

## DELRAY BEACH LECTURE SERIES PRESENTERS

**Evan P. Bennett, Ph.D.** is a historian of the American South whose research focuses on the intersections of rural, environmental, and labor history. He has just completed writing a book on the environmental history of Tampa Bay. He is the author of "When Tobacco Was King: Families, Farm Labor, and Federal Policy in the Piedmont," (University Press of Florida, 2014). He is also co-editor of "Beyond Forty Acres and a Mule: African American Landowning Families Since Reconstruction," (University Press of Florida, 2012).

**Robert Feeney** holds a master's degree in history from Florida Atlantic University. His research focus is on material culture (historical artifacts) and the history of technology. In his world travels, he has conducted research at Oxford University's famous Bodleian Library, the Imperial War Museum, the Royal Armouries at Leeds, and the National World War One Museum. He has led tours of the Normandy landing beaches and surrounding areas. He is also an experienced archaeologist and avocational paleontologist. He is a member of the famed Explorer's Club of New York, the Florida Anthropological Society, the Society for the History of Technology, and the Institute for the History of Pharmacy. He has worked as a historical consultant on programming for BBCAmerica, the History Channel, and for numerous book authors.

**Emily A. Fenichel, Ph.D.** is an Associate Professor of Art History at Florida Atlantic University who earned her M.A. and Ph.D. from the University of Virginia. Her research focuses on the art of the Italian Renaissance, specifically the religious art of Michelangelo Buonarroti, on which she has published and lectured extensively. Her forthcoming book, Michelangelo's Art of Devotion in the Age of Reform (Cambridge, 2023) considers the artist's late religious works against the backdrop of Counter-Reformation Rome.

Since 1999, **Michiko Kurisu** has worked together with her father at Kurisu, LLC, a Japanese garden landscape design and construction firm, to develop public awareness about healing gardens and the particular qualities of Japanese garden design that shape therapeutic environments. A professional photographer, she has documented Kurisu's gardens and the experiences of people who inhabit them to further understand how nature affects human wellness. She holds a BFA from Brown University, studied photography at the Rhode Island School of Design and environmental science in Botswana with the School for International Training. She is based in Delray Beach, Florida.

**Brian McConnell, Ph.D.**'s research interests span the Old World from prehistory through the Middle Ages. He concentrates on the island of Sicily, where he has conducted archaeological field research for over three decades, including FAU's summer study abroad excavation program at ancient Palikè (Rocchicella di Mineo). He has published a book on the journey through Sicily by painters Thomas Cole and Samuel James Ainsley (Agli Albori del Viaggio Moderno in Sicilia, Il viaggio di Thomas Cole e Samuel James Ainsley per la Sicilia 1842, Domenico Sanfilippo Editore, Catania 2014) and a documentary and analytical monograph on Wall Illustrations from the 'Grotte di Caratabia' (University of Palermo/Franco Serra Editore 2015), as well as a variety of articles and reports in international journals and convention proceedings. He teaches undergraduate art history surveys and upper division courses that focus on ancient and medieval cultures of the Mediterranean and Europe. He has taught graduate seminars on such varied topics as Picasso, Minimalism, the Art of Internment, Art & Human Rights, and Art & Sound, and he has directed and served on MFA committees for the Department of Visual Arts & Art History and Ph.D. committees for the D. F. Schmidt College of Arts & Letters.

**Jermaine Scott** is an Assistant Professor of African American and Sports History at Florida Atlantic University. He's currently working on a book with Columbia University Press, called, "Black Soccer: Football and Politics in the African Diaspora," which seeks to understand how Black footballers challenged racist structures in the modern game while renegotiating the relationship between blackness and the nation. His writings have been included in ESPN's The Undeclared, the Journal of African American History and the Journal of Sports History. Jermaine teaches courses on African American and African Diaspora History and Sports History.



OSHER LIFELONG LEARNING INSTITUTE  
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## 2024 Delray Beach Lecture Series

The Delray Beach Downtown Development Authority, which is now operating Old School Square, is hosting the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI) at FAU for a special series of lectures at the Square.

Old School Square  
POWERED BY DELRAY BEACH DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY  
AND CITY OF DELRAY BEACH



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Click [here](#) or visit [olliboca.fau.edu](http://olliboca.fau.edu) for registration information for all lectures.



## 2024 DELRAY BEACH LECTURE SERIES

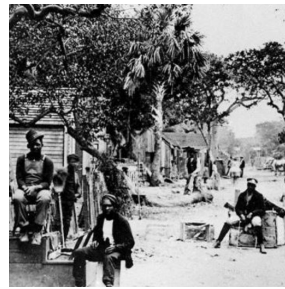
**Location: The Field House at Old School House Square**

51 N. Swinton Avenue (at Atlantic Avenue) in Downtown Delray Beach

Free parking at the Old School Parking Garage 180 NE 1<sup>st</sup> St, Delray Beach, FL 33444

**Pricing:** OLLI Member: \$30 | Non-member/Guest: \$35

*\$100 for any combination of four events, members only. Bundle purchases are not refundable.*



### THE GREATEST BENEFIT TO PALM BEACH: Railroads, Hotels, and the Styx, 1890–1910

**Presenter:** Jermaine Scott | **Class Code:** W213D

**Date:** Tuesday, February 13 | **Time:** 10:30 a.m.–12 p.m.

This presentation will be about African American life in West Palm Beach during the early twentieth century. I will highlight the role of Henry Flagler and the African American workers that constructed his railroads and hotels in Palm Beach. Importantly, I will discuss the significance of “the Styx” one of the earliest African American settlements in West Palm Beach which housed nearly 500 African Americans. During this period, the city of WPB was constantly concerned with the sanitary conditions of the Styx and advocated for its complete removal. This presentation argues that African American life was vital to the creation and sustainability of West Palm Beach.



### DELRAY BEACH'S DESEGREGATION STORY

**Presenter:** Evan Bennett, Ph.D. | **Class Code:** W312D

**Date:** Tuesday, March 12 | **Time:** 10:30 a.m.–12 p.m.

James “Bay” McBride drowned on Mothers’ Day 1956 while saving his brother from a rip current south of Delray Beach’s municipal beach. McBride and his family lived in Delray, but could not use the city’s beach because of the city’s segregation ordinance. McBride was not Delray Beach’s first Black citizen to drown in the rough, unguarded waters south of town, but community members struggled to make sure he’d be the last. This lecture explores the long struggle to desegregate Delray Beach’s famous white sands in the middle of the twentieth century while placing it in the context of Black Floridians’ longer struggle to unseat Jim Crow.



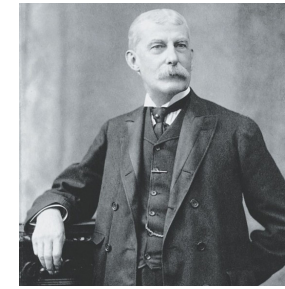
### THE BOOTLEGGING KING:

#### James “Cracker” Johnson and Prohibition West Palm Beach

**Presenter:** Jermaine Scott | **Class Code:** W409D

**Date:** Tuesday, April 9 | **Time:** 10:30 a.m.–12 p.m.

This presentation will focus on the life of James “Cracker” Johnson who was an African American entrepreneur in West Palm Beach during the interwar period. He made his fortune as a bootlegger during the Prohibition era, and was the leader of a larger underground bootlegging empire that accumulated wealth and power for Johnson. This presentation will argue that African Americans in WPB during the interwar period found ways to secure economic self-sufficiency in the midst of racial violence and police surveillance.

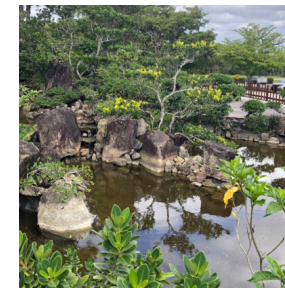


### HENRY FLAGLER'S DREAM: The Railroad that Went to Sea

**Presenter:** Robert Feeney, MA | **Class Code:** W514D

**Date:** Tuesday, May 14 | **Time:** 10:30 a.m.–12 p.m.

Ever wonder what it would be like to take a train journey over the sea? Henry Flagler’s railroad did just that. Feeney, dressed as a train conductor circa the 1915-era, will take you on a trip through the history of Florida railroads, including the destruction of Flagler’s dream by the Great Hurricane of 1935. He will also show original artifacts from the golden age of train travel and present anecdotes regarding early rail travel in Florida.



### MORIKAMI GARDENS:

#### A Conversation About Art, History, Design, and Healing

**Presenter:** Emily Fenichel, Ph.D. and Machiko Kurisu | **Class Code:** W611D

**Date:** Tuesday, June 11 | **Time:** 10:30 a.m.–12 p.m.

Join Dr. Emily Fenichel from Florida Atlantic University and Michiko Kurisu, from Kurisu LLC, for a wide-ranging conversation about Morikami Gardens in Delray Beach. Kurisu was a part of the team that designed and installed the fabulous Japanese Gardens at Morikami and Fenichel is an Art History professor. Together, they will discuss the history of Morikami, the challenges in making a Japanese Garden in South Florida, the ethos behind the design, the garden’s place in the broader community, and how such gardens can be healing spaces.



### FLORIDA'S HIGHWAYMEN:

#### African-American Landscape Painters and the Fort Pierce Art Phenomenon

**Presenter:** Brian McConnell, Ph.D. | **Class Code:** W709D

**Date:** Tuesday, July 9 | **Time:** 10:30 a.m.–12 p.m.

Join Dr. Brian McConnell as he explores the story of Florida’s Highwaymen, a group of 26 African-American artists that exhibited resourcefulness and creativity, forging a unique style of painting that offered them economic independence amidst the Jim Crow era. Starting in the 1950s and inspired by A.E. “Bean” Backus and Alfred Hair, these self-taught artists depicted Florida’s landscapes in a vibrant manner, using a “fast painting” technique. Scenes of serene wilderness—beaches, marshes, sunny days, and storms — were crafted from memory and experience into landscape abstractions that nevertheless created a very real image of an emerging Florida, America’s last frontier. Using inexpensive materials, they stacked paintings in cars for efficient sales, showcasing ingenuity and adapting to expanding automobile access to the state in a manner very different from turn-of-the-century art colonies. Florida’s Highwaymen turned to art as a means of livelihood, leaving a lasting legacy of artistic style and entrepreneurial spirit that remains active today.



### THE GLADIOLUS CAPITAL AND MUCH, MUCH MORE: Delray Beach's Agricultural History

**Presenter:** Evan Bennett, Ph.D. | **Class Code:** W813D

**Date:** Tuesday, August 13 | **Time:** 10:30 a.m.–12 p.m.

Delray Beach started as Linton, a farming community settled by Michiganders eager to help turn South Florida into a winter garden at the turn of the last century. Their vision soon carried the town to renown as a producer of fruits, vegetables, and, most famously, gladiolas flowers. While agriculture has changed and become a smaller part of Delray Beach’s economy, growers nevertheless continue to turn out crops west of town. This lecture will explore that long history of agriculture, placing it in the context of South Florida’s history as a garden spot and the larger currents of agricultural production in the U.S. and abroad.

*Savor a day in Delray! Post-lecture, stroll along Atlantic Avenue’s charming shops, art galleries, and restaurants.*

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