

## About The Society

*(The first African American Genealogical Society in the State of Michigan)*

The Society's founder, a retired Librarian and Field Archivist, **Margaret McCall Thomas Ward** (1918-2007), had a vision and commitment to research and preserve African American family histories for future generations. In 1979, her idea became a reality, with the formation of the **Fred Hart Williams Genealogical Society** (FHWGS) in the city of Detroit. Organizing Committee members, Yvonne Parks-Catchings, DeWitt S. Dykes, Jr., Karen Batchelor-Farmer Allen, Gabrielle Bradby-Greene, Norman McRae Ph.D., and others, including John H.M. Ingram, III, Edith Martin-Jackson, Marguerite Coar-Massey, Leontine Cole-Smith, and Thelma Woodley-Mitchell, supported Margaret's efforts.

The Society honors the legacy of **Fred Hart Williams** (1882-1961), a pioneer in collecting and interpreting historical materials about African Americans. Throughout his employment as a senior tax clerk for the City of Detroit, he also wrote and reported for three newspapers: *The Detroit Tribune*, *The Michigan Chronicle*, and the Detroit edition of *The Pittsburgh Courier*.

Historians and writers all over the world are indebted to him for the materials he donated to establish the highly regarded E. Azalia Hackley Collection which honors African Americans in the performing arts. The collection is stored at the Detroit Public Library. The descendant of a family who came to Detroit on the Underground Railroad, Williams served his community as a journalist, author,

historian and patron of the arts. Williams' personal family history papers, donated to the Burton Historical Collection, DPL, form an important source of African American History.

Today, the FHWGS publishes a newsletter twice a year, and sponsors educational programs and workshops, which explain research techniques most useful to persons of African American ancestry. Members are encouraged to share their experiences, exchange research finds at meetings, and to deposit their compiled family histories with the Society. The Society also collects, preserves and makes available to the public, manuscripts, documents, genealogical records and historical materials. Field trips are taken throughout the year to examine historical sites, and collections of family history records.

### Membership: Annual Dues September - August

- Single \$20
- Family \$30 (2 persons, 1 Household)
- Junior/Student \$5 (Under 18)
- Founding Member \$100
- Life Member (Under 10 Years) \$300
- Life Member (10 Years+) \$150
- Patron/Business \$100

\*Printable renewal application available. See Join fhwgs (Website) - [www.fhwgs.org](http://www.fhwgs.org)

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FRED HART WILLIAMS GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY  
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