

The Black Appalachian Storytellers Fellowship honors, celebrates, and supports Black storytellers representing the Appalachian counties (as designated by the Appalachian Regional Commission) of Ohio, West Virginia, Virginia, Tennessee, Kentucky, and North Carolina. This is a partnership between the National Association of Black Storytellers, Mid Atlantic Arts, and South Arts. The Black Appalachian Storytellers Fellowship is administered by the National Association of Black Storytellers.

The NABS Black Appalachian Storytellers Fellowship is funded in part by Mid Atlantic Arts' Central Appalachia Living Traditions Program and South Arts' In These Mountains, Central Appalachian Folk Arts & Culture initiative.

In 2023, NABS Black Appalachian Storytellers Fellowships provides six (6) \$5,000 awards to support experienced practitioners and culture bearers with opportunities to examine, research, develop, perform, and/or document the Black Appalachian storytelling tradition. One fellowship is awarded to represent each of the six eligible states.

Fellows receive an additional funding to apply toward travel and lodging to the "In the Tradition..." Annual National Black Storytelling Festival and Conference in the year of their award.

Fellows will also receive a one- year membership to the National Association of Black Storytellers.

2023 Fellows

From the South Arts Region

Kentucky

Andrew Baskin

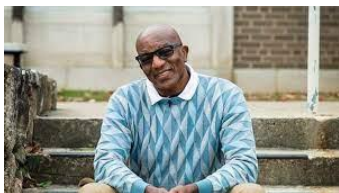


Andrew Baskin is a Professor Emeritus of African and African American Studies at Berea College. Since his retirement from Berea in 2019, he has taught African American History at Simmons College of Kentucky and Kentucky State University. A native of Alcoa, Tennessee, Andrew received Berea College's three most prestigious faculty awards for teaching, academic advising, and community service. For thirty-two years, he was the Editor of The

Griot: The Journal of African American Studies, the official publication of the Southern Conference on African American Studies.

North Carolina

Ronnie W. Pepper



Ronnie Pepper, a Hendersonville native, began his work encouraging children as a teen at the Neighborhood Youth Corps, which continues today. It's also where he started on his journey as a storyteller, entertaining the young with tried-and-true stories in the mountains and stories from around the world. Presently he leads

the Henderson County Research Group of Henderson County project of documenting the lives and stories of the Black communities of Henderson County. He celebrates being married to Roxanna for 42 years. They are blessed with two children and three grandchildren.

Tennessee

Kelle Jolly



Kelle Jolly, “The Tennessee Ukulele Lady” was inspired by Ella Jenkins and Sparky Rucker to expand upon the Black string music tradition in her performances. Embedded in every jazz, blues, or folk song she strums are the stories that need to be amplified. She grew up in a home where mountain songs were sung all the time, and fairy tales were told at bedtime. She is the founder of the Women in Jazz Jam Festival and the Ukesphere Ukulele Club. Kelle helped establish the TellBound Storytellers from ETSU. Albums with her husband include *Dreams of Muroran*, *Live at the Red Piano*, and *Freedom, Soul, Jazz*. They have traveled throughout the U.S and Japan. <https://www.facebook.com/myjollyboy/>

2023 Fellows

From the Mid Atlantic Region

Ohio

Lyn Ford



Lynette (Lyn) Ford is a fourth-generation, internationally recognized storyteller, an Ohio Arts Council teaching artist, a Thurber House mentor for young authors, and a John C. Campbell Folk School instructor, with more than thirty years of experience, many published poems and several award-winning books including *Affrilachian Tales*, *Beyond the Briar Patch*, *Hot Wind Boiling Rain* and *Boo-Tickle Tales*. Lyn is a two-time recipient of the National Storytelling Network's ORACLE Circle of Excellence award, and a member of the National Association of Black Storytellers Brother Blue Circle of Elders and NABS 2023 Zora Neale Hurston Awardee. <https://www.storytellerlynford.com>

Virginia

L. Renée



L. Renée is a poet, nonfiction writer, and collector of her family's stories. A descendant of proud Black Appalachians who labored in coal towns and tobacco fields, she won the international 2022 Rattle Poetry Prize and Appalachian Review's Denny C. Plattner Award. Nominated for Best New Poets, Best of the Net and two Pushcart Prizes, her work has been published in Obsidian, Tin House Online, Poetry Northwest and elsewhere. A recipient of fellowships from

Cave Canem and the Watering Hole, L. Renée holds an MFA in Creative Writing from Indiana University and an MS in Journalism from Columbia University. She works as Assistant Director of Furious Flower Poetry Center and Assistant Professor of English at James Madison University. lreneepoems.com

West Virginia

Aristotle Jones



Known as the Appalachian Soul Man, Aristotle Jones performs a blend of soulful folk music for audiences throughout Appalachia. He blends the R&B, Blues, Doo-Wop, Gospel, and Folk traditions rural black porch pickin' music found in West Virginia that he learned from his grandfather and other mentors. Aristotle is also a Radio Personality and Creative Director for WVRC Media, as well as the founder of the Osage Gospel N' Soul Community Choir. His most recent album Mountain Doo-Wop & the Streets of Osage was released in 2023 and is a tribute to his family, his state, and his rural blackness in America.

<https://www.aristotlejones.com>

2022 Fellows

Alicetyne Turley, Ph.D, **Kentucky**

Raymond Christian, **North Carolina**

Sparky Rucker, **Tennessee**

David Butcher, **Ohio**

Crystal Good, **West Virginia**

Ruby Daniels, **West Virginia**