



# THE FIRES LAST TIME: LANDLORD ARSON AND THE REVERB OF RACIAL CAPITALISM

## ON FIRE TALK: BENCH ANSFIELD FREE PUBLIC EVENT

MAY  
**14**  
THU

4–6 PM

*McCune Conference Room, HSSB 6020*

*Learn more: [bit.ly/IHC-Ansfield](https://bit.ly/IHC-Ansfield)*



This year's wildfires in Los Angeles turned a spotlight on the California FAIR plan, the state's insurer of last resort. This talk will explore the strange career of the FAIR plan, which is the byproduct of the Watts uprising of 1965, to illustrate the links between the urban crisis of the late twentieth century and the climate crisis of the present.

Bench Ansfield is an assistant professor of history at Temple University. Their book, *Born in Flames: The Business of Arson and the Remaking of the American City*, was published by W. W. Norton in August 2025 and recently named an Editors' Pick by the New York Times.

*Cosponsored by the IHC's On Fire series and the Sara Miller McCune and George D. McCune Endowment*

*Image: George R. Fry, Los Angeles Times. Aerial view of Avalon Blvd. during the Watts Riots, 1965. Courtesy of UCLA Library Digital Collections.*

