

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **UH Law Center: Black History Month Lecture speaker Burr to analyze pre-Civil War ancestral history**

**HOUSTON, Feb. 23, 2021** - In commemoration of Black History Month, the University of Houston Law Center will host a virtual discussion led by University of New Mexico School of Law Professor Emeritus Sherri L. Burr at 5:30 p.m. on Feb. 25.

Burr's presentation is titled, "Genealogical Research into America's Antebellum Past: The Challenges of Finding the Enslaved, the Free, and Enslavers." Dean Leonard M. Baynes will serve as a commentator.

"We must analyze pre-Civil War ancestral history because too much of relations between races has been lost, misunderstood, or misinterpreted," Burr said. "This unexamined history continues to impact relations between races today."

"For many African-Americans, the search for historical ancestors is complicated by slavery," Baynes noted. "Professor Burr's research provides hope that some will be able to fully trace their family roots. Moreover, Professor Burr's genealogical discovery is very important because it evidences that there was a significant amount of race mixing during Antebellum times in both the South and the North."

Six years of tracking relatives and ancestors resulted in Burr's book, "Complicated Lives: Free Blacks in Virginia, 1619-1865," published by the Carolina Academic Press in 2019. It received numerous awards and was nominated for the Pulitzer Prize in History.

After hearing Burr present part of her research in 2018, the Aaron Burr Association unanimously voted to acknowledge that Aaron Burr fathered two children of color with Mary Emmons and that all of their descendants were legitimate members of the Fairfield Branch of the Burr Family. In 2019, the Aaron Burr Association placed a memorial headstone, acknowledging his parentage, on the gravesite of John Pierre Burr at Eden Cemetery in Pennsylvania. Burr worked with the Aaron Burr Association for eight months to secure grant funding, design the headstone, arrange shipping, and installation.

The event is sponsored by the University of Houston Law Center's [Black Law Alumni group](#). Attendees will receive one hour of Texas continuing legal education credit.

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The [University of Houston Law Center](#) (UHLC) is a dynamic, top tier law school located in the nation's 4th largest city. UHLC's Health Law, Intellectual Property Law, and Part-time programs rank in the U.S. News Top 10. It awards Doctor of Jurisprudence (J.D.) and Master of Laws (LL.M.) degrees, through its academic branch, the College of Law. The Law Center is more than just a law school. It is a powerful hub of intellectual activity with more than 11 centers and institutes which fuel its educational mission and national reputation. UHLC is fully accredited by the American Bar Association and is a member of the Association of American Law Schools.

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