



Atlanta University Center Library CEO & Director Loretta Parham to Retire This Year



News Release

ATLANTA, Georgia, January 25, 2024 — Loretta Parham, chief executive officer and director of the Robert W. Woodruff Library of the Atlanta University Center Inc., will retire after 19 years of outstanding leadership of the Library. The Board of Trustees and governing body of the AUC Woodruff Library is announcing her planned retirement date of June 2024.

“When our Board of Trustees recruited Loretta Parham in 2004, we needed a leader who not only understood our vision for building a quality educational library, but who also had the experience and expertise to make that vision a reality; and I have come to understand the distance that Mrs. Parham has moved the Library and thus the AUC,” said Dr. David A. Thomas, president of Morehouse College and chair of the Library’s Board. “In Parham, we got exactly what we were looking for – and so much more.”

Parham was appointed at a moment in the history of the Library when many AUC students and faculty used other local college and university libraries that had more comprehensive offerings and services. Under her direction, the AUC Woodruff Library has become a “first and best” choice for the more than 9,000 scholars in the AUC, the nation’s largest consortium of Historically Black Colleges and Universities, which includes Morehouse College, Spelman College, Clark Atlanta University, and the Interdenominational Theological Center. With the support of an outstanding team, Parham’s many accomplishments resulted in a strong brand and reputation for the Library including:

Infrastructure Improvements

- Raised more than \$26 million for capital enhancements and established an organizational culture of grant seeking resulting in \$9.8M in program funds
- Led the renovation of more than 140,000 square feet of library space
- Transformed the library grounds to create a greenspace and park for student and AUC use
- Reengineered and branded AUC campus shuttle services



Library Holdings and Resources

- Implemented an “electronic first” policy for library acquisitions
- Established an Archives Research Center that has processed nearly 100 collections, received 119 new manuscript acquisitions and now serves as a research destination and trusted repository for significant archival materials including, custodianship of the Morehouse College Martin Luther King Jr. Collection
- Opened the Bloomberg Finance Lab with 13 terminals and an interactive Market Wall, providing access to real time, global market data and cutting edge information technologies used in the business and financial sectors
- Established the Knowledge and Arts Initiative and curation of fine art collections, including pieces by AUC alumni and other acclaimed artists

Administrative Operations

- Recruited and retained a highly qualified and effective staff that carries out the Library’s vision and mission
- Engaged in annual strategic planning, implementation and assessments that produced sustained excellence in library services

Institutional Support

- Planned and delivered library services to ensure each member institution and selected academic departments met their requirements for accreditation with the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools
- Facilitated the establishment of the Walter Sessoms Scholarship, a library initiative that awards scholarships annually to AUC students

Library Distinctions

- [Named Academic Library of the Year](#) by the Association of Colleges and Research Libraries (ACRL)
- Earned membership in the Association of Research Libraries (ARL)

Parham’s Professional Service and Recognitions

- ACRL Librarian of the Year
- University of Michigan School of Information Distinguished Alumni Award
- Board membership on EDUCAUSE, EDUCOPIA, National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine (NASEM), Initiative for Open Science, OCLC, SOLINET, ACRL and ALA
- HBCU Library Alliance, of which she was co-founder and the inaugural board chair

Before leading the AUC Woodruff Library, Parham led the Hampton University Library, Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh, and a district of 24 branches of the Chicago Public Library.

She is the daughter of the late Amanda S. Rudd, the first female and African American commissioner of the Chicago Public Library. Parham received her master's degree from the University of Michigan and her bachelor's degree from Southern Illinois University.

"It has been my privilege to lead the AUC Woodruff Library, guiding it to its current level of excellence," said Parham. "I am forever grateful for the contributions of the Library staff and the commitment of the presidents of our member institutions who believe, as I do, in the value and strength of the nation's HBCUs and their students who are deserving of nothing less than the best."

The Library's Board of Trustees will launch a national executive search for the next AUC Woodruff Library CEO and Director.

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About the Atlanta University Center Robert W. Woodruff Library

Established in 1982, the [Atlanta University Center Robert W. Woodruff Library, Inc.](#) partners with the nation's largest consortium of historically black colleges and universities: Clark Atlanta University, the Interdenominational Theological Center, Morehouse College and Spelman College, providing information management, instruction and access to a variety of global information resources acquired and organized in support of teaching and learning, scholarship and cultural preservation of the Atlanta University Center and African American history. The Library has evolved into a model repository of information resources and a front-runner in the innovative delivery of [digital resources](#).

The Library's premier [Archives Research Center](#) provides collaborative leadership in preservation, access and collection development of unique archival resources documenting African American history and culture and is noted for its holdings of materials on the African American experience, including the John Henrik Clarke Africana and African American Collection, the Joseph and Evelyn Lowery Collection, the Henry P. Slaughter and Countee Cullen Memorial Collection, Black Women in Radio Historic Collection and the Southern Education Foundation Collection. The Archives Research Center is the repository of institutional records for selected schools within the Atlanta University Center and it serves as custodian of the Morehouse College Martin Luther King, Jr. Collection. In July 2022, the AUC Woodruff Library became the 127th member of the Association of Research Libraries, becoming the second HBCU in its history to achieve this distinction. For more information, visit www.auctr.edu

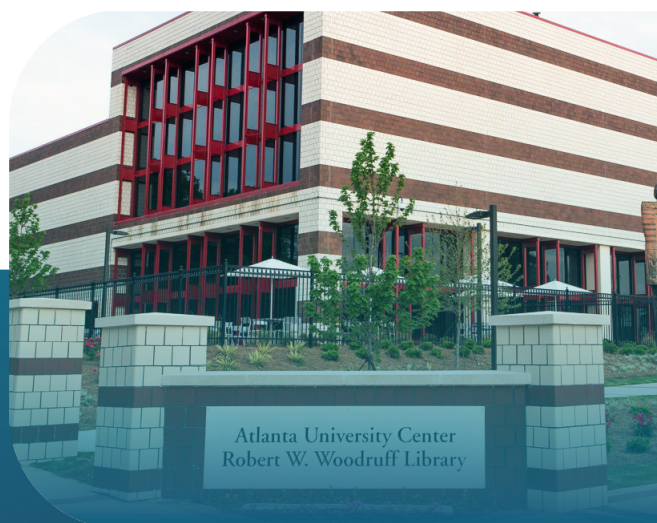
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