

VOL. 5, NO. 2; WINTER 2004

SHOREFRONT

SHOREFRONT Retrospective

HISTORY, NEWS AND EVENTS ON CHICAGO'S SUBURBAN NORTH SHORE

TM

SHOREFRONT

HISTORY, NEWS AND EVENTS ON CHICAGO'S SUBURBAN NORTH SHORE

TM

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SHOREFRONT™ Journal is a publication of SHOREFRONT™, a not-for-profit institution with an established membership base. Annual memberships start at \$25.00 and are tax exempt to the extent permitted by the IRS. As a bonus, members may also receive a special limited run issue at any given time within the calendar year. All funds raised through membership, donations and grants help to further the collections and outreach of SHOREFRONT™.

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Purpose of SHOREFRONT™

The purpose of SHOREFRONT, N.F.P. is to collect, preserve, exhibit, and interpret the history of the African American population of the Cities, Villages and Townships of suburbs north of Chicago; to disseminate and provide to the public access to such historical information; and to promote knowledge of and pride in the accomplishments of the African American residents of these municipalities.

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Founder

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Cover Photos:

Clockwise from upper
left corner:
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(v.1,'2),
Edwin B. Jourdain, Jr.
(v.4,'2),
Rosetta V. Gradford
(v.3,'3),
William H. Twigg
(v.1,'3) and
Melvin S. Smith (v.2,'1)



Morris (Dino) Robinson, Jr.
Founder

Thank You Annual Appeal and Building A Legacy Supporters!

Shorefront's first Annual Appeal provided Shorefront with an unrestricted source of operating income that will allow Shorefront to continue its ongoing programs.

Shorefront would like to thank the following supporters for their kind contributions and support of Shorefront's efforts in documenting and preserving the North Shore African American community. Shorefront could not exist without your contributions.

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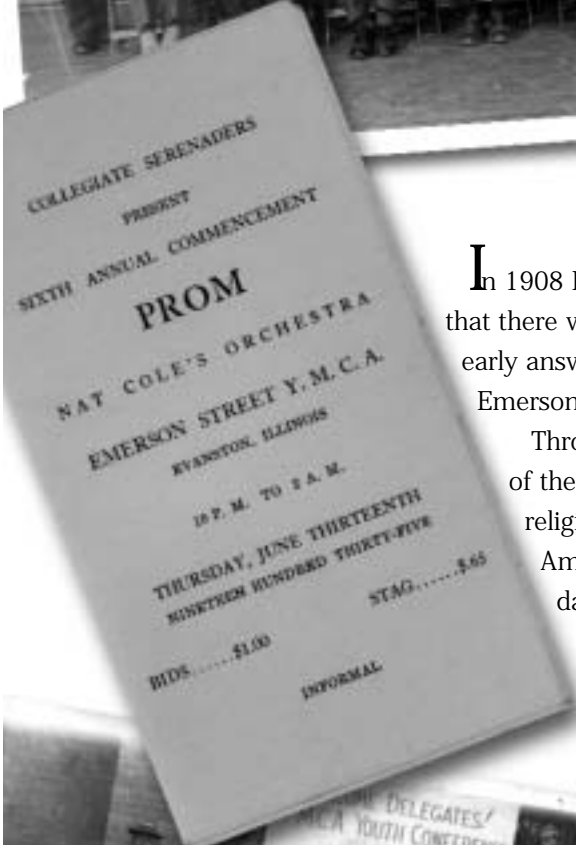


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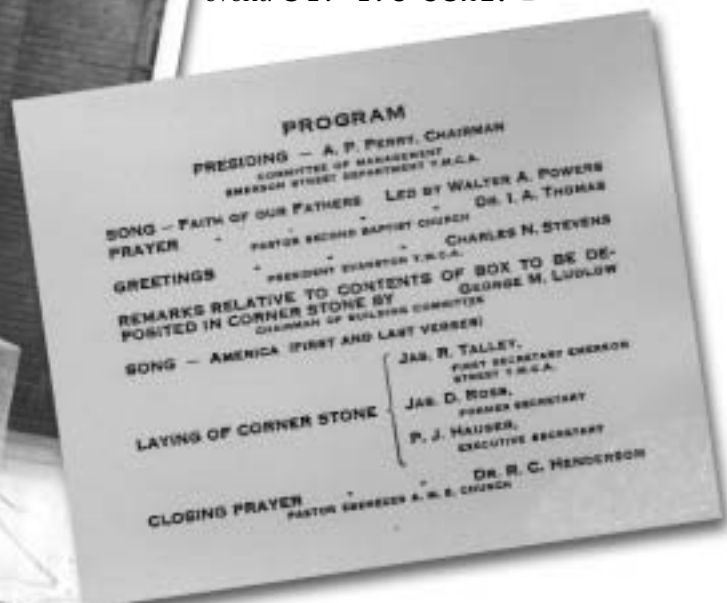


Remembering the Emerson Street YMCA

In 1908 Rev. James R. Talley, of Peoples Baptist Church of Evanston, was concerned that there was no viable supervised recreational activities for African American youth. An early answer to that concern opened six years later in 1914 and was known as the Emerson Street Department Y.M.C.A.

Throughout its existence, the Emerson Street Branch proved to be an integral part of the development of thousands of African American youth, organizations and religious congregations. The Emerson branch provided room and board for African American students attending Northwestern University. It provided space for dances, proms and a multitude of memories that have lasted for decades.

SHOREFRONT and the Grove Street YMCA have embarked on a project that will annually recognize the important contributions that the Emerson Street YMCA made to the African American Evanston community. We seek your fond memories and memorabilia for inclusion in a traveling exhibit and a publication on the history of the Emerson Street Department YMCA. Please contact SHOREFRONT for more information and how you might be able to contribute to such an event. **847-475-5321.**





SHOREFRONT hosted "Building A Legacy" on Thursday, March 11, 2004 at Phillips Fine Art, Framing and Gallery, 1405 Greenleaf, where more than 60 members of several North Shore communities were entertained with music, art, food and history. This event, underwritten by the Mammel Foundation, was **SHOREFRONT**'s first fundraiser for the development of the **SHOREFRONT** Legacy Center.

"Building A Legacy" is a campaign to establish a home for **SHOREFRONT**'s growing archival collection and to bring **SHOREFRONT** programs together under one roof. The future center will also be open for public use and personal research initiatives. The ideal location for the Legacy Center would be within the historic and viable

African American community in Evanston. No other entity such as this exists anywhere north of Chicago within the State of Illinois.

At the event at Phillips Gallery, guests enjoyed live jazz and delicious food by A Cut Above Catering. **SHOREFRONT** featured three of its exhibits at the gallery. The first showcased the purpose of Shorefront, and its quarterly publication *SHOREFRONT Journal*. The second exhibit featured the "North Of Chicago" history which was recently displayed at the Evanston Public Library. The "Pembroke, Illinois Project", commissioned by the Illinois Humanities Council, was displayed to showcase the current research of a rural Illinois community struggling to revive its community and history.



SHOREFRONT

Focuses on Building a Legacy



Presentations began with a welcome and introduction by Nancy and Ann Mammel of the Mammel Foundation. SHOREFRONT Founder, Dino Robinson, gave a general history of SHOREFRONT, its activities and diverse programming. Program's Manager, Debi Mabie, introduced SHOREFRONT's newest program, the "Legacy Project", designed to engage its participants in all aspects of researching and documenting their own or community history. Dino closed the presentation with the introduction of the Legacy Center Project and solicitation of investors in this historical venture.

The "Building A Legacy" campaign goal is to raise funds for the future home of SHOREFRONT's Legacy Center. The Legacy Center will house SHOREFRONT's

growing collection of archives important in telling the history and contributions of the North Shore's African American communities.

SHOREFRONT is the only a not-for-profit entity north of Chicago that collects, preserves, educates, exhibits and honors the history and contributions of the local African American community on Chicago's suburban North Shore.

To learn more about SHOREFRONT and its programs, to become a member, or to become a partner in the "Building A Legacy" campaign, contact SHOREFRONT at 847-475-5321. SHOREFRONT's website, www.shorefrontj.net, provides additional information, a map of sites and downloadable documents of early issues of SHOREFRONT Journal.



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History Preserved

A Retrospective
Development of
Shorefront Journal

This year marks our fifth year in the production of *SHOREFRONT Journal*. As we look back on the past issues Shorefront has produced, it is immediately apparent that we are preserving and documenting the history of African American communities in a small geographical area. What we did not anticipate is the impact that this journal has locally and nationally.



Above: First issue of Shorefront Journal, July, 1999 (page nine) Cover: William Twigg's 1890 publication of the "Afro-American Budget"; Below: Mast head for the International Black Arts Museum.

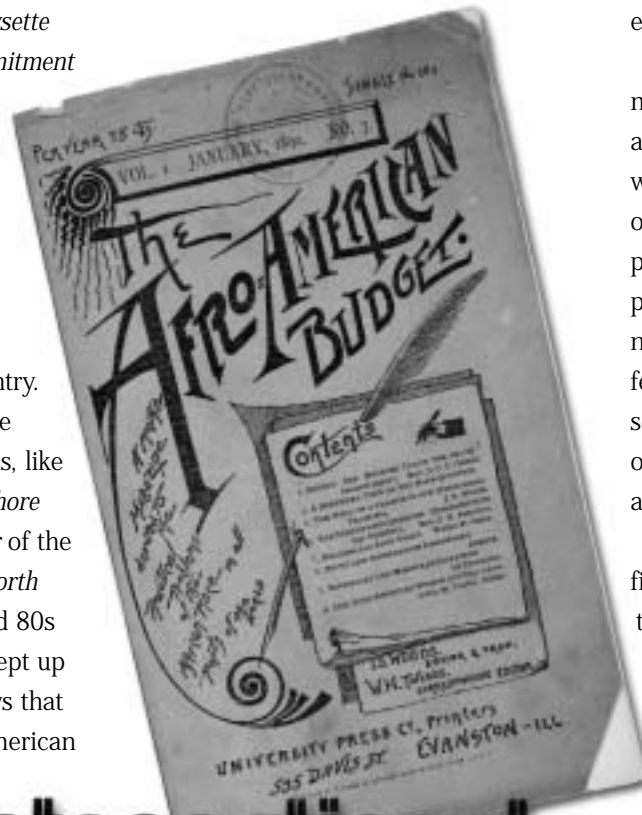
Shorefront is not a “new” idea. There were several periodicals that, in one shape or form, attempted to keep local residents abreast of local history. Many are familiar with Melvin Smith’s two papers, The 1940s *Evanston Newsette* and the *Concerned Citizens Commitment* of the 70s and 80s. Other periodicals existed earlier and others formed afterward.

William Twiggs in the 1890s produced the *Afro American Budget*, a national periodical focused on the plight of “Afro-Americans” throughout the country. His office was later known as the “history den”. Regular periodicals, like the Edwin Jourdain, Jr’s *North Shore Guide* and the *Evanston Informer* of the 1930s, Randolph Tomlinson’s *North Shore Examiner* of the 1970s and 80s and today’s *Evanston Sentinel*, kept up with local and metropolitan news that was important to the African American Community.

Entities such as the Negro History Gallery located on Garnett Street in the 1930s and the International Black Art Museum of the 1970s brought national and local history to Evanston. As with some of its predecessors, Shorefront as an organization, has been disseminating information and preserving local African American community history. The *SHOREFRONT Journal* has quickly become its main outreach device of the Shorefront organization.

The journal has developed some history of its own during its formation dating back to 1997. Having just completed “Through the Eyes of Us” and needing to distance myself from researching for a while, I began to

contemplate a third publication in book form. I estimated that two years was needed to research, write, produce and publish a worthwhile book on our community.



International Black Art Museum

Two years was just too long of a period. The answer to the question as to what could be produced in a shorter time period, that was of benefit to the community and incorporate the growing collection of notes, interviews and clippings already acquired was paramount.

Toying with that concept, I began to develop concepts that would have long-range benefits. In 1998, I put together a newsletter, and it sat on my computer for more than a year as I tweaked the content and procrastinated on whether it should be distributed.

During this time, the idea of a newsletter underwent a variety of

possible name considerations such as “ShoreLine”, “NorthLine”, “African American Community History”, “In The Black”, “Legacy” and “North Shore Legacy”. These names and others were either too long or in use.

A mock-up of the newsletter was made and shown to my family members and several other people, (many of whom ended up on the Shorefront Board of Advisors). They were asked to critique, provide feedback and comments. Several pushed for the production of the newsletter as soon as possible. From the feedback and brainstorming among several community members, we settled on a name and immediately sought and acquired a trademark.

SHOREFRONT Journal was born, but the first ready-to-print publication continued to exist only as an electronic file on my computer for the rest of 1998 and well into 1999. Almost forgotten, a routine spring-cleaning of my hard drive brought it back to my attention and upon final encouragement, the journal went to press.

Our first issue debuted in July 1999 as a four-page document and was passed out at the Evanston Farmers Market on Emerson Street and Oak Avenue. Historically, this was on the site of the last Butler Livery building. Depending upon feedback, an annual release of the newsletter was considered. However, after hearing the responses received from the first issue, that plan was reconsidered.

Several realizations came to the forefront from this first release. First, I had underestimated how fast the issues were taken up as requests for more copies started coming in. Although

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1,000 copies of the first issue were printed, by the end of two weeks, not one was left. An additional run of 50 were made for backorders and archiving.

The next realization was that issues would have to be released more than once a year. Quarterly issues were decided as the next logical step. Any more would become difficult to produce since there was no staff, no money and little time to work it into my already busy workload as a graphic designer.

I also wanted to have others write and research topics of interest and immediately started to look for others to write compelling stories of community members. Issue two featured an article on Helen Cromer Cooper written by Petina Dixon, then a Medill School of Journalism student at Northwestern University. At this point, it became imperative to involve the community in what was becoming a community effort to share, research, write and become historians in their own right.

Since then, Shorefront made it a point to incorporate a story written by someone outside of Shorefront in each issue. To date, all issues, with the exception of the first issue, have had guest writers ranging from first time writers to experienced journalists and multi-degreed individuals. Shorefront has indeed become a venue for such submissions.

Preserving each issue was of extreme importance. It is one thing to print material for the community to share. To have it preserved ensures that the journal and its contents would be accessible for generations. Issues were

sent to surrounding libraries, universities and historical societies so that the journals would end up in archives there. Shorefront also applied for and received an ISSN number in 2001 and sends two copies of each issue to the Library of Congress for archiving.

Lastly, I realized that the *SHOREFRONT Journal* would have to be self-supportive, relying heavily on a subscription or membership base. As a result, we at Shorefront developed a structure that mirrored that of historical societies.

People could become members of

Shorefront and, as a benefit of membership, would receive the quarterly *SHOREFRONT Journal*.

These on-going developments over the first years have led to *SHOREFRONT Journal's* growth from a four-page "newsletter" to a journal averaging 20 pages per issue. To better cope with the changes, the structure and the design of the publication began to

work its way into production.

The first major improvement was the volunteer work of author/editor Rose Jourdain. I can still remember her initial phone call a week after I gave her the first issue of Shorefront; "Dino! Excellent news...um...booklet, or whatever you call this thing. Listen, you need... and this is far too important a piece to go without ... an editor..." Since then, *SHOREFRONT Journal* had its first editor followed by additional editors and proofreaders who volunteer their services.

A committee, consisting of community members, was formed around the journal. Each person brought with them skills and techniques needed for the journal. As the committee formalized, it was time for the next phase.

In the fall of 2001, Shorefront began to undergo a facelift. Again designs and redesigns sat on my computer for six months as members of the committee decided which best suited the mission



of Shorefront. The new design was introduced during the spring of 2002, Rosetta Gradford was featured on the cover.

Consistent departments appeared such as "Shorefront UpFront" and "Flash in the Past". The later page featured a



photograph that asked for reader assistance in identifying the event or the people in the photo. With these responses also came suggestions on who Shorefront should feature. We responded by asking the person who suggested the idea, if they would like to write the story.

Over the years, our readership has grown. Though we expected a local growth in reader and membership, we did not expect a growth on a national level. By end of 2002, Shorefront was finding its way to the east and west coast and parts of the south. As a result of Shorefront's growth, a natural connection with many former Evanstonians developed. An example of this connection is shared with Norma Taylor who produces the "Evanston Connection" newsletter out of California.

Serious recognition of the potential impact of the *SHOREFRONT Journal* and the Shorefront organization began to take root in 2002, gaining the attention of various funding entities. In addition to initial "interest" grants from the Evanston Cultural Fund in the mid 1990s, new funding opportunities became available.

Shorefront was officially incorporated as a not-for-profit

organization in June 2002 and, as an organization, Shorefront applied for several grants. Two grants, one through the City of Evanston (Community Development Block Grant) and another from the Mammel Foundation, provided seed money to continue the journal, acquire equipment, firm up internal structure and inspire new projects.

We at Shorefront realize that the journal plays a vital part in keeping the local African American community connected with its own history in a very unique way. The journal provides historical information on people, places and events, and the journals long-term effect soon became apparent.

The journal inspires the younger generation to become involved in and to be a part of a history that is tangible. *SHOREFRONT Journal* invites writers of all levels to submit their articles, poems or short stories. Internally, the journal inspires lectures, exhibits and programs on the history of the African American communities on the North Shore.

The first issue of the *SHOREFRONT Journal* included a short article on musicians from Evanston. Within a year, the article evolved into a 15-minute slide and music lecture. Within two years, the lecture was transformed into a multi-panel exhibit on the subject which includes a "juke box" of sample music spanning nearly 60 years.

Another example of how the journal inspired new programs involves a project outside of the confines of Evanston. Throughout the years, Shorefront has assisted several students

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(Page ten) Top: Petina Dixon-Shorefronts first contributing writer; Middle right: Rose Jourdain and Dino Robinson; Bottom: Redesign of Shorefront Journal Featuring Rosetta Cradford.

(Page eleven) Top: Shorefront first board members and family at summer outing at the home of Morris and Margo Robinson, 2002; Above: "Music for the Soul" exhibit at Noyes Cultrual Center; Bottom: Pembroke teen research group.

A Flash from the Past



Emerson Street YMCA Basketball Team

*Shorefront Archives
Photo: ©Evanston
Photographic Studios*

In recent weeks, the Shorefront office has been receiving a number of images of and about the Emerson Street YMCA. Many are unidentified as is the one above. If you can identify the participants of this photo, please call our offices at 847.475.5321.



Our last issue featured a photo of the Evanston Vanguard, courtesy of Marsha Belcher. Days later, we received a call from “Rip” Ried who identified everyone in the group.

Front row left to right: Mickie Alexander, Billy Gray, Donald Lee, Richard Strong, Bru Alexander, Ronald Lee, Bobby Payton.

Back row left to right: Dickie Fair, Cedrick Watt, Sam Johnson, Richard Morris, Billy Johnson, David Dawson, Eddie Aikens, Bobby Jones.

...Continued from page eleven

in school-related research assignments and we sought a way to incorporate the mission of Shorefront in our assistance.

During the summer of 2003, Shorefront received a call from the Illinois Humanities council asking us to work on an oral history project in Pembroke, Illinois. Shorefront assembled a group of Pembroke teens to record their own history, exhibit it and produce a one-time journal focused on their local

The production of the journal is quite involved and it can take months to prepare a feature story. Brainstorming topics and individuals, finding source materials and photographs and identifying potential writers is an on-going process. Though we have deadlines, we realize we are working with volunteer writers who themselves are busy with their daily activities. So it is not unusual that several articles are

useful and eye-catching images without altering the photo's original composition.

At the same time, all copy goes through our editor and proofreaders for content, corrections and suggestions for expanding the main story usually working with the approval of the author.

SHOREFRONT *Journal* is a community effort. It is one in which the community can take ownership. The journal's end benefit is that future generations within



Shorefront covers since 1999

history. Now, this idea is being established in Evanston as an ongoing project. The Legacy Project goal is to engage our youth in processes related to the preservation and telling of local history.

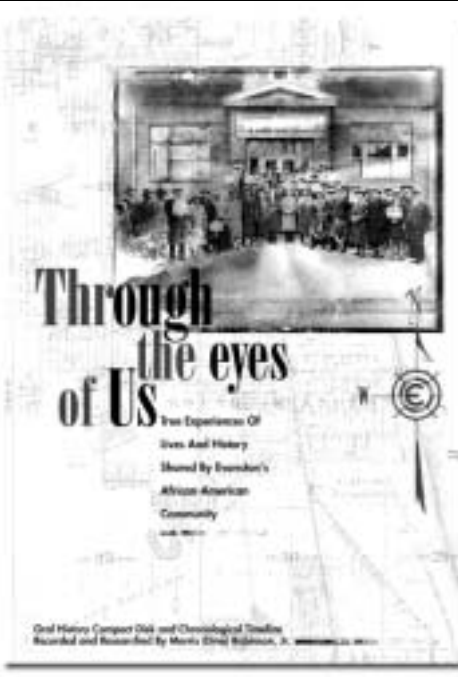
We could not have imagined the impact that a simple four-page newsletter would have had. Nor could we have realized this without the local and national participation of readers and participants from the community.

developed simultaneously and published when ready.

The graphic production is the journal's second phase. If we do not receive photos from the interview subject, we try our best to locate samples and acquire, permission to use them. The journals volunteer photo retoucher, Photo Grafix, has on many occasions repaired faded, damaged or otherwise, un-reproducible images and brought them to

our communities will have access to the information. With the list of the subjects that we have developed, and are always adding to, we will be able to keep Shorefront busy for decades.

We look forward to serving our community as well as to the community serving and feeding Shorefront its many important stories that honor those of our community who have played a part in our lives. 📷



Historical Book and CD

Dino Robinson, founder of SHOREFRONT, and SHOREFRONT Journal, presents this informative second book aptly named, "Through the eyes of Us". This timely publication takes readers through the decades of African American history in Evanston that tells of the community's historical contributions, frustrations and accomplishments from 1850 to 1998. The accompanying audio Compact Disk includes interviews of several residents, past and present, and their thoughts on growing up in Evanston.

\$15^{ea} Plus \$1.75 for shipping and handling. Multiple books, add an additional .45 per book.

To order, call 847.475.5321 or send check payable to:

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Thank You

Your support helps SHOREFRONT continue the publication of SHOREFRONT Journal and support other project initiatives.

Grants

SHOREFRONT is partially supported by generous grants from the following entities:

- The Mammel Foundation
- Evanston Community Development Block Grant
- The Evanston Arts Council, a city agency, supported by the City of Evanston and the Illinois Arts Council, a state agency.

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Membership Levels (Memberships are annual)

A portion of each membership category fee is reserved to further the collection efforts of SHOREFRONT archives, for assistance in research initiatives and to aid students involved with research projects.

Individual: \$25

- 4 issues of Shorefront Journal*
- Announcements to exhibit openings and displays
- Listed in an issue of Shorefront as a member

Family: \$50

- 4 issues of Shorefront Journal*
- Announcements to exhibit openings and displays
- Copy of "Through The Eyes of Us" Book and audio oral history CD*
- Listed in an issue of Shorefront as a member

Organization: \$100

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- Announcements to exhibit openings and displays
- Copy of "Through The Eyes of Us" Book and audio oral history CD*
- Listed in every issue of Shorefront as a Supporter for the current year

Small Business: \$250

- 4 issues of Shorefront Journal*
- Announcements to exhibit openings and displays
- Copy of "Through The Eyes of Us" Book and audio oral history CD*
- 1/16 page advertisement in every issue of Shorefront for the current year*

Corporate: \$1,000

- 4 issues of Shorefront Journal*
- Announcements to exhibit openings and displays
- Copy of "Through The Eyes of Us" Book and audio oral history CD*
- 1/8 page advertisement in every issue of Shorefront for the current year*
- Recognized in exhibits and programs as a Sponsor for the current year

Grantor: \$5,000 and up

(one time payment)

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- Announcements to exhibit openings and displays
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- Recognized in exhibits and programs as a Sponsor for the current year
- Listed in Shorefront as a Life Member for the duration of its publication
- Special recognition award

*Values

4 issues of Shorefront Journal - \$20;
 "Through The Eyes of Us" - \$15;
 Advertising: 1/4"-\$150, 1/8"-\$100, 1/16"-\$35

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Entity _____

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Levels: Individual \$25

Family: \$50

Organization: \$100

Small Business: \$250

Corporate: \$1,000

Grantor: \$5,000+

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In The Attic

STOP! Don't throw away those old ad books, invitations, artifacts, newspapers, photographs, club minutes. The contents in your basement, attic or deep in your closet tell a story of the evolution of the African American organizations, businesses, churches, people and places.

As part of our on-going research, SHOREFRONT is looking for items relating to the African

American experience in Evanston and the north shore community for inclusion in a central archival center. The north shore area includes Rodgers Park in Chicago, north to Lake Forest.

If you have such material and are willing to donate the item(s) or willing to make them available for duplication, please call our office at

847.475.5321.

Programs of SHOREFRONT

Journal

SHOREFRONT *Journal* is published four times a year. It serves a growing membership that includes the Chicago metropolitan area institutions, schools, historical societies and individuals. The publication shares a national readership and is archived at the U.S. Library of Congress. The publication is open to submissions from novice and professional writers and researchers and from a range of age groups.

Exhibits

SHOREFRONT produces traveling exhibits focused on specific aspects of the local African American community. Exhibits have been displayed in public library's and historical societies in Evanston, Wilmette and Lake Forest.

Lectures

SHOREFRONT has been involved and/or facilitated more than 40 lectures and several neighborhood bus tours highlighting the history and contributions of the North Shore African American community.

Legacy

SHOREFRONT's **Legacy Project** is a oral history/photo documentary project designed to introduce and engage youth and community members in aspects of research, writing and archiving personal and community history.

SHOREFRONT is a not-for-profit
501(c)(3) organization.

Online at shorefrontj.net

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