action Society Files, Box 1, Pitt Archives.
- ²² Letter from Paul H. Masoner to Wesley W. Posvar, March 12, 1969. Chancellor Record Group, Posvar, Office File Academic Programs, 1968/69, Pitt Archives. Underlining in original.
- ²³ Chancellor Record Group, Posvar, Office Files, 1968/69, FF 1.18.1, Pitt Archives.
- ²⁴ Ibid.
- ²⁵ The National Association of Negro Business and Professional Women's Clubs, *Salute to Fifty of Pittsburgh's First Blacks in Business and Professions* (Pittsburgh: The Pittsburgh Club. The National Association of Negro Business and Professional Women's Clubs, n.d.).
- ²⁶ Hazel Garland, "Things to Talk About," *The New Pittsburgh Courier*, March 20, 1976.
- ²⁷ Their addresses appear in University of Pittsburgh directories published between 1970 and 1974 and in resumes preserved in Frances Barnes's papers.
- ²⁸ Trotter and Day, *Race and Renaissance*, 124-25.
- ²⁹ "Fair Housing???", undated manuscript, Frances Barnes papers.
- ³⁰ Roy Lubove, *Twentieth-Century Pittsburgh: The Post-Steel Era*, vol. Volume II (University of Pittsburgh Press, 1995), 87-88; Department of Housing and Urban Development, *The Model Cities Program, a Comparative Analysis of the Planning Process in Eleven Cities* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 1970), <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/003006926>; Koger Ralph, "Are Model Cities Plans Pork Barrel?," *Pittsburgh Courier*, December 2, 1967.
- ³¹ Barnes personal file, Pitt Archives.
- ³² Black Action Society Files. The organization's records include leadership meeting minutes, event programs, and newsletters.
- ³³ Letter from Paul H. Masoner to Wesley Posvar, May 7, 1971. Chancellor Record Group, Posvar, Office Files, Academic Programs, 1970-71, FF 1.6, Pitt Archives.
- ³⁴ "Center for Desegregation and Conflict Founded at University of Pittsburgh," *The Center Communicator*, 1972, 1.
- ³⁵ Dolores Frederick, "Integrate Handicapped, Educator Says," *The Pittsburgh Press*, January 18, 1970.
- ³⁶ *Blue Gold & Black 2006* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh African American Alumni Council, 2006), 179, <http://www.chancellor-emeritus.pitt.edu/sites/default/pdfs/2006-bg-black.pdf>.
- ³⁷ Frances Barnes papers; "Real Estate Licensing and Registration Act." (101 amended Mar. 7, 1982, P.L.158, No.50).
- ³⁸ Frances Barnes Papers; "Educational Events to Help Realtors, Realists Observe Realty Week," *The Pittsburgh Press*, April 12, 1987.
- ³⁹ Haynes, Monica L., "Celebration of Love Gala Unlocks Secrets of Marital Bliss," *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, November 18, 1997.
- ⁴⁰ Tawanda Williams, "Her Message: All You Need Is Love," *The Pittsburgh Press*, August 31, 1988.
- ⁴¹ Haynes, Monica L., "Celebration of Love Gala Unlocks Secrets of Marital Bliss."
- ⁴² Marc Hopkins, "Hardships and Relationships Are Portrayed in BAS Play," *The Pitt News*, February 8, 1988.
- ⁴³ "Racial Motivation Charged," *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, March 6, 1987.
- ⁴⁴ Marty Levine, "Strained Relations," *Pittsburgh City Paper*, January 1, 2004, www.pghcitypaper.com/pittsburgh/strained-relations/Content?oid=1335928.
- ⁴⁵ Allegheny County land records; North Carolina Department of Vital Statistics.
- ⁴⁶ Sylvia Craig, telephone conversation, July 5, 2019.
- ⁴⁷ "Fair Housing???"