

Finding aid for the Lyman Parks collection

Collection 294

Finding aid prepared by R. Mayne

This finding aid was produced using the Archivists' Toolkit

September 27, 2014

Describing Archives: A Content Standard

Grand Rapids Public Library, Grand Rapids History and Special Collections Department
111 Library Street NE
Grand Rapids, Michigan, 49503
616-988-5400
localhis@grpl.org

Table of Contents

<u>Summary Information</u>	3
<u>Biographical/Historical note</u>	4
<u>Scope and Contents note</u>	4
<u>Administrative Information</u>	4
<u>Related Materials</u>	5
<u>Controlled Access Headings</u>	5
<u>Collection Inventory</u>	6
<u>Reference and biographical files</u>	6
<u>Retirement Banquet memorabilia</u>	7
<u>Photographs</u>	8

Summary Information

Repository	Grand Rapids Public Library, Grand Rapids History and Special Collections Department
Title	Lyman Parks collection
Date [inclusive]	1917-2001
Extent	1.1 Linear feet Two boxes
Language	English
Abstract	<p>Lyman S. Parks (1917-2009) was the mayor of Grand Rapids, Michigan from 1971 to 1976. He was the first African American to serve as mayor in Grand Rapids and was also the first African American elected as city commissioner. This collection was created by staff of the local history department at the Grand Rapids Public Library in anticipation of Park's retirement and recognition banquet on May 2, 1986. The collection contains Grand Rapids Press newspaper clippings, correspondence, research notes and data related to the 1986 banquet. Also included are copy photos of Park's early days and family, images from his pastoral role at A.M.E. First Community Church and from his time as Grand Rapids Mayor. A slide show used during the banquet is also included in the collection.</p>

Biographical/Historical note

Lyman S. Parks was mayor of Grand Rapids from November 1971 to January 1976, and pastor of First A.M.E. Church from 1966-1986. He was born in Princeton, Indiana on March 12, 1917. He attended Indiana State Teachers College from 1936-37 and Wilberforce University and Payne Theological Seminary from 1940-41. He served as pastor of Bethel A.M.E Church in Marion, Indiana from 1944-47, and pastor of Bethel A.M.E. Church in Richmond, Indiana from 1947-51. In 1951 he received an honorary Doctor of Divinity Degree from Allen University. He served as pastor at the A.M.E Church of Ann Arbor, Michigan from 1952-64, and pastor of the A.M.E. Church of River Rouge, Michigan from 1964-1966. In 1966, Parks became the pastor of First A.M.E. Church in Grand Rapids where he served until 1986.

In February 1968, Parks was elected as Third Ward Commissioner. Upon the resignation of Mayor Robert Boelens in June 1971, Parks was appointed as mayor. Parks was elected mayor in his own right in November of 1971, beating out Boelens and several other candidates. After losing the 1975 mayoral election to Abe Drasin, Parks became a clerk-typist in the city's Traffic Bureau, and served his church full time. In 1982, Parks was appointed to the State Officers Compensation Commission by Governor William Milliken. In 1986, Parks retired from his position as pastor at First A.M.E. Church, and became pastor of another A.M.E. Church in Chicago. He moved back to Grand Rapids in January of 2001.

Scope and Contents note

This collection documents the life and works of Lyman S. Parks. The Grand Rapids Press clippings span the late 1960s-2001, but predominantly feature articles from the early to mid-1970s related to his mayoral position. They are organized chronologically and do not contain all articles pertaining to Lyman Parks from the period listed.

The photographs primarily depict him during his term as mayor and during his early days in portrait photos and with family. The retirement memorabilia include stationary from his retirement party, personal letters from former President Gerald R. Ford, Sen. Dick Posthumus, and other friends both locally and nationally notable. The collection predominantly features Parks' time as mayor. The slide show has been made into a video that may be found in Coll. 175, the GRPL Moving Images Collection.

Administrative Information

Publication Information

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

Immediate Source of Acquisition note

Gordon Olson and library staff, accession number 1986.420.

Related Materials

Related Archival Materials note

Collection 164 GRPL Oral History Collection. Parks November 1985 interview.

The Bentley Historical Library of the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, Michigan, also has Lyman Parks materials.

Controlled Access Headings

Geographic Name(s)

- Grand Rapids (Mich.) -- History

Personal Name(s)

- Parks, Lyman S, 1917-2009

Subject(s)

- African Americans -- Michigan -- Grand Rapids
- Politicians -- Michigan -- Biography

Reference and biographical files

Collection Inventory

Reference and biographical files		
	Box	Folder
“Lyman Parks, leader for Grand Rapids” Grand Rapids Press, Dec. 26, 1984.	1	1
Newspaper Index citations (copies from GRPL Local History indexes to the GR Press)	1	1
Biographical Sketch (2 page vita, annotated)	1	1
Grand Rapids Press biographical form (2 pages)	1	1
“Local African American History Research Guide” / GRHSC	1	1
Biography section from the finding aid, prepared by Jonathan Skiles	1	1
Two First Search World Cat Records for Bentley Library holdings.	1	1
Biography & Genealogy Master Index sheets (3) referencing Who’s Who type sources for additional information.	1	1
Grand Rapids Press Clippings (1966-1971)	1	2

Retirement Banquet memorabilia

Grand Rapids Press Clippings (1972-1979)	1	3
Grand Rapids Press Clippings (1982-2005)	1	4
Retirement Banquet memorabilia		
	Box	Folder
Sen. Dick Posthumus, handwritten note, undated. [On Memorandum letterhead with b/w City logo]	1	5
Three pages and card, of brief congratulatory notes.	1	5
Working copy of Program (1 white sheet)	1	5
Letterhead. "The Rev. Lyman S. Parks Recognition / Reception / Banquet Thanks / Good Luck and God Bless Him on His Retirement Committee" With list of members along the left side of sheet. (12 copies)	1	5
Invitation letter and March 10, 1986 memorandum, both using the letterhead above (2 sheets).	1	5
Photocopy of letter from Gerald Ford, Feb. 3, 1986, with annotated image of Parks family and bio., taken from his Retirement Reception and Banquet program.	1	5
Retirement Reception and Banquet Program [original]	1	5

Photographs

Retirement Reception and Banquet Program [photocopies of biographical information]	1	5
May 2, 1986 Recognition / Reception / Banquet [flyer? 2 sheet, including names of contributors / sponsors]	1	5
Photographs		
	Box	Folder
Photocopied photographs	1	6
		Box
“A Tribute to Lyman Parks” slide show		2
Family and personal photographs (9 items, 6/13/2003)		
	Box	Folder
Parks in stripped suit, stripped tie, Kiwanis pin, portrait photo. Perhaps actually a Mayoral image. Set of copy photos made May 1986. 1986.240.	1	7
Park’s Mother? 1986.420.06.	1	7
Park’s with his mother. 1986.420.07	1	7
Park’s Father? 1986.420.08	1	7
Man seated in vehicle drawn by 2 horses, in field? 1986.420.09	1	7

Mayoral photographs (5, 6/13/2003)

Portrait photo of you man Lyman Parks. 1986.420.10	1	7
Two toddlers seated in a carriage 1986.420.12	1	7
Parks left with group, perhaps family 1986.420.13	1	7
Parks as a youth, 1986.420.14	1	7
Mayoral photographs (5, 6/13/2003)		
	Box	Folder
Parks speak with flags 1986.420.0?	1	8
Parks with jackhammer	1	8
Unidentified male and Parks on either side of American flag in background 1986.420.15 GR Press photo.	1	8
Parks seated a council table near microphone 1986.420.16	1	8
Parks, portrait photo, in clerical garb. 19998.420.02 Has Chicago address on verso.	1	8
Church-related photographs (4,6/13/2003)		
	Box	Folder
Parks at Pantlind podium, with plack, 2 men looking on. 1986.420.03	1	9

Church-related photographs (4,6/13/2003)

First A.M.E. Community Church 1874-1974 Centennial Year Banquet. 1986.420.04	1	9
Parks with others behind Pantlind podium 1986.420.05	1	9
Reverend Park in minister's robes. 1986.420.11	1	9