



# WEST VIRGINIA HUMANITIES COUNCIL

## West Virginia Folklife Collection at West Virginia University Libraries Receives American Folklore Society's Brenda McCallum Prize

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*Charleston*—The West Virginia Folklife Program, a project of the West Virginia Humanities Council, is honored to announce that the West Virginia Folklife Collection housed at the West Virginia University Libraries has received the Brenda McCallum Prize, an award sponsored by the Archives and Libraries Section of the American Folklore Society.

The West Virginia Folklife Collection currently holds approximately 2,500 items generated by folklife fieldwork and programs conducted by the West Virginia Folklife Program since the program's founding in 2015. The items included in the collection are unique primary source materials such as field-recorded interviews and other audio recordings, transcriptions, photo and video documentation, ephemera, and some material objects. These recordings document the vernacular culture, beliefs, occupational skills, and expressive culture of contemporary tradition bearers, folk and traditional artists, and cultural communities across West Virginia. While this institutional partnership began in 2016, West Virginia Folklife's Founding Director Emily Hilliard and Interim Director of the West Virginia and Regional History Center at WVU Libraries Lori Hostuttler achieved success in providing digital access to the collection in 2021. Visit the West Virginia Folklife Collection here: <https://wvfolklife.lib.wvu.edu/>

The digital collection holds interviews with participants of the West Virginia Folklife Apprenticeship program like Jenny Bardwell and Susan Ray Brown describing the history and recipes of the Appalachian tradition of baking salt rising bread, and "West Virginia's First Lady of Soul" Lady D describing the blues and Black gospel music scenes in the state. More highlights of the collection include documentation of the foodways and community celebrations of the Randolph County Swiss community of Helvetia, recordings of members of the Scotts Run Community Museum in Monongalia County, and Summers County collector Jim Costa's collection of 18th and 19th century farm tools and objects of rural life.

"I am thrilled that we have received this prestigious recognition," says West Virginia State Folklorist Jennie Williams who currently directs the West Virginia Folklife Program. "I want to express gratitude for my predecessor Emily Hilliard, as well as Lori Hostuttler whose collaborative efforts made this archival partnership possible." Williams will continue to work with Hostuttler and Digital Archivist Elizabeth James to add to this original and ongoing collection, preserving stories of those who live in the Mountain State and providing access for those who wish to learn more about these documented lived experiences.

Since 1994, the American Folklore Society Archives and Libraries Section has awarded a prize of up to \$250 honoring the late folklife archivist Brenda McCallum. According to the American Folklore Society



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(AFS) website, "Through this prize, the AFS Archives and Libraries Section seeks to promote works of excellence and innovation that further the cause of the preservation, organization, curation, or enhanced public access and use related to folklife archival collections."

The West Virginia Folklife Program, a project of the West Virginia Humanities Council, is supported in part by the National Endowment for the Arts and the West Virginia Department of Arts, Culture and History. West Virginia Folklife is dedicated to the documentation, preservation, presentation, and support of West Virginia's vibrant cultural heritage and living traditions.

For more information on the West Virginia Folklife Program, visit [wvfolklife.org](http://wvfolklife.org) and <http://wvhumanities.org/programs/west-virginia-folklife-program/> or contact Jennie Williams at [williams@wvhumanities.org](mailto:williams@wvhumanities.org) or (304)346-8500.

*The West Virginia Humanities Council, an independent nonpartisan nonprofit, is the state affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities. The Council is supported by the NEH, the State of West Virginia, and contributions from the private sector. The purposes of the West Virginia Humanities Council are educational, and its mission is to support a vigorous program in the humanities statewide in West Virginia.*

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