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Contact:
Mindy Weinberg
Communications Liaison, Penn Libraries
215-746-1342
wmin@pobox.upenn.edu

Ancil George Named Community Outreach Librarian at Penn Libraries

PHILADELPHIA, PA, March 5, 2014 - Penn Libraries is proud to announce the appointment of Ancil George as the inaugural Community Outreach Librarian. A 44-year employee of Penn Libraries, and most recently a Research and Instructional Services (RIS) Librarian, Ancil will work toward broadening community engagement by seeking out new partnership opportunities, and he will evaluate existing relationships to determine their accessibility to and impact on the communities they serve.

“We recognize how fortunate we are to have someone with such a long and distinguished history of working with diverse and, often, underserved communities, in the person of Ancil George, to lead our efforts in this key area,” says Carton Rogers, Vice Provost and Director of Libraries.

Ancil was recently named as one of five recipients of Penn's *2014 Martin Luther King, Jr. Community Involvement Award*. As an RIS librarian, Ancil supported faculty and students in the departments of Africana Studies, Asian American Studies, and the Penn School of Social Policy & Practice, but his work extends beyond the boundaries of his job description. He has worked tirelessly for over four decades with both Penn students and with the community of West Philadelphia to promote literacy, learning and library services. Some of his volunteer endeavors include serving on the advisory boards of Penn's African-American Resource Center and the Greenfield Intercultural Center, and conducting workshops for the New Media Technology Charter School, which serves grades 6-12 in Northwest Philadelphia.

“It's exhausting working with young children,” Ancil says, “but it's also very fulfilling.” He notes that most correctional facilities in the U.S. are required to have libraries and librarians, while at the same time, budget cuts are forcing many public school libraries and schools to shut their doors.

Philadelphia is a prime example of what is happening in underserved communities across this country, and Ancil sees this firsthand at West Philly's Henry C. Lea School, where he works twice a week. “The Lea School has a library but no librarian, so only the K-2

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grades have access twice a week to the library when the library is staffed by volunteers,” notes Ancil. “Students in the upper grades have no access to the library at all.”

One of his objectives is to develop instructional and promotional materials that can be used to recruit volunteers – both librarians and non-librarians – who can offer their time at the Lea School so that all children have an opportunity to use the library. Ancil’s work will complement and coincide with Penn’s Graduate School of Education’s *Project for Civic Engagement*, which recently issued a joint report with the Lea School that will deepen the school-university relationship.

The Penn Libraries serve the world-class faculty and students of Penn's 12 schools. The collections comprise more than 7 million volumes, 1 million of which are in electronic form; over 100,000 journals; and extraordinary rare and unique materials that document the intellectual and cultural experience of ancient and modern civilizations. The Libraries also play an instrumental role in developing new technologies for information discovery and dissemination and are noted for groundbreaking work in digital library design. Visit <http://www.library.upenn.edu> for more information.

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