



“11 Black urbanists every planner should know”

By Pete Saunders, *Planning Magazine*, Winter 2021

“In (roughly) chronological order, here is a selection of the many Black urbanists all planners should know:

1. W. E. B. Dubois (1868-1963)

“His work as an activist is well-known, but he rose to prominence in 1899 with the publication of [The Philadelphia Negro](#)...This study was among the first to openly conclude that discrimination was at the heart of the problems plaguing isolated Black urban communities.

6. Samuel J. Cullers (1918-2005)

“In multiple published essays; through leadership positions in the NAACP, the Sacramento Urban League, and APA; and over the course of a civil rights housing lawsuit, Cullers dedicated much of his career to defeating discrimination in both the planning profession and society at large.

7. Dorothy Mae Richardson (1922-1991)

“A community activist who fought against redlining in Pittsburgh, Richardson challenged local banks to issue conventional loans for mortgages and housing rehabs in her Central North Side neighborhood. Her efforts led to the founding of Pittsburgh-based Neighborhood Housing Services, along with the national group now known as [NeighborWorks America](#), one of the leading community development institutions.

11. Mary Pattillo (1970-)

“A current [professor of sociology and African-American Studies](#) at Northwestern University, Pattillo has published two important works: [Black Picket Fences: Privilege and Peril for the Black Middle Class](#), which documents how the Black middle class has a far more difficult time achieving “escape velocity” from the ills of the inner city, and [Black on the Block: The Politics of Race and Class in the City](#), which illustrates how a uniquely Black version of gentrification emerged in Chicago’s North Kenwood-Oakland neighborhood on the South Side.”

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