Clara Stanton Jones
(1913-2012)

Inducted: **2018**   *Locale:* **Detroit**   *Era:* **Historical**   *Group:* **African American**
Area(s) of Achievement: **Civil Rights, Education, Women's Rights**

Clara Stanton Jones of Detroit was the first woman and first African American to serve as director of a major public library system in the United States. Clara was a Missouri native. In the early 1930s Clara attended the Milwaukee State Teacher's College. From there, she transferred to Spelman College in Georgia. It was at this university where Clara decided to become a librarian, and she graduated in 1934 with her Bachelor of Arts in English and History. Next, Clara moved on to the University of Michigan, and graduated in 1938 with a degree in Library Science.

Following the Detroit Race Riot, Clara worked for the city's Interracial Commission, later called the Commission on Community Relations. In this position, she developed a strong sense of community which she carried with her into her library career. In 1944 Clara accepted a position at the Detroit Public Library, and by her retirement she had transformed libraries everywhere. With a focus on community, Clara worked to desegregate libraries, library services, and overall library culture by encouraging the American Library Association to pass the "Resolution on Racism and Sexism Awareness."

Clara was active in multiple organizations throughout her lifetime, including the American Library Association where she was the first African American President. In 1978 she was appointed by President Jimmy Carter to the National Commission on Libraries and Information Science. She was a member of the Public Library Association, American Civil Liberties Union, National Council of Negro Women, and more. She also founded the discussion group, Black Women Stirring the Waters, which is still active today. Clara had been granted many awards celebrating her achievements, including the Distinguished Service to the Community Award from Wayne Community College.