

Brian Graney: Good morning, everyone. Welcome to *Regeneration in Digital Contexts: Early Black Film* organized by the Black Film Center/Archive and made possible in part by a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities with generous additional support provided by the Indiana University Cinema and the Indiana University College of Arts and Sciences.

From the college I'm happy to have with us this morning to offer a word of welcome on behalf of the college, Professor in the Department of Communication and Culture and Associate Dean for the Arts and Humanities, John Lucaites.

John Lucaites: Thank you. You know, it's a cliché but nonetheless true for it that one of the real delights of a position like mine is the opportunity to provide support for events like this and then beyond that to have the opportunity to come and actually welcome the people that are responsible for putting it together and participating in it.

It is my real pleasure to welcome you to this magnificent facility and to Indiana University and our beautiful campus, both of which we are duly proud. I know that you have a packed schedule today and tomorrow but I hope that you will take the opportunity to get out to see some of our campus over the next several days. Particularly, I would direct you to the old crescent area on the west side of campus near the Sample Gates where you would have the opportunity to see the old or the regenerated Franklin Hall, which was the original library for the campus but now is being renovated as the home for what will be our new media school that goes online in July of 2014.

As the Associate Dean for Arts and Humanities I'm especially excited about this conference. As we all know, the humanities have been under some duress in recent times. But we also know that without a robust commitment to the arts and humanities in every register we would not only be poorer as a culture and a civilization but would lack the capacity to transmit the qualities of mind necessary to the cultivation and transmission of human understanding, imagination, creativity, empathy, judgment and so on.

While the study of film is not the only place such work takes place and while exploring and exploiting the capacity of digital technologies to advance such work through processes of regeneration is not the only way in which to advance such concerns, there is no question that the study of film and in particular the historical study of its earliest circuits of circulation, exhibition and content point to an important dimension of our cultural history. That it is being done here with creative methods to take advantage of the recent turn to the digital humanities and with respect to early black film in particular a medium and genre whose past we otherwise risk losing to all memory makes it all the more important. And more, it points directly to the primary reason that institutions like Indiana University's world class Black Film Center and Archive, which is stewarded so wonderfully by Michael Martin and his staff and that houses and preserves such artifacts as the Richard Norman collection is such a vital cultural resource.

I would be remiss to note as well that the work you are doing here resonates with Indiana University President Michael McRobbie's recent commitment of \$15 million to a media digitization and preservation initiative aimed at preserving and making accessible in digital form the unique and invaluable collections of video, recorded music and other irreplaceable material assembled by the university over its nearly 200 year history as part of an overall digitization master plan.

It is such initiatives combined in particular with the intellectual and creative energy of conferences such as this that makes me confident that we can imagine the resurgence of humanistic work in the years ahead.

I am so pleased that Michael Martin and his staff have been able to draw upon the incredible resources of the Black Film Center and Archive and to partner with both the National Endowment for the Humanities and the IU Cinema and the College of Arts and Sciences to bring together such an esteemed, engaged, national, interdisciplinary group of scholars and curators for what I know is going to be an exciting couple of days. I look forward to seeing the results of the work that you bring together and finally and once again I welcome you to Indiana University.