

Finding aid for the Paul Phillips papers Collection 006

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Describing Archives: A Content Standard

Grand Rapids Public Library, Grand Rapids History and Special Collections Department

March 1990

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Summary Information

Repository	Grand Rapids Public Library, Grand Rapids History and Special Collections Department
Title	Paul I. Phillips papers
Date [inclusive]	1947-1979
Extent	0.5 Linear feet Two boxes
Language	English
Abstract	<p>Paul I. Phillips (1914-1976) was an African American community services leader of Grand Rapids, Michigan. This collection contains news clippings, writings, speeches, memorabilia and biographical information on Phillips. Phillips came to Grand Rapids in 1946 to work for the Borough Community Association of Grand Rapids. Working with the board, he affiliated this organization with the National Urban League. Phillips served as executive secretary/director for the Grand Rapids Urban League from 1947 until his death in 1976. Phillips was the first African American elected to public office in Grand Rapids, winning election to the Grand Rapids Charter Commission in 1951. He was also the first African American elected to the Grand Rapids Board of Education, serving from 1962 to 1970. He achieved several other offices, won various awards and served as a consultant to President Gerald R. Ford on minority citizen concerns.</p>

Biographical Note

Born in Omaha, Nebraska, Paul Phillips (1914-Jan. 31, 1976) received a track scholarship to Marquette University in Milwaukee. He then received his MS and Ph.D. in Sociology from Fisk University in 1936. Phillips came to Grand Rapids in 1946 and in 1947 became executive director of the Grand Rapids Urban League. In 1951 Phillips won a position on the City Charter Revision Commission. In 1962 he was the first African American to win a position on the Board of Education in Grand Rapids. Phillips was awarded the PTA's Council Distinguished Award in 1967. In 1972 Phillips received an Honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters from Grand Valley State College. Three years later, Phillips became Vice Chairman for President Gerald Ford on minority affairs. He also served on the Board of Michigan Mental Health Society as member and President.

Phillips' wife, Ethel Phillips, worked actively for minority rights. She was active in the community supporting black rights.

Scope and Contents note

This collection contains news clippings about the progress of non-whites in Grand Rapids community. These clippings show the influence of Phillips. His writings and speeches helped change the attitudes toward minorities in Grand Rapids. The file also contains a sociological study by Phillips on ten inter-cultural areas of Grand Rapids. There is also miscellaneous material about Phillips, including an evaluation of his membership in the Urban League.

Administrative Information

Publication Information

Grand Rapids Public Library, Grand Rapids History and Special Collections Department March 1990

Immediate Source of Acquisition note

Accession Number: 1979.001; Donor: Ethel Phillips

Related Materials

Related Archival Materials note

Coll. 125, Robinson Studio Collection, for images of Phillips and other Borough or League members.

Coll. 129, Grand Rapids Rotary Club Records, 129-15-15 Image of Phillips.

Coll. 252, Grand Rapids Neighborhoods Collection, RE the development of the Madison Area Neighborhood Association

See also the Grand Rapids Urban League Records, 1941-1986, at the Michigan Historical Collections, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan.

Controlled Access Headings

Geographic Name(s)

- Grand Rapids (Mich.) -- History

Personal Name(s)

- Phillips, Paul I., 1914-1976

Subject(s)

- African Americans -- Civil Rights -- Michigan -- Grand Rapids -- History

Collection Inventory

	Box	Folder
Biographical material	1	1
Writings and speeches 1947-1976	1	2
A Study of Ten Inter-cultural areas in Grand Rapids, Michigan : made under the supervisor of the Community Organization Committee / by Paul Phillips, Director, Grand Rapids Urban league and Borough Community Association November 1947	1	2.5
Newspaper Clippings February 1947-January 1977	1	3
Memorabilia	1	4
Paul I. Phillips Building	1	4.5
Miscellaneous papers 1972-1979 n.d.	1	5
News clippings 1947-1977	2	1
Oversized clippings. (2)	2	2
Oversized clipping, Creston High School Gym Dedicated to Paul Phillips	2	3

Office of the White House Press Secretary. Embargoed for Release. "The White House. Fact Sheet. The President's State of the Union Message". [Gerald R. Ford's administration] January 19, 1976

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