

# FOIA MARKER

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**Collection/Record Group:** Clinton Presidential Records

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**OA/ID Number:** 19944

**FolderID:**

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**Folder Title:**

First Lady - Louis Armstrong House 12/3/98 [1]

**Stack:**

**S**

**Row:**

**91**

**Section:**

**6**

**Shelf:**

**9**

**Position:**

**2**

Jo: Louisa Schiller

From: Lela de Souza

Re: December 3 - FICHTUS: Annotations speech

Laura  
Schiller  
★ 11:30  
25 Nov

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

- musical legacy/contrib - preservation
- int'l / nat'l amb. of goodwill, racial harmony  
"Amb. Satchmo"
- Queens
  - the home
  - the neighborhood  
Foundation

1) musical legacy

2) cultural / political legacy

3) Queens

What he passed down - what we're preserving  
- about him, and about who we are as a people

1) music / archive

2) connectedness to e/o here at home ...  
and around the world

3) Queens, and the kids, who ~~are~~ draw upon  
his legacy + carry it forth

Draft 12/02/98 5:00pm  
Jeff Shesol

Jeff - I think this is great. One possible addition - if as discussed, putting his love of hangin' out with kids as bridge to (union sentence) @ how they will carry tune into next millennium)

FIRST LADY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON to introducing kids  
REMARKS AT QUEENS COLLEGE  
QUEENS, NEW YORK  
December 3, 1998

But, I don't care at all... it would be great as is...

Acknowledgments: Michael Mossman and the Queens College Jazz Orchestra (for the pre-show performance); Dr. Allen Lee Sessoms, Pres. of Queens College; Michael Cogswell, Dir. of the Armstrong House & Archives; Claire Shulman, Queens Borough Pres.; Wynton Marsalis; Arvell Shaw; Bill Ferris, Chairman of NEH; Ronnie and David Ginott [guh-KNOT]

(to everyone else who has contrib. so much)

First, I want to thank all of you for showing me such warm and wonderful hospitality here at Queens College, and earlier today at the Louis Armstrong House -- truly, the House that Jazz Built. I know at least one First Jazz Fan who wishes he could have joined us today. I know my husband will be eager to hear a few stories of Satchmo when I return to the White House.

Thanks again  
Car

Amazingly, more than a quarter-century has passed since Louis Armstrong lived here in Queens. It doesn't seem it could possibly be that long ago. That's because, in so many ways, Louis Armstrong still lives here. His music still swings and his spirit soars -- in Queens; and across the East River in Manhattan; and across our nation and around the world.

We hear the legacy of Louis Armstrong in the modern masterworks of Wynton Marsalis. We see it in the neighborhood schools sponsored by the Armstrong Educational Foundation. We find it in the cadence of our speech and feel it in the quickened tempo of our own times.

It is a rich cultural heritage, truly an American treasure, and one well worth preserving. At the Armstrong House and here at the Armstrong Archives, I have been privileged to see the work being done to carry Louis's legacy into the next century. That effort began, of course, with Satchmo himself. When we recall the vast range of his vocations -- from instrumentalist to vocalist, from actor to author, from composer to cultural ambassador -- we often forget that he was also a great preservationist.

As Michael Cogswell just told us, Louis Armstrong made a record of everything. He preserved papers. Photographs. Scrapbooks. Collages. Correspondence. He saved the charts that Wynton will play from today. Satchmo even saved menus, their margins scribbled full of commentary on the soup du jour. ("Dee-licious," he wrote.) On reel after reel, he made priceless recordings of jam sessions, backstage chatter, and parties. This is Armstrong on Armstrong -- a vital record of invention and improvisation, an essential glimpse of an artist at work and at play.

Louis Armstrong collected and preserved these artifacts. Now that he is gone, though, these precious, sometimes fragile, gifts cannot care for themselves -- a point that Michael Cogswell made poignantly clear. We are all, now, their caretakers. And that is why the efforts of Ronnie Ginott are so important: I am pleased to announce that she has raised \$100,000 for the

↓  
(bracket comp?)

is ing

16 pr  
15 sp.  
pg. #14

Ullw  
57228  
-is it more  
than 100 G?

preservation of those wonderful, invaluable Satchmo tapes. I also want to acknowledge Bill Ferris, Chairman of the National Endowment for the Humanities, for supporting a project that, he has told me, is close to his heart. The NEH has given a big financial boost to the Louis Armstrong Collection, helping not only to save these treasures but also to share them -- by generously funding a traveling exhibit. Across America, as I have been fortunate to see, people like Ronnie Ginott and groups like the NEH are doing the vital work Louis Armstrong once did -- preserving the artifacts that define our nation.

*This is all part of ...*

It is worth mentioning that the Louis Armstrong Archives aren't open only to music scholars; they're open to music lovers the world over. Visitors have come from countries as far away as Japan and Argentina to slip on a pair of headphones and listen to some of the rare recordings housed here in Queens -- maybe to take a look at that menu I mentioned. We are reminded that Louis Armstrong isn't just America's treasure; since 1932, when he first set foot overseas, he has belonged to the world.

Louis Armstrong's message of hope and goodwill knew no national boundaries. His was Gideon's trumpet, and could not be contained by even the mightiest walls of oppression. In Berlin, during the height of the Cold War, "Ambassador Satchmo" played and simply charmed his way across Checkpoint Charlie, from West to East and back again. In a *New Yorker* cartoon of that era, a State Department official says, "This is a diplomatic mission of utmost delicacy. The question is: who is the best man for it -- [the Secretary of State] or Satchmo?"

Back at home, Louis Armstrong was an ambassador of another kind -- between the races. A dangerous assignment in his day. Satchmo risked his own safety to sound a clear, resonant note for civil rights, blasting those who stood for segregation. As the nation's most prominent African American, his words carried special weight -- and so did his music, and his films, and the greatness of his gifts. One white Southerner, as a boy, had seen Armstrong play at a dance; later, that man joined the NAACP legal team that won *Brown v. Board of Education*. His inspiration? The genius of Armstrong. This lawyer later wrote: "Louis opened my eyes wide, and put me to a choice. Blacks, the saying went, were 'all right in their place.' What was the 'place' of such a man, and of the people from which he sprung?" Through the darkest days of racism, Satchmo was an eloquent voice for diversity and dignity.

In a sense, Louis Armstrong felt at home everywhere. He was certainly welcome in every country, on every continent. But from 1943 until his final days, there was only one place he and his wife Lucille truly called "home." I was honored to visit there today -- the modest brick house at 3456 107th Street. Of course, he could have lived in Manhattan, Hollywood, anywhere. But he chose Corona, Queens -- along what we now call the "Jazz Trail." Dizzy Gillespie was his neighbor, less than three blocks away. Ella Fitzgerald was nearby. So was Billie Holiday.

But what Louis really liked about Queens was doing his own shopping at the local grocer's... stopping by the barbershop... watching Westerns in his living room with the neighborhood kids. It was the perfect respite from a life spent mostly on the road. Satchmo said,

"We're right out here with the rest of the colored folk and the Puerto Ricans and Italians and the Hebrew cats. . . The frigidaire is full of food. What more do we need?"

Louis Armstrong needed nothing more. But he could see that wasn't the case for everyone in Corona; and, to those families, Satchmo was more than a neighbor. He was a friend. When had a brick facade built on his own house, he walked from door to door and offered to do the same for every family on his block. That same spirit guides the Louis Armstrong Educational Foundation, which Louis founded in 1969. He said then: "I wanna give back to the world some of the goodness the world gave me."

In addition to the profound musical legacy he has left us, Louis Armstrong has indeed given back much goodness -- through music history programs and workshops, through student exchanges and scholarships, through concerts for neighborhood children, and so much more. Twenty-seven years after Louis Armstrong was laid to rest at Flushing Cemetery, his spirit is as bright, and vibrant, as the music he made. The work you do here in Queens will help carry the tune into the next millennium.

*like hangin' w/ young people*  
*- young people will do it - carry it on*  
Now, let's hear a little more of that wonderful music. I am honored to introduce the student choir of Louis Armstrong Elementary and Intermediate Schools.

*like all of us, liked hanging w/ young*

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Ellen:

1) The owner of Queens College, will be opened on 7/4/2000  
\$30,000

2) \$ on

**FIRST LADY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON**

**REMARKS AT QUEENS COLLEGE**

**QUEENS, NEW YORK**

**December 3, 1998**

Acknowledgments: Michael Mossman and the Queens College Jazz Orchestra (for the pre-show performance); Dr. Allen Lee Sessoms, Pres. of Queens College; Michael Cogswell, Dir. of the Armstrong House & Archives; Claire Shulman, Queens Borough Pres.; Wynton Marsalis; Arvell Shaw; Bill Ferris, Chairman of NEH; Ronnie and David Ginott [guh-KNOT]

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[Ronnie has received commitments from the Sam Ash Music Co.; the Carl Fischer Music Publishers; Cynthia Friedman; the Gemeinhardt Flute Co.; Safra National Bank of NY; the Selmer Co.; United Musical Instruments; the Winston Band Instrument Co. and Rayburn Musical Instrument Co.; and Yamaha Band and Orchestral Instruments.]

I also want to acknowledge Bill Ferris, Chairman of the National Endowment for the Humanities, for supporting a project that, as he has told me, is close to his heart. The NEH has given a big financial boost to the Louis Armstrong Collection, helping not only to save these treasures but also to share them, by funding a traveling exhibit. And soon, in the Armstrong House I visited today, there will be a permanent Armstrong Museum. Thanks in no small part to a gift of \$30,000 by Thomas Lee and Ann Tenenbaum, and the ASCAP Foundation, the museum will open to the public on July 4, 2000, the hundredth anniversary of what Louis celebrated as his birthday.

Generosity like this makes it possible for us to continue the vital work Louis Armstrong began -- preserving the art and artifacts that define our nation. Such efforts are all part of our larger project to Save America's Treasures. As we approach the millennium, we should think of that milestone as more than a New Year's celebration -- it should be a celebration of our national culture, an opportunity to honor our past and, at the same time, imagine our future. This year, I have been touring sites that are vital to our national heritage.

During the next week, I will travel to Massachusetts to visit the Henry Wadsworth Longfellow House as well as the African Meeting House, the oldest standing African American church in our country. The point is to spotlight not just famous monuments, and not just political leaders, but also the literary and religious and musical pioneers who have shaped our history.

By highlighting our heritage, we make it more accessible to all. It is worth mentioning that the Armstrong Archives aren't open only to music scholars; they're open to music lovers the world over. Visitors come from countries as far away as Japan and Argentina to slip on a pair of headphones and listen to some of the rare recordings housed here in Queens -- maybe to take a look at that menu I described. We are reminded that Louis Armstrong isn't just America's treasure; since 1932, when he first set foot overseas, he has belonged to the world.

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In addition to the profound musical legacy he has left us, Louis Armstrong has indeed given back much goodness -- through music history programs and workshops, through student exchanges and scholarships, through concerts for neighborhood children, and so much more. Twenty-seven years after Louis Armstrong was laid to rest at Flushing Cemetery, his spirit is as bright and vibrant as the music he made. The work you do here at Queens College -- and the children of Satchmo's beloved borough -- will help carry the tune into the next millennium.

Now let's hear a little more of that wonderful music, from the children of Queens. I am honored to introduce the student choir of Louis Armstrong Elementary and Intermediate Schools.

musicians such as Sidney Bechet, Teddy Buckner, Sammy Price, Claude Hopkins and Earl Hines. Mr. Shaw and the Louis Armstrong Legacy Band currently perform in "Pops is Tops," a series of concerts for young people held every summer in the garden of the Louis Armstrong House.

**Queens College Jazz Orchestra**  
Michael Philip Mossman, Director

Members of the Queens College Jazz Orchestra are candidates for the Master in Jazz Performance at the Aaron Copland School of Music at Queens College/CUNY. These performers have come from all over the United States and abroad to study the art of jazz performance and composition in New York City. The jazz program at Queens boasts many internationally recognized artists among its alumni and many current students are already active in the performing and recording arenas.

Michael Mossman replaced jazz legend Jimmy Heath as Director of Jazz Studies in 1997 and joins Sir Roland Hanna and Todd Williams on the faculty of the Jazz Program at Queens College. Professor Mossman performs with and composes for the Carnegie Hall Jazz Band, the Mingus Jazz Orchestra and Tito Puente as well as with his own group, the New York Latin Jazz Orchestra. His most recent CD, *Mama Soho*, is on the TCB label.

**Queens College and the Louis Armstrong House and Archives**

Queens College, founded in 1937, is a highly selective public commuter college well known for its world class faculty and for the accomplishments of its graduates. The college offers its diverse student population affordable access to outstanding academic programs in the liberal arts and professional fields. Queens College is part of the City University of New York, which includes ten senior colleges, six community colleges, a technical college, a graduate school, a law school and an affiliated medical school.

When Louis Armstrong's wife Lucille died in 1983, leaving her estate and assets to the Louis Armstrong Educational Foundation, she requested the house be given to the City of New York as a museum. The City, in consultation with the Foundation, selected Queens College to administer the House and Archives. The College currently houses archives containing an extensive collection retrieved from the house, then preserved and catalogued for public use. The College also administers the project to open the Louis Armstrong House as a museum.

The White House Millennium Council and Queens College wish to thank the National Trust for Historic Preservation, Jazz at Lincoln Center, the Colden Center technical production staff, the Queens College Offices of Special Events, Security, Publication and Reprographic Services, Information Technology and the many other departments and individuals who have helped to make this event possible.



"My Whole Life Has Been Happiness"  
Louis Armstrong

A Ceremony and Performance  
in recognition of the  
Louis Armstrong House and Archives  
and  
Save America's Treasures

Pre-show performance by the Queens College Jazz Orchestra

Welcome by Queens College President Dr. Allen Lee Sessoms

*Struttin' With Some Barbecue*

Remarks by Michael Cogswell  
Director, Louis Armstrong House and Archives

Remarks by Queens Borough President Claire Shulman

*Basin Street Blues*

Remarks by Wynton Marsalis and a conversation with Arvell Shaw

*Mack the Knife*

Remarks by First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton

*Wonderful World*  
sung by the Louis Armstrong Elementary and Intermediate School  
Choirs

4

1



**Dr. Allen Lee Sessoms**  
**President, Queens College**

Dr. Sessoms comes to Queens College from a distinguished career that has spanned years, disciplines and continents. After earning his B.S. at Union College, his M.S. at the University of Washington and his Ph.D. at Yale, Dr. Sessoms did post doctoral work at Brookhaven National Laboratory and served as Scientific Associate with the European Association of Nuclear Research before going on to become an Associate Professor of Physics at Harvard University.

From 1980 to 1993, Dr. Sessoms held a series of increasingly responsible appointments at the U. S. Department of State. In posts ranging from Director of the Office of Nuclear Technology and Safeguards at the Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs, to Counselor for Scientific and Technical Affairs at the U.S. Embassy in Paris, to Minister-Counselor for Political Affairs and then Deputy Chief of Mission at the U.S. Embassy in Mexico, Dr. Sessoms demonstrated a command in areas ranging from nuclear technology and safeguards to U.S. European space cooperation, to political affairs and the implementation of overall U.S. policy in Mexico, including assisting in the negotiation of the North American Free Trade Agreement. Currently, Dr. Sessoms serves on the U.S. Secretary of Energy's Advisory Board.

In 1995, after two years as Executive Vice President and Vice President for Academic Affairs at the University of Massachusetts, Dr. Sessoms became the eighth President of Queens College.

**Michael Cogswell**  
**Director, Louis Armstrong House and Archives**

In 1973, when he left the University of Virginia to play saxophone professionally, Michael Cogswell did not imagine his musical career would lead him back to a college campus and into the life and history of one of the world's foremost jazz musicians. After eight years of performing a spectrum of music types including jazz, rock, soul and avant-garde, Mr. Cogswell returned to college and earned Master degrees in Jazz History and Library Science. He also fell in love with historical musicology, libraries and archives.

Queens College hired Mr. Cogswell in 1991 to bring order to Louis Armstrong's vast personal collection of home-recorded tapes, scrapbooks, photographs, manuscripts and other materials. After three years of arranging, cataloguing and preserving, the Louis Armstrong Archive at Queens College opened to the public in 1994.

Mr. Cogswell is the recipient of numerous honors, including the 1996 Queens Borough Preservation Award and he currently heads the project to open the Louis Armstrong House as a historic museum.

**Wynton Marsalis**

Wynton Marsalis is an accomplished and acclaimed jazz artist as well as a distinguished classical musician. He has been instrumental in bringing jazz to the forefront of American culture by combining his talents as musician, composer, bandleader, teacher and as Artistic Director of Jazz at Lincoln Center.

Since making his recording debut in 1982, Mr. Marsalis has produced a catalogue of more than thirty outstanding jazz and classical recordings which have won him eight Grammy Awards and the distinction of being the only artist ever to receive both classical and jazz Grammys in a single year. In 1997, Mr. Marsalis became the first jazz artist to be awarded the Pulitzer Prize for music when he was honored for his oratorio on slavery, *Blood on the Fields*.

Named by Time Magazine as one of "America's 25 Most Influential People," Mr. Marsalis often uses that influence to inspire young people by teaching, advocating for music education and conducting regular master classes, including the popular Jazz for Young People Concerts produced by Jazz at Lincoln Center.

Mr. Marsalis' latest recordings with the Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra include *Blood on the Fields* and *Jump Start and Jazz*. Both were released by Columbia Records in 1997. His newest album, *Standard Time Volume 5: The Midnight Blues*, has achieved both critical and popular success.

**Claire Shulman**  
**Queens Borough President**

In 1986, Claire Shulman became the first woman to be elected Borough President of Queens County. As the highest-ranking elected official in a borough of almost 2 million people, Ms. Shulman plays a major role in a wide range of land use issues, the development of the city's expense and capital budgets, and in making recommendations to the Mayor and other City officials that support the interests of the people of Queens. Ms. Shulman's major accomplishments as borough president have included: the rezoning of dozens of neighborhoods to create reasonable and responsible development, while preserving the character of existing neighborhoods; the economic revitalization of many communities and the expansion of the borough's economic base; and increased funding for senior centers and activities, cultural programs and libraries.

**Arvell Shaw**

Double bass player Arvell Shaw has had a long and distinguished career in jazz. From the early days on Mississippi river boats with Fate Marable, to his work on Broadway and touring in "The Wonderful World of Louis Armstrong," Mr. Shaw has been a constant presence on the jazz scene. A member of Louis Armstrong's All Stars from 1945 to 1953, Mr. Shaw continued to play with "Pops," intermittently, until Armstrong's death in 1971.

Mr. Shaw also toured Europe with Benny Goodman and performed and recorded with

2

3

## Memorandum

To: Ellen Lovell  
Jeff Shesol

From: Leela de Souza (x62006)

Date: December 2, 1998

cc: Stephanie Madden-Kurz  
Laura Schiller  
Christy Macy  
Noah Meyer

### Re: ARMSTRONG EVENT-ANNOUNCEMENTS OF GIFTS TO DATE

The following is the list to date of announcements of gifts for the Armstrong event. I confirmed these (names/spellings/dollar amounts) by phone with Bobbie Green. There will likely be a few additions; the unknown dollar amounts will be confirmed by Ronnie Ginott. *Of all contributions, Ronnie Ginnot has personally raised \$100,000+ and deserves a special mention. It still needs to be decided if/which others should be mentioned as well:*

• For the Armstrong House

Thomas H. Lee and Ann Tenenbaum-\$25,000  
ASCAP Foundation-\$5,000

• For the Armstrong Archives - *Ronnie's work*

- Selmer Company- \$?
- Gemeinhardt Flute Company-\$?
- Winston Band Instrument Company-\$10,000
- Safra Bank/Republic Bank (these banks are affiliated, unclear as of yet how they are to be listed-\$?)
- Yamaha Music Company, Michael Bennett, CEO-\$10,000
- The Carl Fisher Music Publishers, Charles Obry [AH-bree], President-\$10,000
- United Musical Instruments, Rob Palmer, President-\$10,000
- Anonymous gift-\$15,000
- Ash Music Company, Coby Narita Ash, \$1,000 (amount likely to increase)

*thanks to the generosity of...*

*[and has already rec'd attments from ...]*

(?) more than a time of celeb...

As part of our efforts, we've embarked

FIRST LADY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON  
REMARKS AT THOMAS EDISON NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE  
WEST ORANGE, NEW JERSEY  
JULY 14, 1998

[IF HOT: I was thinking just now that in July, Edison's comment that genius is 1 percent inspiration and 99 percent perspiration takes on a whole new meaning!]

We are here today so that future generations of children will walk into this historic site and walk out inspired by the American story of creativity and scientific discovery that Thomas Edison wrote. I want to thank everyone who has made that possible, especially: Congressman Pascrell; Mayor McKeon; Dick Moe and the National Trust for Historic Preservation. Bob Stanton, Marie Rust, and the entire National Park Service. Maryanne Gerbackus.

And I want to say a special thanks to Jack Welch and all of General Electric, for your extraordinary generosity and commitment. Because of your gift, the laboratory that gave birth to over half of Edison's patents will always touch the hearts and minds and spirits of all who visit here. It is my sincere hope that your gift will also inspire others, who have benefitted from Thomas Edison's legacy, to help ensure that it lives on forever. And Elizabeth Sloane....

Being at this place where genius transformed into invention, I am reminded of the time Edison signed a guest book. He put down his name and address in the typical spots. But there was one last column headed "Interested in." And there Edison wrote one word: Everything. And that's exactly what he created...everything. Think about our daily lives...even this event which requires pictures and sound and light. We can tape a t.v. show we miss tonight...because of Thomas Edison. We can listen to a new CD in our stereo. We can go to the movies. And, yes, we can punch a time clock at work. In fact, I recently learned that the Marine Band, whose 200th anniversary we celebrated just last week, was one of the first musical ensembles to record cylinders for Edison's new invention, the phonograph.

When Edison died, his staff promptly sealed his desk. They understood, just as Americans have learned through the years, that we needed to preserve our past. That's the point of the tour I'm on: to ask every one of us to Save America's Treasures. As we approach the Millennium, we know there will be all sorts of parties. But this is also a golden opportunity to help preserve the artifacts, monuments and sites that define our nation -- and must guide us into the future.

Yesterday, the President and I stood beneath the Star Spangled Banner at the National Museum of American History, and looked up at the flag that inspired Francis Scott Key to pen our national anthem. I visited the monument to Key and the site where the flag rose up from at Ft. McHenry. And later today, I'll see the Colonial Theater in Pittsfield, Massachusetts, one of the finest theaters in the world, where a family bought it and kept it for decades until it could be returned to the community. The point is to spotlight not just famous monuments. Not just leaders involved in politics. But also the scientists, musicians, and other creative geniuses who lift up our health and lives and spirits.

It's incredible to think, that here with a few hundred other "muckers," as he called them, Edison created the model of the modern research and development lab. Today, all told we spend more than \$200 billion a year on R&D, which has led to everything from the Internet to the Hubble Space Telescope.

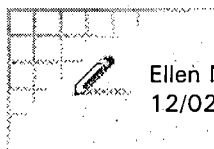
The contributions Edison made changed how we lived our lives during the industrial revolution and thereafter. Now, we live in an information revolution. The question is, will we learn from Edison and accept the challenge? We have the chance to unlock the mysteries behind AIDS and cancer, create high speed wireless networks that bring learning to children all over; and telemedicine to our rural communities. Which is why, in his year 2000 budget, the President will call for significant increases in computing and communications research. And it's why this year, he asked Congress for the largest single increase in research funding in history.

One of my favorite stories about Thomas Edison involves his research into the storage battery. Before he invented it, he first tried 50,000 experiments...none of which were successful. When someone commented on this huge number of failures, Edison responded: "Results? Why I have gotten a lot of results. I know fifty thousand things that don't work." He tried and tried until he got it right. That determination...the spirit of exploration...that optimism must be passed on to students like the ones from West Orange High School and Seton Hall Prep.

What you've done today builds on the great tradition of preservation in this country. By 1850, we had already established George Washington's headquarters at Newburgh, where I go next, as our first State Historic Site. What they knew then, and what we have continued to learn through successes and failures such as the destruction of the beautiful Penn Station..is that we will never own our nation's past. We are it's caretakers and we have a responsibility to be good ancestors.

Perhaps there is a monument in your town square covered in graffiti. A cemetery overgrown with weeds. An historic building threatened by development. A library lacking in resources. A piece of art tucked away. Historic photographs yellowing in a county clerk's file cabinet. We have the chance to find America's Treasures. And every one of us, from the kindergarten class to the corporate board can do something to help save them. We can all give our own gifts to the future.

If you take a look at some of the popular culture, it often views the future with fear. Aliens come down. Cities, usually Washington, D.C., get blown up. And if you're lucky, one person survives. But, there's another view -- one we must take. Just as Edison looked at the future with confidence, so too can we. In this time of great blessings, we cannot rest on our laurels. This is the time to pass on to our children and grandchildren and great grandchildren stories like Thomas Edison's, which shaped us yesterday...and must guide us tomorrow.



Ellen M. Lovell

12/02/98 06:23:54 PM

Record Type: Record

To: Jeffrey A. Shesol/WHO/EOP, Leela deSouza/WHO/EOP, Laura E. Schiller/WHO/EOP

cc:

Subject: context

We need a good P of context to put this event in the millennium, Save America's Treasures context. Can't find a good generic one - so here are the main points, which I hope you can improve on.

We are here today, near the end of the 20th century, to honor a great artist. And soon, when 1999 appears on the calendar, we will be even more aware than we are today, that the odometer of time is about to change the nines to zeroes - and the new millennium will arrive. Already we are hearing about it...we hear millennium minutes, we see ads for millennium mufflers...friends are asking each other where they will be on New Year's Eve - both in 1999 AND 2000. We are also aware that this is an historic time -- a milestone -- after all, it only happens once every 1,000 years.

So last year the President and I created the White House Millennium Council, to set the themes, and stimulate activities in which all Americans can participate: projects that help us learn lessons from our past and prepare us for the 21st c. Our national millennium theme is: Honor the Past -- Imagine the Future.

→ And one of our signature projects is Save America's Treasures -- a public-private partnership to preserve the collections, art, documents, monuments and historic sites that tell America's story. How can we imagine the future, if the legacy of the people and events that shaped our democracy and our culture do not come with us into the next millennium? This year Congress agreed to the president's request for \$30 million to help save our most important national treasures. The National Trust for Historic Preservation is our partner in supporting many sites and artifacts all over the nation, with its partners, the National Park Foundation and Heritage Preservation. The Trust has created a new Millennium Committee to Save America's Treasures which I am pleased to chair and I welcome the members of that committee here today and thank them for their generosity.

Last summer, The WH Millennium Council and I went on my first Save America's Treasures Tour, visiting 13 historic sites in four days. On Saturday, I will travel to Cambridge, Mass., to visit the Henry Wadsworth Longfellow House, then to Boston to an event honoring the African Meeting House, the oldest standing African-American church in the US. Then next week, I will be in California, to recognize and to make announcements at three other historic places.

When we think about historic sites, we often think of the military and political leaders who made history. But our artists make history too, and change our country for the better. This certainly was the case with Louis Armstrong.

sorry this is rough.

*put it at pg. bottom  
- so she can write it in*



## THE WHITE HOUSE MILLENNIUM COUNCIL

PHONE: 202/456-2000

FAX: 202/395-7211

TO: Bobbie GreenFAX: 588-6082C National Trust for  
Historic PreservationPHONE: 588-6190FROM: Leela de SouzaDATE: 11/19/98TIME: 1:00pmNumber of Pages (Including Cover): 5

## MESSAGE:

Bobbie,  
Ellen thought this article on the Armstrong  
Education Foundation would be helpful. Hope  
Leela you're well.

THE WHITE HOUSE MILLENNIUM COUNCIL  
708 JACKSON PLACE, NW  
WASHINGTON, DC 20503

The information contained in this facsimile is PRIVATE and intended for the recipient ONLY. Please call if there are any problems with our transmission.

# Louis Armstrong Educational Foundation, Inc.

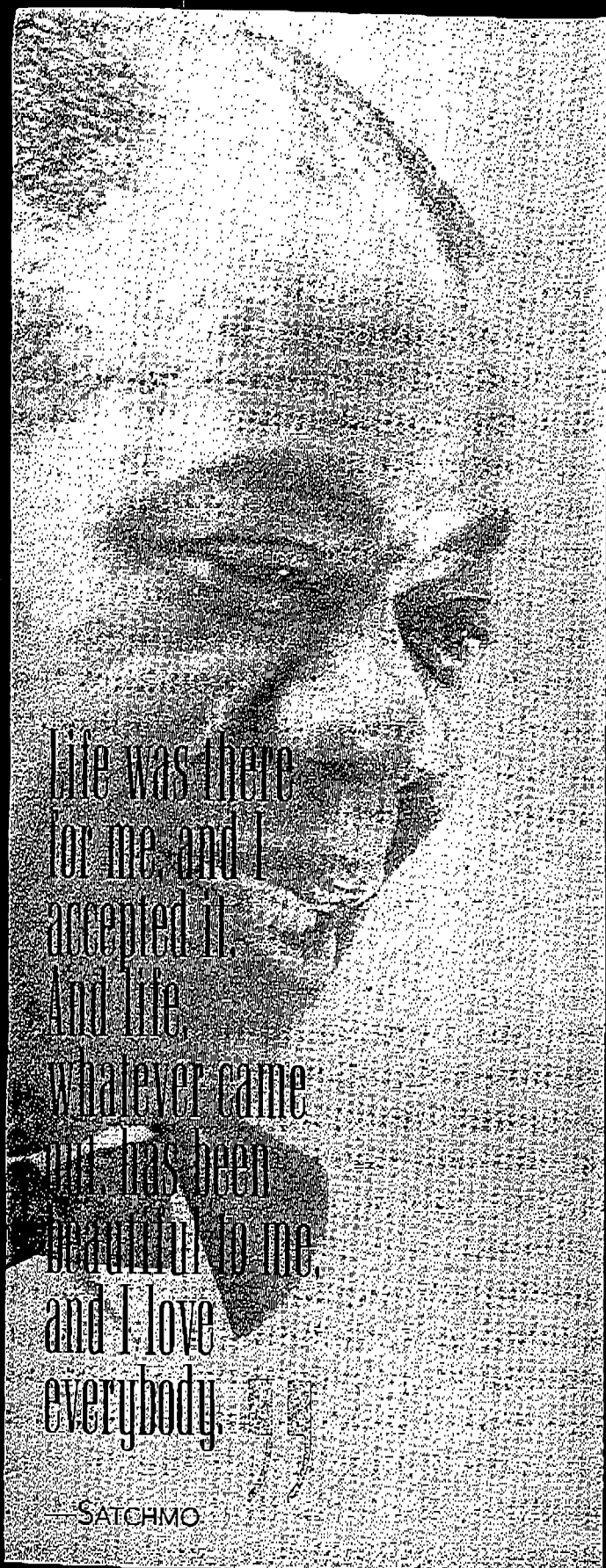


Funded and Founded by Satchmo

“ My whole life  
has been  
happiness.  
Through all the  
misfortunes...  
I did not plan  
anything.”

*Phoebe Jacobs - runs fdu.*





Life was there  
for me, and I  
accepted it.  
And life,  
whatever came  
out, has been  
beautiful to me,  
and I love  
everybody.

—SATCHMO

#### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Executive Vice President

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*Satchmo*

ED

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Gerry Levinson

Wynton Marsalis

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Queens College/CUNY

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Benny Carter

\*Ella Fitzgerald

Jon Faddis

Jon Hendricks

Quincy Jones

\*Lou Levy

Arvel Shaw

Billy Taylor

\*Deceased

## FOUNDATION

## STORY



In 1969, Louis Armstrong funded and founded The Louis Armstrong Educational Foundation stating "I wanna give back to the world some of the goodness the world gave me."

Louis Armstrong's death on July 6, 1971, created waves of mourning over the entire world. His playing, his singing and his joyful persona were known in every corner of the globe, from fans behind the Iron Curtain to European royalty, from the smallest African village to every man, woman and child in the United States. The Congressional Record on that date was filled with tributes:

*"...he was really a citizen of the world and one of this nation's greatest natural resources."*

*"...an inspiration and teacher to his fellow musicians and the driving force behind 20th-century jazz...he provided countless millions of people in many countries with hours of exciting music."*

*"Although unschooled and brought up in poverty, Satchmo always retained pleasant disposition and willingness to look on the constructive and positive side of life. Even in the midst of tawdriness, degradation and artificiality, he found human goodness, sacrifice and charity. Rising from playing his horn in the bordellos of New Orleans to his role as unofficial Ambassador of Goodwill throughout the world on behalf of the United States, Louis Armstrong did more for his country than a thousand official members of the Foreign Service. We have lost one of our most illustrious and valuable citizens."*

In 1974, at the behest of the U.S. State Department and in response to requests from behind the Iron Curtain, Lucille Armstrong embarked on a government-sponsored tour of Hungary, Romania, Czechoslovakia and Poland conducting a program of slides, films and music tapes highlighting her late husband's life. She left albums, books and other memorabilia to schools and embassy libraries.

Lucille died in 1983 and left her estate and assets to the Foundation, with the request that the house be given to the City of New York as a museum.

## FOUNDATION

## GOALS



The Louis Armstrong Educational Foundation Inc., founded in 1969, is dedicated to:

- Fostering programs, workshops and lectures on music history in schools
- Assisting and contributing to programs and event for education in music by organizations such as schools and libraries.
- Sponsoring programs at all school levels that aid the students in developing musical skills.
- Participating in scholarships, student exchanges and grants.



## FOUNDATION

## SUPPORT

- Annual grant maintenance of Corona Queens support of Queens Co
- Public school workshops
- The East E tapes, video books and
- The Lincoln Concerts a under the
- The Music center of E
- Gifts to Ar Harlem Sci Library and
- ASCAP for seminars, v
- Schomburg Culture to library of ir musicians i research c

FOUNDATION

## SUPPORTS



- Annual grants to Queens College for the maintenance of the Louis Armstrong home in Corona Queens—a National Landmark—and support of the Louis Armstrong Archives at Queens College.
- Public schools for music education programs, workshops and library materials.
- The East Elmhurst Library in Queens for CDs, tapes, video material, concerts and special books and programs.
- The Lincoln Center Jazz for Young People Concerts and other educational programs under the direction of Wynton Marsalis.
- The Music Therapy program at the pediatric center of Beth Israel Hospital.
- Gifts to Art Connection, Boys Choir of Harlem, Harlem Schools for the Arts & Lincoln Center Library and Museum.
- ASCAP foundation for programs including seminars, workshops and scholarships.
- Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture to establish extensive audio and visual library of interviews and performances by jazz musicians made available to all schools and research centers.



Lucille and Louis Armstrong, 1951

"The sound of that horn was a pure spiritual essence, the sound of America and of Freedom."

—Wynton Marsalis

"If anybody was Mr. Jazz, it was Louis Armstrong. He is what I would call An American Original."

—Duke Ellington

"He's like Picasso, Stravinsky and Casals—one of a kind, a giant upon the earth, and there won't be another like him."

—Ralph Gleason, Critic

"...you can't play anything on the horn that Louis hasn't played—even modern."

—Miles Davis

"He is the beginning and the end of music in America."

—Bing Crosby

"No him, no me."

—Dizzy Gillespie

"One of the 100 most important Americans of the 20th century"

—Life Magazine, Fall 1990

"He has probably been the most famous musician of the century. He was, at the time of his death on July 6, 1971, a living legend for half a century, not just to the American people as a whole but to millions of people around the world."

—Henry Pleasant, Author and Music Critic

Honor place that nurtured <sup>a</sup> discipline  
- flowering of culture  
- jazz trail

Michael Logswell  
- best source on tapes  
Wynton Marsalis  
- Armstrong the artist + man

- 1) Queens / jazz
- 2) Queens / Louis  
- Kider / foundation  
- Pops is tops  
- archives at Q's College

- many pull in A. Shaw  
College

As a result of FV's Treasure's tour...

- 1) - among them: Pounie Granott (exp?) - husband a musician  
raised \$100,000 for preservation of tapes
- 2) 2nd announcement - donor to renovate house (?) uncertain yet

Focus: ~~on~~ the place, the preservati

- make case for why country + priv. benefactors shd be preserving legacy of great artists like this
- Why do we care about his tapes, his house, his 'hood?
- don't worry about bias

LA embodies notion of preservation

- in reverse, the Millennium motto
- imagined future; honored past by making tapes, etc.  
very aware of creating record of everything  
(Armstrong on Armstrong, a vital glimpse)  
- a great correspondent

\* he painstakingly saved charts that Wynton will play

- → treasures are not just homes, flags, but documents, etc. that artists  
leave behind as a record of an invention in culture (collect. in)

## Program order

- College pres - intro, archives + use in context of college
  - Electeds - Borough pres Claire
  - Cozswell - (Schulman, ~~Schulman~~ perhaps Schuman)
  - Winton - intro or dialogue w/ ArriveLman - spec. about hse, archives, preserv. needs + who uses it
  - Flotus
- perhaps more music

• Finale: combined choir of L.A. elementary + middle schools

Acknowledgments: donors; Ronnie; musical instrument infra.

Will be touring hse + archives — so make spec. ref to what she's seen  
from the quote on L.A. "No ~~for~~ him, no me"  
( "No America, no jazz"  
( "No them, no we" )

Louis as Prez — impact widespread — vocal w/o stridency about air itz.  
- Congo 1961 — break in fighting  
- 4 Berlin 1960s — charmed way back <sup>to port</sup> thru Checkpt Charlie  
- quote Havel: "Jazz is the music of freedom"  
(ie, during 1989 crisis)  
Telegram to Ike

Mastered media — grew up w/ film, recordings, etc  
→ natural he recorded self w/ reel to reel  
- breaking through barriers

# Pops is Tops

The most popular public program of the Louis Armstrong House and Archives is Pops is Tops, our annual concert series for local children, now in its 10th year.

Every spring children from Louis's neighborhood enjoy a live jazz concert at the Louis Armstrong House. The concerts typically take place in the last week in May or the first week in June. There are two shows per day: a morning show at 10 am and an afternoon show at 12:30 pm. Since 1994, the performing group has been Arvell Shaw and the Louis Armstrong Legacy Band. Arvell Shaw, who played bass for Louis Armstrong for more than twenty-five years, leads a band of world-class musicians who perform music associated with Louis Armstrong.

The concerts take place in the beautifully restored garden of the Louis Armstrong House. Because the garden can seat only 250 children at a time, the concerts are wonderfully intimate. The children and the musicians enjoy a rapport not realized in larger venues. For example, the highlight of the 1997 concert occurred at the close of the morning show of 4 June. Arvell Shaw was singing Louis Armstrong's hit "What a Wonderful World," when one hundred children in the audience began to sing along. (The children were students at the Louis Armstrong Intermediate School, which plays the song over the PA every morning.) Ms. Shaw, whose eyesight is so poor that he could not see the children, heard them singing along and tears trickled down his cheeks.

During the concert, each musician in the sextet takes a few minutes to explain his instrument and how it is played. At the end of the concert, ten minutes is devoted to questions and answers. Children raise their hands and get to ask any questions they wish to the musicians. Most questions fall into the subjects of how to play jazz, instrumental technique, or the life of Louis Armstrong, but no question is out of bounds! The explanatory presentations and the question and answer session provides a memorable educational component to each Pop is Tops concert.

Seating at Pops is Tops is so limited that attendance at Pops is Tops is by invitation only. Attendees are usually restricted to children in Louis's neighborhood. Want to come? Send a postcard or letter to:

Pops is Tops Concerts  
Louis Armstrong House and Archives  
Queens College  
65-30 Kissena Blvd.  
Flushing, NY 11367

Pops is Tops is made possible by a grant from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs.

[Go Back](#)

## Memorandum

To: Ellen Lovell

Jeff Shesol

From: Leela de Souza (x62006)

Date: December 2, 1998 (7:00 PM)

cc: Stephanie Madden-Kurz

Laura Schiller

Christy Macy

Noah Meyer

**Re: UPDATE---ARMSTRONG EVENT-ANNOUNCEMENTS OF GIFTS TO DATE**

The following is the list to date of announcements of gifts for the Armstrong event. I confirmed these (names/spellings/dollar amounts) with Bobbie Greene. *Of all contributions, Ronni Ginott has personally helped raise \$100,000 and deserves a special mention. The House donations should also be mentioned and there is a vote for those present [as noted] of the archive donations to be mentioned as well:*

• **For the Armstrong House-\$30,000 total**

-Thomas H. Lee and Ann Tenenbaum-\$25,000

-ASCAP Foundation, represented by Karen Sherry, VP/Executive Director and Ms. Kim Hargraves, Manager-\$5,000 **[both will be present]**

• **For the Armstrong Archives-\$100,000 total**

-Anonymous gifts-\$25,000

-The Carl Fischer Music Publishers, Charles Abry [AH-bree], President-\$10,000 **[will be present]**

-Cynthia Friedman-\$10,000

-Safra National Bank of New York, represented by Mark Barez-\$10,000 **[will be present]**

-Winston Band Instrument Company/Rayburn Musical Instrument Company, David Ginott, President-\$10,000 **[will be present]**

-United Musical Instruments, Rob Palmer, President-\$10,000

-Yamaha Band and Orchestral Instruments, Michael Bennett, President-\$10,000 **[will be present]**

-Gemeinhardt Flute Company-\$5,000

-Selmer Company-\$5,000

-Ronni and David Ginott, in memory of their parents-\$4,000 **[will be present]**

-Sam Ash Music Company, represented by Mrs. Cobi Narita Ash, \$1,000 **[will be present]**



Draft 12/02/98 5:00pm  
Jeff Shesol

**FIRST LADY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON  
REMARKS AT QUEENS COLLEGE  
QUEENS, NEW YORK  
December 3, 1998**

Acknowledgments: Michael Mossman and the Queens College Jazz Orchestra (for the pre-show performance); Dr. Allen Lee Sessoms, Pres. of Queens College; Michael Cogswell, Dir. of the Armstrong House & Archives; Claire Shulman, Queens Borough Pres.; Wynton Marsalis; Arvell Shaw; Bill Ferris, Chairman of NEH; Ronnie and David Ginott [guh-KNOT]

First, I want to thank all of you for showing me such warm and wonderful hospitality here at Queens College, and earlier today at the Louis Armstrong House -- truly, the House that Jazz Built. I know at least one First Jazz Fan who wishes he could have joined us today. I know my husband will be eager to hear a few stories of Satchmo when I return to the White House.

Amazingly, more than a quarter-century has passed since Louis Armstrong lived here in Queens. It doesn't seem it could possibly be that long ago. That's because, in so many ways, Louis Armstrong still lives here. His music still swings and his spirit soars -- in Queens; and across the East River in Manhattan; and across our nation and around the world.

We hear the legacy of Louis Armstrong in the modern masterworks of Wynton Marsalis. We see it in the neighborhood schools sponsored by the Armstrong Educational Foundation. We find it in the cadence of our speech and feel it in the quickened tempo of our own times.

It is a rich cultural heritage, truly an American treasure, and one well worth preserving. At the Armstrong House and here at the Armstrong Archives, I have been privileged to see the work being done to carry Louis's legacy into the next century. That effort began, of course, with Satchmo himself. When we recall the vast range of his vocations -- from instrumentalist to vocalist, from actor to author, from composer to cultural ambassador -- we often forget that he was also a great preservationist.

As Michael Cogswell just told us, Louis Armstrong made a record of everything. He preserved papers. Photographs. Scrapbooks. Collages. Correspondence. He saved the charts that Wynton will play from today. Satchmo even saved menus, their margins scribbled full of commentary on the soup du jour. ("Dee-licious," he wrote.) On reel after reel, he made priceless recordings of jam sessions, backstage chatter, and parties. This is Armstrong on Armstrong -- a vital record of invention and improvisation, an essential glimpse of an artist at work and at play.

Louis Armstrong collected and preserved these artifacts. Now that he is gone, though, these precious, sometimes fragile, gifts cannot care for themselves -- a point that Michael Cogswell made poignantly clear. We are all, now, their caretakers. And that is why the efforts of Ronnie Ginott are so important: I am pleased to announce that she has raised \$100,000 for the

preservation of those wonderful, invaluable Satchmo tapes. I also want to acknowledge Bill Ferris, Chairman of the National Endowment for the Humanities, for supporting a project that, he has told me, is close to his heart. The NEH has given a big financial boost to the Louis Armstrong Collection, helping not only to save these treasures but also to share them -- by generously funding a traveling exhibit. Across America, as I have been fortunate to see, people like Ronnie Ginott and groups like the NEH are doing the vital work Louis Armstrong once did - preserving the artifacts that define our nation.

It is worth mentioning that the Louis Armstrong Archives aren't open only to music scholars; they're open to music lovers the world over. Visitors have come from countries as far away as Japan and Argentina to slip on a pair of headphones and listen to some of the rare recordings housed here in Queens -- maybe to take a look at that menu I mentioned. We are reminded that Louis Armstrong isn't just America's treasure; since 1932, when he first set foot overseas, he has belonged to the world.

Louis Armstrong's message of hope and goodwill knew no national boundaries. His was Gideon's trumpet, and could not be contained by even the mightiest walls of oppression. In Berlin, during the height of the Cold War, "Ambassador Satchmo" played and simply charmed his way across Checkpoint Charlie, from West to East and back again. In a *New Yorker* cartoon of that era, a State Department official says, "This is a diplomatic mission of utmost delicacy. The question is: who is the best man for it -- [the Secretary of State] or Satchmo?"

Back at home, Louis Armstrong was an ambassador of another kind -- between the races. A dangerous assignment in his day. Satchmo risked his own safety to sound a clear, resonant note for civil rights, blasting those who stood for segregation. As the nation's most prominent African American, his words carried special weight -- and so did his music, and his films, and the greatness of his gifts. One white Southerner, as a boy, had seen Armstrong play at a dance; later, that man joined the NAACP legal team that won *Brown v. Board of Education*. His inspiration? The genius of Armstrong. This lawyer later wrote: "Louis opened my eyes wide, and put me to a choice. Blacks, the saying went, were 'all right in their place.' What was the 'place' of such a man, and of the people from which he sprung?" Through the darkest days of racism, Satchmo was an eloquent voice for diversity and dignity.

In a sense, Louis Armstrong felt at home everywhere. He was certainly welcome in every country, on every continent. But from 1943 until his final days, there was only one place he and his wife Lucille truly called "home." I was honored to visit there today -- the modest brick house at 3456 107th Street. Of course, he could have lived in Manhattan, Hollywood, anywhere. But he chose Corona, Queens -- along what we now call the "Jazz Trail." Dizzy Gillespie was his neighbor, less than three blocks away. Ella Fitzgerald was nearby. So was Billie Holiday.

But what Louis really liked about Queens was doing his own shopping at the local grocer's... stopping by the barbershop... watching Westerns in his living room with the neighborhood kids. It was the perfect respite from a life spent mostly on the road. Satchmo said,

"We're right out here with the rest of the colored folk and the Puerto Ricans and Italians and the Hebrew cats. . . The frigidaire is full of food. What more do we need?"

Louis Armstrong needed nothing more. But he could see that wasn't the case for everyone in Corona; and, to those families, Satchmo was more than a neighbor. He was a friend. When had a brick facade built on his own house, he walked from door to door and offered to do the same for every family on his block. That same spirit guides the Louis Armstrong Educational Foundation, which Louis founded in 1969. He said then: "I wanna give back to the world some of the goodness the world gave me."

In addition to the profound musical legacy he has left us, Louis Armstrong has indeed given back much goodness -- through music history programs and workshops, through student exchanges and scholarships, through concerts for neighborhood children, and so much more. Twenty-seven years after Louis Armstrong was laid to rest at Flushing Cemetery, his spirit is as bright, and vibrant, as the music he made. The work you do here in Queens will help carry the tune into the next millennium.

Now, let's hear a little more of that wonderful music. I am honored to introduce the student choir of Louis Armstrong Elementary and Intermediate Schools.

ARMSTRONG

## Memorandum

To: Laura Schiller  
Christy Macy  
Noah Meyer

From: Leela de Souza (x62006)

Date: November 9, 1998

cc: Ellen Lovell

Re: DECEMBER 3-ARMSTRONG EVENT

- Attached is a first draft of the talking points for the Armstrong event in New York on December 3, 1998. As additional relevant information comes in, I will send along updated drafts.
- I have also included a file of background information on Louis Armstrong.
- The contact at the Armstrong Archives (Rosenthal Library, Queens College) is Michael Cogswell, Director--(718) 997-3670. *Design - alt.*
- As we get closer to the event, and know the specifics on who will be attending/contributing, I will also provide the list of acknowledgments.
- Please call me (x62006) if you have questions or need any additional information. I will be back in the office on the Monday, November 16.

*filled where  
none was...*

*Fact check anything  
from Ferguson —  
he has date wrong on  
bldg of the use.*

# Memorandum

**To:** Laura Schiller  
Christy Macy  
Noah Meyer

**From:** Leela de Souza

**Date:** November 9, 1998

**cc:** Ellen Lovell  
Stephanie Madden

**Re:** DECEMBER 3-TREASURE'S EVENT: **FIRST DRAFT ARMSTRONG TALKING POINTS**

- **Who was Louis Armstrong?**

-Louis "Satchmo" Armstrong was one of America's most celebrated and influential artists of the 20th century. He was born in 1901 and died of a heart attack at the age of 70. For five decades he traveled the globe, making his mark as a renowned jazz trumpeter (best known as jazz' first great improviser), band leader and actor. It has been said that his talents and abilities influenced the musical heritage of the nation like no other.

-In the 1920s, he made famous his improvisational style of jazz, which musicians today continue to study and emulate. With his mentor King Oliver, he popularized their trademark two-coronet breaks, which they would perform with handkerchiefs over their hands to hide their fingers from wanna-bees. To this day, Armstrong's handkerchief is as famous as his smile.

-From 1920-1960, Satchmo, as he was affectionately called, had a top-ten recording in every decade. These hits included, "Everybody Loves My Baby", "Mack the Knife", "Hello Dolly" and "What a Wonderful World". His music continues to be used in films, television and radio even today.

-He typically performed "on the road" for at least three hundred days per year. His frequent tours to every part of the world earned him the nickname "Ambassador Satch." His playing, singing and joyful persona were known in every corner of the globe, from fans behind the Iron Curtain to European royalty, from the smallest African village to every man, woman and child in the United States.

-He was one of the first great celebrities of the 20th century. His winning personality, comic timing and unabashed joy for life, made him a frequent guest on the top radio and television shows (e.g., The Jack Benny Show, the Ed Sullivan Show, the Tonight Show). His trademark smile and unselfconscious laugh became recognized worldwide.

-His popularity has also been attributed to his openness to life and the degree to which he remained untouched by his stardom. He lived in this same house for 27 years in the middle class neighborhood of Corona, Queens. His innate humility and lack of pretension won him the love of his neighborhood, in which he was always very active.

*[Neighborhood anecdote to come.]*

-Louis was equally influential as a vocalist--he popularized what is known today as scat-singing. He is considered one of the few artists to achieve such expertise and fame as both a musician and vocalist.

-A gifted actor, he appeared in more than thirty films, which included "Ex-Flame", "Artists and Model" (with Jack Benny), "New Orleans", "The Strip" and "Hello Dolly".

-He wrote two autobiographies, more than ten magazine articles and hundreds of pages of memoirs.

- **How has our nation been affected by Louis Armstrong?**

-The American cultural and social landscape of the 20th century has been greatly influenced by Louis Armstrong. In forming his own jazz group in the 1920s, and performing extensively, he led the way in establishing jazz improvisation as an art form. His work went on to influence the next generation of our nation's great artists--such as, Billie Holiday, Bing Crosby, Ella Fitzgerald and Frank Sinatra.

-His travels and performances became recognized around the world as goodwill missions, which helped to ease the racial and economic tensions of a stressful time in America's social history. During the 1960s, he toured the globe under the auspices of the United States Department of State and became known as the American Ambassador of Goodwill. As a diplomatic asset for America, "Ambassador Satchmo" toured Africa, Japan, India, France, Holland, Formosa, East and West Germany and Great Britain.

-He carried the message of humanity to the world through his music--in times of great political and social struggle his performances provided audiences throughout the world with a great sense of hope and healing. His music was of such character as to appeal to young and old, rich and poor.

- The level of his achievements in music was only matched by his concern for humanity. He openly fought against racism, taking a strong stand against segregation. He gladly relinquished the opportunity to play with his band in New Orleans by keeping the white musicians after a Louisiana law was passed which prohibited integrated bands to give concerts. In 1931, he was actually arrested for sitting in the front of a tour bus next to a white manager's wife.

-In 1969, he funded and founded The Louis Armstrong Educational Foundation stating, "I wanna give back to the world some of the goodness the world gave me." The Foundation is dedicated to fostering music education in schools, libraries and music

organizations; and it provides students with scholarships, student exchanges and grants. As current examples, the foundation is continuing Armstrong's legacy by supporting the Armstrong house and archives, Lincoln Center Jazz for Young People Concerts, the Music Therapy program at the pediatric center of Beth Israel Hospital, Boys Choir of Harlem, Harlem School for the Arts, etc.

-To know Armstrong is to view his 100-plus awards, the range of his performances, the adulation of his fan letters, the photos of celebrities who sought him out and the 40,000 condolence letters from around the world written in response to his death.

- **Why are we here today?**

-This event is part of a series of White House Millennium initiatives to support American communities in preserving their cultural heritage. We are here to acknowledge and support the efforts of Queens College to convert the home of Louis and Lucille Armstrong to a public museum. And to set an example for other communities to come together and preserve their local treasures for generations to come as we approach the new Millennium and move into the 21st century.

-The house was built in 1925 and purchased by the Armstrongs in 1943. Louis and Lucille Armstrong lived in the house for 28 and 40 years respectively, which marked the remainder of their adult lives. This modest home in Corona, Queens was declared a National Historic Landmark in 1977 and declared a City of New York Landmark in 1986.

-When Lucille died in 1983, leaving her estate and assets to the Louis Armstrong Educational Foundation, she requested the house be given to the City of New York as a museum. She wanted the house to serve as a lasting legacy to her husband's remarkable life.

-In 1996, Queens College, which had been administering both the house and the Armstrong archives, signed a 20-yr agreement with the Armstrong estate and the City of New York to formalize their administrative role and to establish the process for opening the house to the public.

-The house and the Armstrong archives (a collection that includes over 650 reel-to-reel audio tapes personally made by Armstrong, 5,000 photographs, 1,600 records, 85 scrapbooks, 5 trumpets, 105 awards and plaques, all of his big band scores, personal letters and manuscripts and memorabilia) will serve as a permanent reminder of Armstrong's artistic talents and gifts.

-There have been volumes written about Armstrong. His recordings are ubiquitous, his music played by countless musicians. It is easy to find commentary on and reaction to Louis Armstrong, but what is unique about this house and these archives is that they give us Armstrong on Armstrong. From the tapes of backstage conversations, to the personal notes and letters, to the furnishings and knickknacks [yes, oddly enough, that is the correct spelling] in the house Louis said was "filled with happiness," this is a true glimpse at the man who made the music and the legend.

-The project to preserve Louis Armstrong's home has already received \$682,000 in capital funding from the City of New York and has a goal of opening to the public on July 4, 2000. A Master Plan for the house museum is complete and progress on the project is shared with the neighborhood at monthly block meetings held at the house.

*He day  
he celebrated  
as his b'day*

-One example of how the house and archives are already being used to preserve Armstrong's legacy and to uplift the community of Corona, Queens (which Louis had been committed to throughout his life) is the "Pops for Tops" annual concert series for local children. Now in its tenth year, the concert series takes place in the beautifully restored garden of the house. The intimate garden seats only 250 guests, who are restricted to children from Louis' neighborhood. Since 1994, Arvell Shaw, who played bass for Armstrong for more than twenty-five years, has led the "Pops for Tops" concerts with a band of world-class musicians in performing music associated with Louis Armstrong.

- **If applicable, possible quotes**

-Wynton Marsalis has said of Armstrong, "The sound of that horn was a pure spiritual essence, the sound of America and of freedom."

-MORE QUOTES TO COME



## Review

# Satchmo's wonderful world

In his Queens archives, Louis Armstrong left behind a lifetime of tapes and letters



Brazed off: Near what Louis left behind in Corona.

**A**side from being arguably the most important figure in 20th-century popular music, Louis Armstrong was something of a technophile. The trumpeter traveled with a tape recorder, a typewriter and motion-picture and still cameras, documenting everything in every medium. Until his death in 1971, he kept his home in Corona, Queens, up-to-date with the latest sound equipment; he often left a tape recorder running during parties and backstage hangs, or simply when he wanted to ruminate on a work-in-progress. Armstrong also wrote incredibly detailed and evocative letters and postcards, and charming descriptions of his first neighborhood in New Orleans and his last one in New York.

The Louis Armstrong Archives, a jewel of a collection set in the Rosenthal Library at Queens College in Flushing, includes 240 acetate recordings of Armstrong's radio broadcasts, 85 scrapbooks, his book and record collection (which contains a fair number of black comedians), 6,000 photographs, his own commercial recordings and films and the sheet music for his big band. A visit to an archive may not be most people's idea of something to do—the best of them are not especially hospitable to the casual visitor, and even hard-core scholars can find them forbidding. But the general public is welcome here. An appointment is requested, but only because of the tiny staff, which will put you at ease in their comfortable rooms, where you can ask to see some of the holdings or listen to music on headphones.

With this summer's biography and

new releases shedding more light on Satchmo, the archives offer a chance to see and hear Armstrong's life and achievements firsthand. Even if you think you know Armstrong, you've only got a clue as to his significance until you've looked at his 100-plus awards, the range of his performances, the adulatory fan letters, the photos of celebrities who sought him out and the 40,000 letters of condolence written in response to his death. You can listen to tapes of Armstrong performances that practically no one else has ever heard: There are recordings of him playing along with then-40-year-old recordings of King Oliver's band, and

of Satchmo accompanying his favorite operas. You can see the only existing photo of his father, or examine the collages Armstrong made to decorate his tape boxes and the walls and ceiling of his den. (His collage work, curiously, began around the same time as that of his friend, artist Romare Bearden, who included images of Armstrong in his work during the early '80s.) You could also study unpublished works such as his journals (including an account of his childhood home) and his somewhat mysterious erotic writings, or just bask in the beauty of one of his five trumpets.

A small space in the archives was recently devoted to "Mrs. A," an exhibition which recounted Louis's wife Lucille's life as a Cotton Club dancer, performer and public activist. In the fall, the archives will mount an exhibit of recent acquisitions, featuring a gold-plated trumpet given to Armstrong by King George of England and previously unknown recordings by his All Stars. Next spring, another exhibit will focus on Armstrong's life in Corona, Queens, where he lived for 27 years at 34-68 107th Street—a house that the archives hope to open to the public by 2000.

After poring over Armstrong's memorabilia and possessions, it's hard not to be affected by his openness to life and the degree to which he remained untouched by stardom. His patented laugh was as real as it gets. —John F. Swod

The Louis Armstrong Archives is at the Rosenthal Library at CUNY Queens College. See Museums for directions and admission.

# Time Out New York

The complete entertainment guide  
September 4-11, 1997 Issue No. 102 \$1.95

# A TRIBUTE TO LOUIS "SATCHMO" ARMSTRONG



The Master

**Biography** b. August 4, 1901, New Orleans, LA; d. July 6, 1971, Queens, N.Y.

Both as trumpeter and vocalist, Louis Armstrong stamped every development in the progression of Jazz and American Popular Music. He was the first great Jazz soloist. Armstrong achieved an unparalleled technique, and could execute lightning runs, powerfully articulating the entire range of the trumpet, from soaring high notes to a burnished mid-to-low register tone, with impeccable, insouciant elegance and feeling. His jubilant, lyrical, emphatically swinging, inevitably logical improvisations on recordings of the 1920s ("West End Blues," "Weather Bird," "Cornet Chop Suey") and 1930s ("Confessin'," "If I Could Be With You One Hour Tonight," "Stardust") set aesthetic standards all instrumentalists of his generation aspired to -- no Jazz player can ignore them to this day. Armstrong's growly voice counterstated his gold-toned trumpet, infusing lyrics with the inflections and syncopation of his instrumental style, always grabbing the heart of the song. He influenced Billie Holiday, Bing Crosby, Ella Fitzgerald and Frank Sinatra, and therefore the highest art aspirations of popular singing. If Louis Armstrong had not lived, the music of our century would not sound the way it does.

## Audio

Louis Armstrong featured on "[Dippermouth Blues](#)" (Real Audio)

For a complete Armstrong Discography [Click here](#) --Music Central

Link to Detailed Biography: "<http://www.technoir.net/jazz/louie.html>"--This is a great site with a lot of information on Jazz.

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[Go Back To Main Page](#)

The Magazine of  
Queens College

# AMBASSADOR SATCH

✱ IN A 1950S NEW YORKER CARTOON, A STATE DEPARTMENT OFFICIAL ASKS A GATHERING: "THIS IS A DIPLOMATIC MISSION OF UTMOST DELICACY. THE QUESTION IS: WHO IS THE BEST MAN FOR IT—JOHN FOSTER DULLES OR SATCHMO?" DURING THE AGE OF IKE AND JFK, LOUIS ARMSTRONG WAS THE WORLD'S MOST FAMOUS AMERICAN.

*Continued on page 15*



Milton Glaser



(Continued from cover) Armstrong's music was unmistakably original and American, and the world eagerly listened to it. His recordings, frequent performances on Voice of America broadcasts, and ceaseless international tours—he was on the road more than 300 days a year—made him what many called the Ambassador of Jazz.

Armstrong's first performance outside the United States was a 1932 tour of England. Much to his surprise, the English were already familiar with his recordings and he played to sellout crowds. During the next 25 years he became the most popular jazz musician in the world.

The State Department, perhaps inspired by the *New Yorker* cartoon, asked Armstrong to tour the Soviet Union. He would have been the first American jazz musician to perform behind the Iron Curtain, but in September 1957, incensed about the volatile confrontation over the integration of Arkansas schools, Armstrong abruptly canceled the tour. Not until 1960 did he undertake his first State Department tour: a 45-concert swing through Africa.

Armstrong had previously visited Africa in 1956 and had played to colossal audiences. His 1960 tour was an even greater diplomatic success. When he departed the Congo River ferry, the opposing forces of Joseph Mobutu and Prince Lumumba, who were engaged in a bitter civil war, halted their fighting and jointly escorted him to safety. At Leopoldville, he was greeted at the airport by a crowd of thousands, who triumphantly carried him, in a canvas sedan chair, through the streets and into the stadium.

Armstrong's visits to Eastern Europe rivaled his successes in Africa. Describing his 1955 tour of Europe, he noted that:

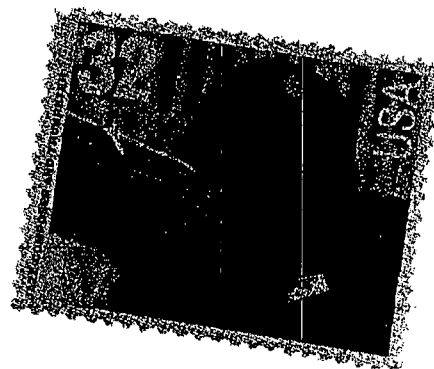
*I know what jazz means to people all over the world. We played in West Berlin on the last tour, and people sneaked over from the East Zone to hear us. They wouldn't dare do that for food or anything else. Man, there were even Russians who came over. Hardly any of them could speak English, but that didn't bother them or us. The music did all the talking for both sides.*



Arvell Shaw, who played bass for Armstrong for more than 25 years, recalls that while performing a week-long engagement in East Berlin, the band members discovered that, after their show, the only recreation available to them was to retire to a dingy hotel and have a bowl of soup. By the third night, desperate for entertainment, they decided to cross over to West Berlin to explore the nightlife. When they arrived at the East German checkpoint, they were surrounded by soldiers armed with machine guns who demanded a pass the band did not have. But once the soldiers aimed their flashlights into the bus, they shouted "Louis Armstrong! Louis Armstrong!" and waved the bus on. When the bus arrived at Checkpoint Charlie, the American soldiers were astonished that a vehicle had crossed over without a pass. Then they spotted its famous passenger, cried "Satchmo!" and allowed the bus to go through. The band repeated this routine for each night of their stay in Berlin.

Why was Louis Armstrong received so affectionately by people from every country of the world? As he once told Edward R. Murrow, "A note's a note in any language."

—Michael Cogswell



Top: Commemorative stamp issued September 1, 1995  
Middle and bottom: Louis in traditional Korean dress (undated)



*Louis meets Pope Paul VI in Rome (1968)*



*Street vendor in Prague selling photos of Louis (1965)*



*Carved wood relief from Louis's art collection (probably Nigerian)*

*"America's secret weapon is a blue note in a minor key. Right now its most effective ambassador is Louis (Satchmo) Armstrong," the New York Times noted in 1955.*



## LOUIS ARMSTRONG HOUSE AND ARCHIVES

House: 3456 107th St., Corona, NY

Archives: Rosenthal Library, Room 332, Queens College, 65-30 Kissena Blvd., Flushing, NY 11367

### **Description**

A two-story frame house and garden; the house covered by the Armstrongs in the 1960s with a brick-like veneer. Built in 1925, the house was purchased by Louis and Lucille Armstrong in 1943, and both lived here the rest of their lives (Louis passed away in 1971 and Lucille in 1983). The house is a National Historic Landmark (1976) and a New York City Landmark (1986).

Armstrong's personal collection of recordings, photographs, papers, scrapbooks, memorabilia, musical instruments originally in the house has been transferred to the archival center of the Rosenthal Library at Queens College for conservation and transcription.

### **Historical Significance**

For 28 years, the home of Louis Armstrong, internationally known jazz trumpeter, instrumentalist, band leader, and film star. Armstrong made hit recording for five decades, from the 1920s through the 1960s, and developed an improvisational style of jazz musicians still study and emulate today. Except for a house in Chicago that Armstrong briefly co-owned in the 1920s with his second wife Lil Hardin Armstrong, this is the only home Armstrong owned.

Born into poverty to a single mother in New Orleans, Armstrong celebrated his birthday as July 4, 1900 (records have since shown that his birth date is August 4, 1901). His formal education ended in the fifth grade. At age 11, Armstrong was placed in the New Orleans Colored Waif's Home for Boys for firing a pistol to celebrate New Year's Eve. Although during his 18 months there, Armstrong deeply missed his mother and sister, he benefitted from the discipline of the home and from the musical instruction of band director Peter Davis. Historians have long believed that Armstrong got his first cornet at the Waif's home, but autobiographical manuscripts discovered in the Armstrong Archives indicate that he owned a cornet before he entered the Waif's home.

Armstrong apprenticed with American cornetist King Oliver in New Orleans, and performed with Oliver's band in Chicago at age 21. So popular were the trademark two-cornet breaks Armstrong and Oliver worked out that they would perform with handkerchiefs over their hands to hide their fingering from others who would want to copy them. Armstrong formed his own jazz groups in the late 1920s, with which he established jazz improvisation as an art form for the solo instrumentalist. He influenced Billie Holiday, Bing Crosby, Ella Fitzgerald and Frank Sinatra, thereby influencing much of American popular music in the mid-twentieth century.

Armstrong moved to New York in the 1920s. The Armstrongs moved to the Corona neighborhood in 1943 partly because of its proximity to other jazz musicians who lived nearby, including dizzy Gillespie, Jimmy Heath, Lena Horne and Ella Fitzgerald

Armstrong had top-10 hits in every decade for half a century, from "Everybody Loves My Baby"

in the 1920s, to "Mack the Knife" in the 1950s, and "Hello Dolly" in the 1960s. He is one of a handful of artists to appeal both the hard-core purists and to consumers of mainstream entertainment. A gifted actor, he also appeared in over 30 films.

Close to 300 days of each year found Armstrong touring and performing in every part of the world, earning him the nickname "Ambassador Satch." He traveled with a tape recorder, a typewriter, and motion picture and still cameras, recording everything in every medium. He often left a tape recorder running during parties and backstage hangouts, or simply when he wanted to ruminate on a work-in-progress. He wrote two autobiographies and kept voluminous scrapbooks.

In 1969, Armstrong founded and funded the Louis Armstrong Educational Foundation stating, "I wanna give back to the world some of the goodness the world gave me." The Foundation is dedicated to fostering programs, workshops and lectures on music history in schools; assisting and contributing to programs and events for education in music; sponsoring programs at all school levels that aid students in developing musical skills; and participating in scholarships, student exchanges and grants.

Armstrong died of a heart attack in his sleep on July 6, 1971. So beloved was Armstrong that, after his death, 40,000 condolence letters were sent to his widow, Lucille. He is buried at Flushing Cemetery and his gravesite is visited by dozens of fans each year on July 4, the day he celebrated as his birthday. The towering headstone is embellished with a white granite relief of a trumpet and handkerchief resting on a pillow. In the early 1980s, the granite trumpet replaced a bronze trumpet because vandals kept stealing it. Mrs. Armstrong kept the bronze trumpet at her home; it is now part of the archives.

Lucille Armstrong died in 1983, leaving her estate and assets to the Foundation, with a request that the house be given to the City of New York as a museum. In 1996, Queens College, which had been administering the house and Armstrong archives, signed a 20-year agreement with the Armstrong estate and the City of New York formalizing this administration and establishing that the house will open to the public as a museum. The Armstrong archival collection includes over 650 reel-to-reel audio tapes personally made by Armstrong (and most in boxes that were hand decorated by him), 5000 photographs, 1,600 records (78s, LPS and 45s), 85 scrapbooks, 5 trumpets, 105 awards and plaques, all of his big band scores, personal letters and manuscripts, and memorabilia.

The archival collection is housed at the Rosenthal Library at Queens College. For the 18-month period between July 1996 and December 1997, 1,240 visitors came to the archives from around the country and around the world (Japan, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Germany, Argentina and Australia); 71 of those visitors were researchers. In addition, approximately 250 reference questions were received by phone, mail, fax, and e-mail. Two exhibits are installed annually in the archives and have included such topics as "Pop's Children: Kids and Louis Armstrong," "Mrs. A: Lucille Armstrong," and "Louis Armstrong and Civil Rights."

Since 1986, the Louis Armstrong House and Archives has sponsored an annual jazz series for local children called "Pops is Tops" in the garden of Armstrong's house. The performing group

is Arvell Shaw and the Louis Armstrong Legacy Band (Arvell Shaw played bass for Armstrong for more than 25 years). Along with music, the band members explain his instrument and how it is played and the children may ask questions at the end of the concert. [The highlight of the 1997 concert series occurred at the close of one of the June 4 shows. Arvell Shaw was singing Louis Armstrong's hit "What a Wonderful World," when 100 children in the audience began to sing along. (The children were students at the Louis Armstrong Intermediate School, which plays the song over the public address system every morning.) Mr. Shaw, whose eyesight is so poor that he could not see the children, heard them singing along and tears trickled down his cheeks.]

The Louis Armstrong House and Archives has a homepage: [www.satchmo.net](http://www.satchmo.net).

### **Local Involvement**

Monthly block meetings are held at the house on the first Saturday of the month to share with the neighborhood residents the master plan, programs, and community concerns in general. Meetings are held in English and Spanish. Each meeting concludes with a tour of the house.

The house is not yet regularly open to the public and plans are underway to achieve this by July 4, 2000, the centennial of the day Armstrong celebrated as his birthday. \$682,000 has been given by the City of New York for capital funding. A master plan is under development that will detail the steps necessary to prepare the house for opening as a museum.

Support for the Louis Armstrong House and Archives comes from the Louis Armstrong Educational Foundation (formed by Armstrong's estate to support jazz, education, etc.), the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs (supports "Pops is Tops"), the City of New York (for capital funding) and, last year, a gift collected throughout Japan and given by Mr. Yoshio Toyama on behalf of 138 of his fellow jazz enthusiasts (the total gift was \$9,500.00). A grant of \$20,000 from the American Express Foundation was used to repair the roof on the house.

### **Preservation Needs**

The number one priority is to open the house to the public. They have already raised \$682,000 (from City of NY) for this project. A Master Plan for the house museum is complete. Their goal for opening the house is July 4, 2000, the centennial of Armstrong's "birthday." (The story is that Armstrong did not know his birthday and so chose to celebrate it on July 4, 1900; research shows that Armstrong was actually born on August 4, 1901.) Projected additional cost to complete project: \$500,000.

The top priority for the archives is to transfer the reel-to-reel tapes onto modern tape. They currently have the sound lab available but not the technician to perform the transfers. Projected cost: \$100,000.

All of Mr. Armstrong's scrapbooks need conservation and restoration.

### **Contact**

Michael Cogswell, Director 718-997-3670



## Louis Armstrong House and Archives Queens College, CUNY

### Who is Louis Armstrong?

The totality and diversity of Louis Armstrong's creativity is astonishing. Louis would have been famous for any one of these achievements:

In the 1920s, he developed a way of playing jazz that jazz musicians still follow today.

He made hit recordings for five decades (1920s - 1960s) and his music is used in films, television, and radio even today.

He was equally influential as an instrumentalist and a vocalist. He is perhaps the only person to do both to such an exceptional degree.

He wrote two autobiographies, more than ten magazine articles, thousands of letters, and hundreds of pages of memoirs.

A gifted actor, he appeared in more than thirty films.

More than one dozen of his compositions have become jazz standards.

He typically performed "on the road" for at least three hundred days per year. His frequent tours to every part of the world earned him the nickname "Ambassador Satch."

His winning personality, comic timing, and unabashed joy for life, made him a frequent guest on the top radio and television shows (e.g., *The Jack Benny Show*, the *Ed Sullivan Show*, the *Tonight Show*). He became one of the first great celebrities of the twentieth century.

Despite his fame, he lived a simple life in a working class neighborhood, and gave away a fortune in handouts and gifts.

### The House

Louis and Lucille Armstrong could have lived anywhere—including a mansion in Beverly Hills or an estate in Connecticut—but they settled in modest house in Corona, Queens. They lived in this house for the remainder of their lives. (Louis passed away in 1971; Lucille continued to live in the house until her passing in 1983.) The House provided a refuge for Louis when he was not "on the road." His innate humility and lack of pretension enabled him to escape the adversities often encumbered through fame and fortune, and earned him the undying affection of the neighborhood.

The House was declared a National Historic Landmark in 1977 and declared a City of New York Landmark in 1986. The House and its furnishings remain exactly as they were during Lucille's life, and very much the same as they were during Louis's life. Queens College is working with a team of architects, engineers, and preservationists to open the house as a public museum in the near future.

#### The Archives

The Louis Armstrong Archives is located in a state-of-the-art archival center in the Benjamin S. Rosenthal Library on the campus of Queens College. Visitors to the Archives can tour an exhibit, listen to copies of tapes that Louis recorded himself, read Louis's autobiographical manuscripts, view Armstrong videos, or other such activities.

The *Louis Armstrong Collection* comprises Louis's vast personal collection of photographs, papers, scrapbooks, commercial recordings, private recordings, memorabilia, musical instruments and other such material discovered in the Louis Armstrong House. Highlights include:

- 650 reel-to-reel tapes in hand decorated boxes
- 1,600 78s, LPS, and 45s
- 86 scrapbooks
- 5,000 photographs
- 270 sets of band parts
- 12 linear feet of personal papers, correspondence, and autobiographical manuscripts
- 5 trumpets
- 14 trumpet mouthpieces
- 120 awards and plaques

#### Other collections include:

*Satchmo Collection*: a rapidly growing collection of Armstrong recordings, photographs, letters, books, art work, videos, memorabilia, musical instruments, and other material purchased by or donated to the Louis Armstrong Archives. Each year more than 100 new acquisitions are added to the *Satchmo Collection*!

*Jack Bradley Collection*: more than 200 rare Armstrong recordings.

*Phoebe Jacobs Collection*: five cubic feet of personal papers, correspondence, photographs, and ephemera related to Ms. Jacobs's work with Louis and Lucille Armstrong.

*Wingy Manone Collection*: two cubic feet of scores, papers, and recordings, and one trumpet, belonging to Wingy Manone, the New Orleans trumpeter who was a contemporary of Louis Armstrong.

### Hours

The Archives is open from 10 am until 5 pm, Monday through Friday, and from noon until 5 pm on Saturdays. Because hours sometimes vary according to the academic calendar and to staff availability, we do ask that you call before visiting!

### Public Programs

Each year two major exhibits are installed at the Archives. (Past exhibits have included "Armstrong and Africa," "Breaking the Barriers: Louis Armstrong and Civil Rights," and "Pops's Children: Kids and Louis Armstrong"). "Pops is Tops," an annual jazz concert series for children, is held in the beautiful garden of the Armstrong House every spring. Louis Armstrong House and Archives staff also present entertaining and informative slide/tape presentations, based on treasures from the Archives, to schools, libraries, senior centers, jazz clubs, and other groups.

### Funding

Major funding for the Louis Armstrong House and Archives is provided by the Louis Armstrong Educational Foundation.

Additional funding is provided by the Office of Queens Borough President Claire Shulman, the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, and the New York State Natural Heritage Trust.

Funding for special projects and programs has been provided by the Ford Foundation, American Express Foundation, and the National Endowment for the Humanities.

Private donors from all over the world support the Louis Armstrong House and Archives through annual memberships!

For more information contact:

Louis Armstrong House and Archives  
Queens College, CUNY  
Flushing, NY 11367  
718-997-3670 (Tel.)  
718-997-3677 (Fax)  
satchmo@qc.edu

Visit our home page on the world wide web!

[www.satchmo.net](http://www.satchmo.net)

## Louis Armstrong House and Archives

Michael Cogswell  
Director

~~George Arevato~~ *vacant*  
Assistant Director

**Bessie Williams**

Manager, Louis Armstrong House

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# HISTORY



In 1969, Louis Armstrong funded and founded The Louis Armstrong Educational Foundation stating "I wanna give back to the world some of the goodness the world gave me."

Louis Armstrong's death on July 6, 1971, created waves of mourning over the entire world. His playing, his singing and his joyful persona were known in every corner of the globe, from fans behind the Iron Curtain to European royalty, from the smallest African village to every man, woman and child in the United States. The Congressional Record on that date was filled with tributes:

"...he was really a citizen of the world and one of this nation's greatest natural resources."

"...an inspiration and teacher to his fellow musicians and the driving force behind 20th-century jazz...he provided countless millions of people in many countries with hours of exciting music."

"Although unschooled and brought up in poverty, Satchmo always retained pleasant disposition and willingness to look on the constructive and positive side of life. Even in the midst of tawdriness, degradation and artificiality, he found human goodness, sacrifice and charity. Rising from playing his horn in the bordellos of New Orleans to his role as unofficial Ambassador of Goodwill throughout the world on behalf of the United States, Louis Armstrong did more for his country than a thousand official members of the Foreign Service. We have lost one of our most illustrious and valuable citizens."

In 1974, at the behest of the U.S. State Department and in response to requests from behind the Iron Curtain, Lucille Armstrong embarked on a government-sponsored tour of Hungary, Romania, Czechoslovakia and Poland conducting a program of slides, films and music tapes highlighting her late husband's life. She left albums, books and other memorabilia to schools and embassy libraries.

Lucille died in 1983 and left her estate and assets to the Foundation, with the request that the house be given to the City of New York as a museum.

## FOUNDATION

# GOALS



The Louis Armstrong Educational Foundation Inc., founded in 1969, is dedicated to:

- Fostering programs, workshops and lectures on music history in schools
- Assisting and contributing to programs and event for education in music by organizations such as schools and libraries.
- Sponsoring programs at all school levels that aid the students in developing musical skills.
- Participating in scholarships, student exchanges and grants.



## FOUNDATION

# SUPPORTS



- Annual grants to Queens College for the maintenance of the Louis Armstrong home in Corona Queens—a National Landmark—and support of the Louis Armstrong Archives at Queens College.
- Public schools for music education programs, workshops and library materials.
- The East Elmhurst Library in Queens for CDs, tapes, video material, concerts and special books and programs.
- The Lincoln Center Jazz for Young People Concerts and other educational programs under the direction of Wynton Marsalis.
- The Music Therapy program at the pediatric center of Beth Israel Hospital.
- Gifts to Art Connection, Boys Choir of Harlem, Harlem Schools for the Arts & Lincoln Center Library and Museum.
- ASCAP foundation for programs including seminars, workshops and scholarships.
- Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture to establish extensive audio and visual library of interviews and performances by jazz musicians made available to all schools and research centers.

# **Expanded Annual Report**

**for the**

**Louis Armstrong  
House and Archives**

**Queens College, CUNY**

**1 July 1996 - 31 Dec. 1997**

**Michael Cogswell**

**Director**

**Louis Armstrong House and Archives**

**10 February 1998**

## Introduction

Each year since its inception in 1991, the Louis Armstrong House and Archives has compiled a narrative report that describes the activities of the past year. These reports have always covered a twelve-month time period that corresponds to the college's fiscal year: 1 July - 30 June.

This "expanded" annual report covers an eighteen-month time period: 1 July 1996 - 31 December 1997.

Subsequent annual reports will follow the calendar year. Following a calendar year is easier for our readers and better represents our departmental work flow (e.g., June and July are steadily busy, the department usually shuts down for one week during the Christmas-New Years season).

## Opening the Louis Armstrong House

During the past eighteen months, exciting progress was made towards opening the Louis Armstrong House to the public!

### Capital Funding

Michael Cogswell requested funding from the New York City in fiscal year 1997 and again in fiscal year 1998. Thanks to support of Queens Borough President Claire Shulman and Council Member Helen Marshall, the City awarded the capital funding as follows:

|               |                  |
|---------------|------------------|
| FY1997        | \$320,000        |
| <u>FY1998</u> | <u>\$362,000</u> |
| TOTAL:        | \$682,000        |

Queens College and DCA selected the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs (DCA) as the recipient of the funds. (DCA owns the Armstrong House and Queens College administers the Armstrong House under a license agreement with DCA.)

Because the Armstrong House is city property, DCA transferred funds to the New York City Department of Design and Construction (DDC).



**Project Team**

DDC and the Louis Armstrong House (LAH) assembled a project team of architects, engineers, and preservationists. The project team included:

Michael Cogswell (Director, LAH)  
George Arevalo (Asst. Director, LAH)  
Victor Metoyer (Asst. Director of Capital Projects, DCA)  
Peter Demb, R.A. (Project Manager, DDC)  
James Fox, R.A. (Team Leader, DDC)  
Misia Leonard, R.A. (Chief, Historic Preservation Office, DDC)

The team selected Rogers-Marvel Architects to compose the master plan. The master plan details the steps necessary to take what is essentially a private home and open it as a historic house museum. (Rogers-Marvel had a requirements contract with DDC and had a history of projects with historic structures.)

On November 1996, a planning meeting of the project team was held at the Louis Armstrong House. In June 1997, DDC approved the budget and generated a task order letter. On 6 August 1997 the project team and Rogers-Marvel had a kick-off meeting and the master plan project commenced.

From August 1997 to December 1997 (the closing date of this annual report) the project team and the architect engaged in a steady stream of site visits, meetings, memos, faxes, telephone calls, draft reports, etc. Rogers-Marvel brought in several subconsultants, including a conservator and a mechanical engineer.

**Historical Research**

In November 1997, Michael Cogswell located Morris Grossberg, the interior decorator who worked with the Armstrongs from 1949 to 1983. (Mr. Grossberg had retired to Florida--Mr. Cogswell located him by calling directory assistance in various cities in Florida!) Mr. Grossberg flew to New York and spent an entire day touring the Louis Armstrong House with the project team. He provided a wealth of information on the changes made to the House over the decades.

Another help in determining the history of the House was the acquisition of photos of Louis in the House. Mr. Cogswell collected more than two dozen new photographs of Louis in the House. Thanks go especially to Jack Bradley and Charles Graham for kindly providing their original photos for the historical research portion of the master plan project.

### **Completion of the Master Plan**

The master plan will be completed in early February 1998. The project will then go through the following stages: (1) design, (2) generation of construction documents, (3) bid for construction, and (4) construction. The construction budget is approximately \$500,000--this money has already been raised in capital funds. The target date for opening the Armstrong House is 4 July 2000, the centennial of Louis Armstrong's traditional birthday.

### **Repairs to the Louis Armstrong House**

In March 1997, Westal Contracting (an award-winning roofer from upstate New York) completed a major roof repair to the Louis Armstrong House. The roof has had a troubled history of water penetration since the third story was installed in 1978. The water penetration problems are now fully corrected! The \$20,000 repair was paid by a grant from American Express Foundation.

Additional repairs to the Louis Armstrong House (which requires the same upkeep as any other 87 year old house) include: alarm system (3 repairs), loose floor tiles in kitchen, broken toilet seat, and correction of water damage to interior finishes.

### **Community Relations**

#### **Use of the Armstrong House Garden**

It is the policy of the Louis Armstrong House and Archives to make the beautiful garden of the Louis Armstrong House available to community groups when appropriate. On 26 June 1997, ELMCOR held a fundraising supper in the garden. ELMCOR rented the tables and chairs, hired the caterer, etc. Other community groups that have inquired about the garden include the National Council of Negro Business Women, and the NAACP. Mr. Cogswell, with the approval of Queens College counsel Jane Denkensohn, will soon complete a written contract so that policies and procedures for community use of the garden are standardized.

#### **Block Meetings**

From October 1997 through December 1997 [and into February 1998] we held monthly block meetings at the Louis Armstrong House. Meetings were held on the first Saturday of each month. Block residents were invited by letters (written in both Spanish and

English) which were delivered by mail and by hand. George Arevalo (Assistant Director of the Louis Armstrong House and Archives), who is a native speaker of Spanish, translated the block meeting for Spanish speaking neighbors. At the block meetings we discussed the master plan project, the possible programs of the House and Archives, and community concerns in general. We served refreshments, and concluded each meeting with a tour of the House.

## **Louis Armstrong Archives**

### **Visitors**

Visitorship has increased every year since the Archives has opened. Visitor statistics for July 1996 through December 1997 are as follows:

|                         |       |
|-------------------------|-------|
| Total visitors:         | 1,240 |
| Group visits:           | 14    |
| Average size of groups: | 20    |
| Total researchers:      | 71    |

As in previous years, people from all over the globe visited the Louis Armstrong Archives! Several visitors traveled to New York City specifically to visit the Louis Armstrong Archives. Locations that our visitors came from included:

#### **International**

Japan (Osaka and Tokyo)  
Switzerland  
Germany  
Argentina  
Australia

#### **Domestic**

New Orleans, Louisiana  
Charlottesville, Virginia  
Austin, Texas  
Chicago, Illinois

Groups that visited the Armstrong Archives included:

Antwerp Jazz Club  
Long Island Jewish Hospital

Louis Armstrong Intermediate School (IS 227)  
Louis Armstrong School (PS 143)  
Maria Schmidt Tour Group (Germany)  
PS 80 (Queens)  
Queen of Peace Senior Center  
Queens College Child Development Center  
Queens College Jazz Studies  
Queens College Drama 201 (Jazz Dance)  
Queens College Journalism 101  
Rockaway Boulevard Senior Center  
United Cerebral Palsy of Queens

### **Researchers**

Seventy-one researchers registered and accessed the collections. Although overall visitorship has increased every year since we opened, the number of researchers seems to remain at a fairly constant level, i.e., approximately thirty-five researchers per year. Michael Cogswell was somewhat apprehensive that after the first wave of researchers in 1994-1995 (immediately after the Archives opened to the public), few researchers would use the Archives. This does not seem to be the case. Steady researcher statistics probably result from: (1) worthy projects about Louis Armstrong are still being created, and (2) the collections of the Louis Armstrong Archives are rapidly growing.

Researchers came from the following locations:

California  
Massachusetts  
New Jersey  
New York  
Texas  
Virginia  
Washington, D.C.

Spain  
Sweden

As in previous years, researchers comprised a diverse population: university professors, graduate students, undergraduate students, public school students, jazz musicians, professional writers, broadcast journalists, film documentarians, jazz festival producers, and jazz fans.

### Reference Questions

In addition to the reference questions presented by researchers working in the Archives, the Archives staff answered approximately 250 reference questions that were received by mail, fax, telephone, and e-mail. Some reference questions could be answered immediately (e.g., "How many times was Louis married?") and others required more involved research (e.g., "Can you identify the date of this recording?"). Reference questions came from public school students, record companies, periodicals, historians, jazz fans, and many others.

### New Acquisitions

More than 450 items were added to the collections!

Without doubt, the most stunning new acquisition is a gold-plated trumpet given to Louis in 1934 by King George V of England. Louis eventually gave the trumpet to Lyman Vunk, the lead trumpet player for Charlie Barnett. The trumpet was a gift to the Archives from Dorothea Vunk (widow of Lyman Vunk). The Archives is especially grateful to Advisory Board member Jack Bradley, who introduced Ms. Vunk to the Archives.

New acquisitions can be grouped into the following formats:

|                     |              |
|---------------------|--------------|
| LP records          | 6            |
| 78 RPM records      | 105          |
| artifacts           | 6            |
| awards              | 10           |
| books               | 20           |
| cassette tapes      | 41           |
| compact discs       | 51           |
| CD-ROM discs        | 1            |
| concert programs    | 5            |
| ephemera            | 4            |
| letters             | 16           |
| musical instruments | 1            |
| papers              | 2 cubic feet |
| periodicals         | 13           |
| photographs         | 158          |
| pictures, posters,  | 3            |
| slides              | 59           |
| video tapes         | 21           |

Some of the above materials were purchased. For example, we purchased all known video releases of Louis Armstrong films.

Other new acquisitions were gifts. Each donor received a thank-you letter. Original materials or materials of high intrinsic value were accepted after a "Deed of Gift" form was completed.

### **Exhibits**

The Louis Armstrong House and Archives installed three exhibits in the Archives:

*Pops's Children: Kids and Louis Armstrong* (11 September through 5 December 1996)

"This exhibition highlights Louis's love, care, and concern for children and the enduring charm and appeal he holds for kids."

*Mrs. A: Lucille Armstrong* (11 March through 16 May 1997)

"Louis Armstrong's beloved wife is honored in an exhibition which highlights her life with Pops and her career as a Cotton Club dancer, entertainer, and public advocate."

*"The Song Has Ended but the Melody Lingers On": New Acquisitions* (9 September through 17 December 1997)

"The collection of the Louis Armstrong Archives is growing! This exhibit showcases new acquisitions, including a gold-plated trumpet that was given to Louis by the King of England, postcards written by Louis in 1948, newly discovered photos of Louis and his third wife Alpha, and previously unknown recordings of the All Stars."

The opening of each exhibit was celebrated by a catered reception. Approximately 100-125 people attended each reception.

The Louis Armstrong House and Archives was invited to install an exhibit at Tweed Gallery in City Hall park, for Black History Month 1997:

*Louis Armstrong: "I Can't Give You Anything But Love": An Exhibit to Celebrate African-American History Month in the City of New York* (4-23 February 1997)

Tweed Gallery occupies a stunning rotunda in a turn-of-the-century building next to City Hall. (At one time, the building was used as City Hall.) The exhibit consisted of thirty

photographic murals (i.e., 30-inch by 40-inch blow-ups of photographs) with accompanying labels. The exhibit compared and contrasted Louis's role as an international ambassador of goodwill with his modest domestic life in Queens. Approximately four hundred people viewed this exhibit. Because many city officials have their offices in the building, the exhibit was viewed by many elected officials and visiting VIPs.

### **Publications**

Photographs from the Louis Armstrong House and Archives appeared in the following publications:

*Where: New Orleans* (Magazine)  
Allon Schoener, *New York: An Illustrated History*  
*New York Landmarks Conservancy Annual Report*  
*People Magazine*  
*Satchmo's Blues* (Armstrong biography)

Income derived from use of photographs from the collections is credited as "earned income" and is deposited in a department services account.

### **Publicity**

As in previous years, the Louis Armstrong House and Archives has received generous publicity in print and broadcast media.

#### **Broadcast Media**

Broadcast media that covered the Louis Armstrong House and Archives included:

Fox 5 News (9 July 1996)

Time Warner Cable (9 Nov. 1996)

Discover World Mysteries: African-American Heroes (Japan) (Fall 1997)

Queens Public Television (September 1997)

Metro Television (September 1997)

**Print Media**

Feature articles that focus upon the Louis Armstrong House and Archives include:

David Gates. "Louis Will Never Go Away Again," *Newsweek* (July 1997).

Howard Girsky. "Trumpeting Louis Armstrong's Achievements," *Queens Courier* (Sep. 11, 1997).

"Mayor to Present Black History Proclamation at Opening of Armstrong Exhibit," *New York Beacon* (Feb. 6-12, 1997).

Jeremy Olshan. "Profile: Michael Cogswell," *Queens Tribune*.

Margaret Ramirez. "Hometown Tribute," *Newsday* (August 31, 1997).

Michael Sheridan. "The Real House of the Blues," *Astoria Weekend* (August 23, 1997).

John Szwed. "Satchmo's Wonderful World," *Time Out New York* (Sept. 4-11, 1997).

The Louis Armstrong House and Archives was mentioned in many articles about jazz, reviews of new Armstrong books, etc. These mentions include:

Institute for Studies in American Music Newsletter (Fall 1997)

Los Angeles Times Book Review (27 July 1997)

New York Times Book Review (3 August 1997)

New York Times Book Review (7 September 1997).

Times/Ledger (Queens, NY) (10/23/97)

Times Picayune (New Orleans) (4 August 1997)

Weekly Standard (8 September 1997)



West Side Beat (27 September 1996)

### World Wide Web Site

*It is now up and running - please visit!*  
The Louis Armstrong House and Archives has a homepage that is part of the Rosenthal Library homepage, that is part of the Queens College homepage. But the Louis Armstrong page is flat and boring! It consists of one page of text and four poorly cropped photos.

In June 1997, the Armstrong House and Archives hired Dennis Jeter to design a new, compelling homepage. (Mr. Jeter designed the homepages for the Manhattan School of Music and for Jazz at Lincoln Center. He is also a professional jazz trumpet player and Wynton Marsalis's personal assistant!) The new home page will be finished in early 1998. It will allow anyone in the world at any time of day to find out all about the Louis Armstrong House and Archives. The web site will have photographs, text, and audio clips. The address has already been registered: [www.satchmo.net](http://www.satchmo.net). We estimate that once the page is well known, we will receive 15,000 to 20,000 "hits" per day!

### Loans

The Louis Armstrong House and Archives made seven loans to other venues. Each loan was governed by a written "Loan Agreement." All materials were fully insured during the term of the loan. Loan fees were deposited in the Queens College Foundation. Loans between July 1996 and December 1997 were:

Jazz Museum @ 18th & Vine, Kansas City

Loaned 19 items - trumpet, artifacts, awards, concert programs, papers, letters (October 1997)

Contemporary Arts Center, New Orleans

Loaned 19 big band scores for concert led by Professor Tony Dagradi (November 1997)

Festival Productions, JVC Jazz Festival, New York

Loaned Louis Armstrong trumpet for Randy Sandke to use in "The Unknown Louis and Bix" concert (June 1997)

Kennedy Center, Washington, D.C.

Loaned slides for the "Louis Armstrong Legacy" concert series (December 1997)

Atlanta History Center, Atlanta, GA

Louis Armstrong trumpet returned from a one year loan (November 1997)

German Public Radio, Hamburg. (Michael Kleff, Producer)

Tape of excerpts of Louis Armstrong speaking (October 1997)

National Public Radio, Ben Shapiro, Producer, New York

Loaned audio excerpts for "Jazz Profiles" broadcast (September 1997)

School of Library and Information Science, Queens College, Flushing, NY

Loaned slide for class presentation (May 1997)

Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Services (SITES): "Louis Armstrong: A Cultural Legacy"

This major exhibit on Louis Armstrong, which traveled throughout the United States for three years, concluded at the National Portrait Gallery in October 1996. The materials were returned to the Louis Armstrong Archives on 10 December 1996. Removing materials from their frames, re-encapsulating materials, etc. was completed after several months of part-time work.

## Public Programs

### Pops is Tops

From 3 to 5 June 1997, we held "Pops is Tops," our annual jazz concert series for local children. "Pops is Tops" is now in its eleventh year! . There were two shows per day: a morning show at 10 am and an afternoon show at 12:30 pm. As usual, the performing group was *Arvell Shaw and the Louis Armstrong Legacy Band*. (Arvell Shaw, who played bass for Louis Armstrong for more than twenty-five years, leads a band of world-class musicians who perform music associated with Louis Armstrong.) Because the garden of the Armstrong House can seat only 250 children at a time, the concerts are wonderfully intimate. During the concert, each musician in the sextet took a few minutes to explain his instrument and how it is played. At the end of the concert, ten minutes was devoted to questions and answers. Children raised their hands and got to ask any questions they wished to the musicians. Most questions fell into the subjects of

how to play jazz, instrumental technique, or the life of Louis Armstrong, but no question was out of bounds! (The explanatory presentations and the question and answer session provides a memorable educational component to each *Pop is Tops* concert.)

The highlight of the 1997 concert series occurred at the close of the morning show of 4 June. Arvell Shaw was singing Louis Armstrong's hit "What a Wonderful World," when one hundred children in the audience began to sing along. (The children were students at the Louis Armstrong Intermediate School, which plays the song over the PA every morning.) Mr. Shaw, whose eyesight is so poor that he could not see the children, heard them singing along and tears trickled down his cheeks.

*Pops is Tops* is funded by a grant from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs.

#### **Presentations**

Mr. Cogswell made the following public presentations about Louis Armstrong:

- "Midsummer Night Swing," Lincoln Center (1 July 1996)
- Armonk Public Library (7 November 1996)
- Sussex Community College (25 February 1997)
- "Gallery Talk," Tweed Gallery, New York City (26 February 1997)
- Alumni Day, Queens College (3 May 1997)
- "1937 Night," Queens College (5 November 1997)

### **Major Grants and Gifts**

#### **Louis Armstrong Educational Foundation**

Without doubt, the Louis Armstrong House and Archives would not even exist if it were not for the generosity of the Louis Armstrong Educational Foundation. Their annual grant of \$150,000 provides for almost all of the tasks described in this Annual Report. Their funding is especially crucial for covering operating expenses: staff salaries, office supplies, archival supplies, postage, utilities at the Armstrong House, and dozens of other day-to-day expenses.

#### **Yoshio Toyama**

One of the most heartwarming visits yet experienced by the Louis Armstrong House and Archives staff took place on 8 November 1996. Mr. Yoshio Toyama, a trumpet player

who leads the Dixieland Jazz Band at Disneyland, Tokyo, flew to New York City to spend a day at the Louis Armstrong House and Archives. (Mr. Toyama had heard about us through Yasuhiro Fujioka, a Japanese jazz journalist who has visited the Archives many times.) In advance of his visit, Mr. Toyama traveled throughout Japan and collected 138 donations for the Louis Armstrong House and Archives! After he arrived he handed us a check for \$9,500.00! We spent the entire day with Mr. Toyama and his party: We toured the Archives, toured the House and visited the Louis Armstrong School. We ended the day at Flushing Cemetery, where Mr. Toyama and his party folded their hands and said Buddhist prayers at Louis's grave and Mr. Toyama played his trumpet for Louis. We have kept in touch with Mr. Toyama and have placed all 138 donors on our mailing list.

#### **Department of Cultural Affairs**

The Programs Unit of the New York City department of Cultural Affairs awarded us \$31,308. This money underwrites most of the expenses for the *Pops is Tops* children's concerts held every spring at the Louis Armstrong House.

## Goals for 1998

Without doubt the primary goal for 1998 is major fundraising! Interest in the Louis Armstrong House and Archives has exploded! Each year our staff of four (two full-time professionals, one full-time paraprofessional, and one half-time administrative assistant) serves 1200 visitors and researchers, designs and installs two exhibits, plans and hosts free jazz concerts for 1,500 local children, answers 300 reference questions (by telephone, e-mail, and fax), preserves and catalogs 100 new acquisitions, gives five public presentations (to schools, libraries, and community groups), maintains the eighty-seven year old *Louis Armstrong House*, plans--in conjunction with a DCA-DDC project team--the conversion of *Louis Armstrong House* to a public museum,, and raises more than \$180,000 in operating funds (which we spend within the same fiscal year). We are severely understaffed! When the Armstrong House opens as a museum in July 2000, we will need even more staff and funding.

The Louis Armstrong House and Archives hopes to hire a full-time fundraising consultant for a finite term (e.g., 12 months) to (1) evaluate our current and future funding needs, (2) plan an endowment, (3) compose a funding strategy of diverse components (e.g., major gifts, special events, grants, memberships), and (4) identify and research specific funding sources. Our goal is to raise a four million dollar endowment by July 2000.

**Fax Cover Sheet**  
**Louis Armstrong House and Archives**  
**Queens College, CUNY**

**TO:** Fax: 202-395-7234  
Name: Lisa McCann  
Agency: White House Millennium Council  
Telephone: 202-395-7104

**FROM:** Deslyn Downes  
Administrative Assistant  
Louis Armstrong House and Archives  
Queens College, CUNY  
Flushing, NY 11367  
718-997-3670 (Telephone)  
718-997-3677 (Fax)  
satchmo@qc.edu

Date: 29 July 1998

Number of pages (including cover sheet): 21

**Message:**

Thank you for your call and your interest in the Archives off course! Until you speak with Michael Cogswell, the following information will prove helpful. I am including information from the (1) Louis Armstrong brochure, (2) Louis Armstrong Educational Foundation brochure, and (3) a condensed copy of our Annual Report, which gives information on visitorship, and funding etc.

Sincerely,



# Louis Armstrong, Civil Rights Pioneer

By David H. Ostwald

**I**n the clamor over the Supreme Court nomination of Clarence Thomas, the civil rights struggle is again at the forefront of the national consciousness. The names of black heroes — Thurgood Marshall, Martin Luther King Jr., Rosa Parks, Jackie Robinson — are seen and heard everywhere. One person has unfortunately been omitted from this pantheon — Louis Armstrong, whose 90th birthday would have been tomorrow.

Before black ballplayers and political activists became household names, musicians were the only blacks able to attract white America's attention, and Satchmo was the first to make it big. He was the first black man to be featured in Hollywood movies made for white audiences, as well as the first to serve as host on a sponsored network radio show. The power of his genius, combined with his loving manner, forced whites to rethink their racism, whether they knew it or not.

For five decades, he was a huge public presence. In February 1949, wearing a crown of trumpets, he was on the cover of Time magazine. In 1957, Edward R. Murrow's CBS documentary "Satchmo the Great" followed Armstrong from a tour of Europe and Africa to a New York per-

*David H. Ostwald, a lawyer, leads the Gully Low Jazz Band.*

Satchmo was  
rarely overt, yet  
subtly effective.

formance with Leonard Bernstein. Armstrong had hits from the 1920's to the 1980's, the longest string in recording history. In May 1964, "Hello Dolly" toppled the Beatles from the No. 1 spot on the Billboard chart.

Armstrong was rarely overtly political, but as a black artist of universal popularity he had an inevitable social impact. The trumpeter Lester Bowie recently told Garry Giddins, Armstrong's biographer: "The true revolutionary is one that's not apparent. I mean the revolutionary that's waving a gun out in the streets is never effective; the police just arrest him. But the police don't ever know about the guy that smiles and drops a little poison in their coffee. Well, Louis, in that sense, was that sort of revolutionary, a true revolutionary."

But Armstrong was more than just visible. As early as 1929, his celebrity allowed him to shrewdly inject the issue of race into the mainstream. His recording that year of "Black and Blue" — a song with the lyrics: "I'm white inside, but that don't help my case/ 'cause I can't hide what is in my face" — was made and publicized at a time when such sentiments were unheard of in white America.

In his early films, in which he portrayed potentially demeaning black characters, he used his awe-inspiring

artistry and gift for satire to overcome stereotype and rise above the material.

In September 1957, Armstrong finally lost his cool. "The way they are treating my people in the South, the Government can go to hell," he announced as he canceled a State Department-sponsored tour of the Soviet Union upon learning that Gov. Orval Faubus had called out the Arkansas National Guard to prevent the integration of Little Rock's schools. He charged that President Dwight D. Eisenhower had "no guts" and was "two-faced" for allowing it to happen.

This outburst resulted in some bad press and canceled engagements, but his popularity was too great to allow permanent damage to his career. And when Eisenhower sent Federal troops into Little Rock, Armstrong sent him a telegram saying: "If you decide to walk into the schools with the little colored kids, take me along, Daddy. God bless you."

Charles L. Black Jr., a white Southerner who was a member of Thurgood Marshall's legal team that won Brown v. Board of Education in 1954, attributed his own civil rights involvement to having heard Armstrong live at a 1931 dance. "It is impossible to overstate the significance of a 16-year-old Southern boy's seeing genius, for the first time, in a black. We literally never saw a black, then, in any but a servant's capacity. It had simply never entered my mind... that I would see this for the first time in a black man. But Louis opened my eyes wide, and put me to a choice. Blacks, the saying went, were 'all right in their place.' What was the 'place' of such a man, and of the people from which he sprung?"

Happy birthday, Pops, you'll not be forgotten. □

*N.Y. Times*

1991

Final 09/18/98 10:00am

Jeff Shesol

**PRESIDENT WILLIAM J. CLINTON**  
**OPENING REMARKS AT THE MILLENNIUM LECTURE**  
**"JAZZ: AN AMERICAN METAPHOR"**  
**September 18, 1998**

A little more than a century ago, a famous composer arrived on our shores and was amazed by what he heard. African-American music -- blues and spirituals, street songs and work songs -- was unlike anything he had heard in Europe or, in fact, anywhere else. "America," he wrote, after hearing these new, uniquely American sounds, "can have her own music, a fine music growing up from her own soil and having its own special character . . . the natural voice of a free and great nation." That was the great Czech composer, Antonin Dvorak [AN-toh-nin De-VOR-zhahk], writing in 1892. So it is especially fitting that we have President Havel with us here tonight.

In time, the music Dvorak heard became jazz, and jazz became the soundtrack of the American Century. It is, like America itself, inventive and bold; vital and free; respectful of its roots yet always changing, always becoming, always reinventing itself. The great drummer and bandleader Art Blakey once said, "No America, no jazz." This was no mere boast: jazz could only have happened here, because it is music born of the American experience, and it gives voice -- eloquent, insistent voice -- to the American spirit.

Like our country, jazz is a cultural crossroads: where the rhythms of Africa meet the musical instruments of Europe; where black meets white and Latino; where New Orleans meets the South Side of Chicago and 52nd Street. And like our democracy, jazz provides a framework for flowing dialogue; a basis for brilliant improvisation; a point of reference and a point of departure. It poses challenges, and seeks resolution -- finding it in the coordinated effort of the community as well as the unique voice of the individual. Syncopation and solo.

Like me, you're probably eager to hear some of this music we've been talking about. So please join me in welcoming two remarkable musicians who are also our hosts for the evening. Marian McPartland, as you all know, plays improvisational jazz piano, and has been playing it wonderfully for more than seven decades. With just as much energy and enthusiasm, Marian has long been introducing young students to jazz -- even introduced them to Duke Ellington himself a number of years ago. And in the tradition of Duke Ellington, Wynton Marsalis is a distinguished composer, big band leader, and devoted advocate for the arts and education. It is no wonder that last year, he became the first jazz artist to win the Pulitzer Prize for music.

Wynton, Marian: the stage is yours.



Final 09/18/98 10:00am  
Jeff Shesol

**PRESIDENT WILLIAM J. CLINTON**  
**CONCLUDING REMARKS AT THE MILLENNIUM LECTURE**  
**"JAZZ: AN AMERICAN METAPHOR"**  
**September 18, 1998**

I want to thank Marian and Wynton and all these wonderful musicians for showing us how much jazz can tell us about our country, our century, and our deepest aspirations. As you know, I grew up loving jazz, and was inspired by the agility of Charlie Parker and Sonny Rollins . . . the inventiveness of Thelonious Monk and John Coltrane . . . the cool lyricism of Miles Davis. [*These are references to still photographs.*] They opened my ears -- and countless others' -- to a music that was profoundly human, and distinctly American.

As I said before, in the words of Art Blakey, "No America, no jazz." But if jazz is an American invention, it travels well: from club to concert hall, from coast to coast, and across the oceans and back, returning with the imprint of other cultures and new influences. Music that is American at its core has become, truly, the music of the world.

Jazz is also, as it has long been, the international language of liberation -- or, as a man named Willis Conover put it, "the music of freedom." For more than 40 years during the Cold War, Conover hosted the jazz program on the Voice of America. Dictators banned it, and jammed his broadcasts, because they understood the power of jazz to unleash the human spirit. But they could not stop the music. Six nights a week, as Conover started his show with the first bars of "Take the 'A' Train," 30 million listeners in the Soviet bloc would join him for the ride. As far away as China, and as recently as 1989, students at Tiananmen Square hummed the tunes they heard on V.O.A. -- Charlie Parker, Dizzy Gillespie -- sort of a not-so-secret code in the struggle for human rights.

We are honored tonight by the presence of someone who has stood at the frontline of that struggle, and who can tell us the meaning of jazz to those yearning to be free. A few years ago in Prague, he and I even performed a few standards together. Please join me in welcoming an artist and a leader whose work is a tribute to the human spirit: President Vaclav Havel of the Czech Republic.

[*THE PRESIDENT may ask Vaclav Havel a question about the influence of jazz on the dissident community in Communist Czechoslovakia.*]