



**Memorial  
Robert L. Davis**

*Almost always the creative dedicated minority has made the world better.  
Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.*

The Black Landscape Architects Network (BlackLAN) expresses its deepest sympathy to the family and friends of Robert L. Davis. Mr. Davis was an outstanding 'creative dedicated minority' in the profession of landscape architecture. Prior to his passing at the age of 104, Mr. Davis was the oldest living African American landscape architect in the United States. It is safe to assume that he was also the oldest living landscape architect in the United States.

Mr. Davis attended the University of Wisconsin and graduated in 1947 with a master's degree in landscape architecture. This was at a time when very few African Americans were allowed to attend majority white institutions of higher learning in America. Currently less than 2% of landscape architects in America are African Americans and one can imagine that in 1947 the percentage was near zero. He was the second known landscape architect to have graduated from a school of landscape architecture, following David Williston who graduated in 1898 and is known to be the first African American landscape architect.

Mr. Davis' graduation occurred after a span of 49-year after the first African American graduate in landscape architecture. Davis and Williston were followed by Charles Edgar Dickinson-1950 graduate, J.W.R. Grandy III-1953 graduate, and Edward Lyons Pryce-1953 graduate. Thus, Mr. Davis was among the first six African American landscape architects in America. His 20-year public service career within the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and finally the Embassy Division of the US State Department was a unique career for any African American of his era. In this respect, African American landscape architecture students and professionals today stand on the shoulders of his accomplishments.

The Black Landscape Architects Network, a nonprofit organization, will continue to research Mr. Davis' career as part of a larger effort to document the contributions of early African American landscape architects. It is our collective responsibility as African American landscape architects to document and write about these trailblazers as part of our professional history. As stewards of our own black history, we again express our sympathies to the family of Mr. Davis and promise to keep his flame alive through our documentation of African American landscape architecture history in America.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Glenn LaRue Smith". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

**Glenn LaRue Smith, FASLA – Founder, Black Landscape Architects Network  
The Board of Directors, Black Landscape Architecture Network**