

Archivists & Archives of Color Roundtable
Society of American Archivists
17 North State Street
Suite 1425
Chicago, IL 60602-4061

February 20, 2015

Linda Johnson Rice
Chairman
Johnson Publishing Company
200 S. Michigan Avenue
Chicago, IL 60604

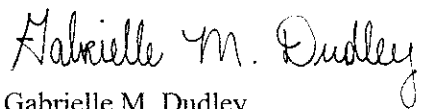
Dear Linda Johnson Rice:

The year 2015 marks a century of African American life, history, and culture as a field of study. Since 1942, Johnson Publishing has served as a both a print and photographic repository of the world's collective memory of the African American experience. Too often, the history of people of color goes undocumented and the Johnson Publishing Photo Archives consisting of photographs from both *Ebony* and *Jet* fills a much needed void in the documentary heritage of African Americans. The company, its magazine, and its photographs have helped to uplift us, as a people, showcase our challenges, celebrate our triumphs, and demonstrate our beauty.

The Society of American Archivists' Archivists & Archives of Color Roundtable recently learned that you plan to sell the photo archive of 5 million African American images, which includes the Pulitzer Prize winning photo of Coretta Scott King at the funeral of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. for 40 million dollars. While we are aware of the challenges facing print media in the digital age and honor your decision to seek alternative methods to increase your capital, we are concerned that the loss of this type of collection to a for-profit entity could have serious ramifications for future generations.

As professionally trained archivists and individuals concerned with the history of people of color, we ask that you consider the long-term ramifications of a short term financial solution. We urge you to reconsider your decision to sell the collection, but if it must be sold, please consider working with an institution like the Library of Congress or Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture that can ensure continued access and preservation of the entire Johnson Publishing Photo Archives. It is imperative that this collection be accessible and preserved for future generations so that they too can see and learn from our triumphs, challenges, and beauty. We welcome the opportunity to create a dialogue about the sale and offer possible alternatives to you.

Sincerely,



Gabrielle M. Dudley
Chair, Archivists & Archives of Color Roundtable

Aaisha Haykal

Aaisha Haykal

Chair-Elect, Archivists and Archives of Color Roundtable

cc: Desiree Rodgers, Chief Executive Officer

cc: Cheryl Mayberry McKissack, Chief Operations Officer

cc: Kathleen Roe, President, Society of American Archivists

cc: Nancy Beaumont, Executive Director, Society of American Archivists