

Maryemma Graham began her career as a journalist which helped to finance her graduate education and give focus to her academic and public engagement work. Her first major publication was an interview with the late novelist Frank Yerby, which appeared in *Essence Magazine*, establishing Yerby as an important figure in the History of Black Writing. By the 1980s, recovery work became a central component of her scholarly interests. Currently, she is University Distinguished Professor of English at the University of Kansas, where she has been since 1998. Graham is one of the most visible advocates for connecting literary studies directly with Black book history while advancing scholarship and access using technology. With her 12 books, 60 book chapters, articles, and essays, and her popular lectures in the US and abroad, she is widely known for her scholarly practice that redefines the field.

Graham founded the History of Black Writing, a documentary, literary, and archival project, which has been devoted to the preservation and teaching of African American literature and culture since 1983. The *Cambridge History of African American Literature* (with Jerry W. Ward, Jr.), published in 2011, the first African American literary history to appear in the 21st century, is based on HBW's research and has become one of the most influential books that opened the door for important new scholarship.

A John Hope Franklin Fellow at the National Humanities Center, an American Council of Learned Societies fellow, and a recipient of more than twenty grants from the National Endowment for the Humanities, Graham has also received major funding from the Ford and Mellon Foundations. Whether through the Langston Hughes National Poetry Project, the Language Matters partnership with the Toni Morrison Society, or the Black Book Interactive Project together with its Scholars Program, Graham has spent a career helping to reconceptualize the meaning and purpose of the humanities for all people inside and outside of higher education.