

Alumni Update: Alison Rose Jefferson

Meet Alison Rose Jefferson, PhD (2015)!

Alison is truly a public intellectual. A third-generation Californian, Alison is based in Los Angeles, where she works as a historian, author, public speaker, and consultant. She's currently serving as a scholar in residence at Occidental College's Institute for the Study of Los Angeles. Her intellectual interests include the history of Black life in Southern California during the Great Migration and Jim Crow era, heritage conservation, spatial justice, and cultural tourism. Check out her website [here](#).

Just last year, she published an award-winning book, [*Living the California Dream: African American Leisure Sites during the Jim Crow Era*](#) (University of Nebraska Press, 2020). According to the press, the monograph "examines how African Americans pioneered America's "frontier of leisure" by creating communities and business projects in conjunction with their growing population in Southern California during the nation's Jim Crow era. By presenting stories of Southern California African American oceanfront and inland leisure destinations that flourished from 1910 to the 1960s, Jefferson illustrates how these places helped create leisure production, purposes, and societal encounters."

Some of our readers may already be familiar with Alison's work. The *Los Angeles Times* featured her work last month in a [feature article](#) about Santa Monica's historic Black community. As the article notes, the city of Santa Monica commissioned Alison to work on the [Belmar History + Art Project](#), which will commemorate the history, cultural significance, and legacies of the Black community that called Santa Monica home from 1900 to 1950.

More recently, the *Los Angeles Times* published an [op-ed](#) authored by Alison herself. It discusses the "wrong done to" Willa and Charles Bruce, who established what came to be known as Bruce's Beach in Manhattan Beach. They were chased off their property in 1924 by white officials who used an eminent domain proceeding to dispossess the Black family. Now, some officials are considering financial restitution or even returning the land to the Bruce descendants. It's a must read.