

## **Rosa L. Parks Collection**

**Papers, 1955-1976**

**2 linear feet  
2 oversize boxes**

Accession Number 775

The papers of Rosa L. Parks were placed in the Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs on July 14, 1976.

Rosa Parks was born to James and Leona MacCauley on February 4, 1913 in Tuskegee, Alabama. Her parents, a builder and a teacher who worked as a seamstress, were separated by the time she was seven years old. During her childhood, she and her younger brother Sylvester often worked with their grandparents, former slaves, Sylvester and Rose Edwards, as pickers on a nearby farm. At age eleven she moved to Montgomery to live with an aunt and attend the Montgomery Industrial School for Girls. She dropped out of high school when her mother became ill, and worked at various jobs. She married Raymond Parks in 1932,

After her marriage, Mrs. Parks finished high school, and also attended classes at Alabama State University. From 1943 to 1955 she was the secretary of the Montgomery NAACP, and worked with E. D. Nixon to encourage blacks to register and vote. In 1948 she served as state secretary of the Alabama NAACP.

It was in December 1955, when Mrs. Parks was working as a seamstress in a local department store, that the well-known bus confrontation occurred. She was riding home after work on December 1st, when she and three other blacks were asked to rise and move to the back of the bus to give their places to a white rider. Mrs. Parks refused to move, and was subsequently arrested. Young Martin Luther King, Jr., then a new minister at the Dexter Avenue Baptist Church in Montgomery, led the year-long bus boycott which followed. It ended on December 21, 1956, when a Supreme Court decision ruling bus segregation unconstitutional became effective. As a result of this incident, Mrs. Parks is often called the Mother of the Civil Rights Movement.

Because of stress and illness, Rosa Parks and her mother and husband moved to Detroit in 1957. She again worked as a seamstress until joining the staff of newly-elected Congressman John Conyers in 1965. In addition to her work for Conyers, Mrs. Parks has dedicated herself to numerous church, community and civil rights activities. She was recognized for her contributions when she was made an honorary Doctor of Humanities by Shaw College in 1971, and again in 1975, when she received a similar degree from Wayne State University. In 1976, 12th Street in Detroit was renamed "Rosa L. Parks Boulevard." The Southern Christian Leadership Conference annually gives a Rosa Parks Freedom Award. In January, 1980, Mrs. Parks was the recipient of a Martin Luther King, Jr. Nonviolent Peace Prize. Now a widow, Mrs. Parks resides in Detroit and is still a member of Congressman Conyers' staff.

## Contents

### **4 manuscript boxes 2 oversize boxes**

#### **Series I, Correspondence and Papers, 1954-1976; Box 1:**

Awards, correspondence, invitations, programs, a manuscript fragment and some clippings and other items containing biographical information about Mrs. Parks

#### **Series II, Organizations and Activities, 1955-1976, Boxes 2-4:**

An alphabetical series of materials relating to organizations with which Mrs. Parks has been associated, activities in which she participated or has been interested and people with whose activities or careers she has been concerned

#### **Clippings, 1955-1976, Oversize Box 1:**

Clippings, primarily from the Detroit Free Press, the Detroit News, and the Michigan Chronicle

#### **Newspapers/Newsletters, 1965-1976, Oversize Box 2:**

Issues of various newspapers of community and religious organizations, and from Alabama

#### **Non-manuscript material:**

Four pamphlets relating to civil liberties or civil rights have been placed in the Archives Library.

**Series I**  
**Correspondence and Papers, 1954-1976**  
**Box 1**

Awards, correspondence, invitations, programs, a manuscript fragment and some clippings and other items containing biographical information about Mrs. Parks and about her role in the Montgomery Bus Boycott of 1955-1956.

**Box 1**

1. Rosa Parks, Biographical Information
2. Rosa Parks, Clippings
3. Awards, 1954-1973
4. Birthday Cards, Undated
5. Correspondence, 1956-1960
6. Correspondence, 1961-1970
7. Correspondence, 1971-1972
8. Correspondence, 1973
9. Correspondence, 1974
10. Correspondence, 1975
11. Correspondence, 1976
12. Correspondence, Undated
13. Invitations, 1966-1976
14. Ms. Fragment: "Some Homework for Southerners"
15. Programs, 1959-1969
16. Programs, 1970-1972
17. Programs, 1973-1976

**Series II**  
**Organizations and Activities, 1955-1976**  
**Boxes 2-4**

An alphabetical series of materials relating to organizations with which Mrs. Parks has been associated, activities in which she participated or has been interested, and people with whose activities or careers she has been concerned. The materials especially reflect her involvement with church and community groups and with the civil rights, human rights and women's movements.

**Box 2**

1. African Methodist Episcopal Churches, 1961-1969
2. African Methodist Episcopal Churches, 1970-1975
3. Afrikan History Club No. 2; Newsletter, 1974-1975
4. American Friends Service Committee, 1956-1975
5. American Friends Service Committee; "Quaker Service Bulletin," 1972-1975
6. American Friends Service Committee; "Speak Truth to Power," 1955
7. Black Women's Community Development Foundation; "Binding Ties," Jan and May, 1974
8. Chisolm, Shirley; Speech notes
9. Church Activities, 1956-1976
10. Civil Rights Activities, 1957-1976
11. Conyers, John, 1966-1976
12. Frederick, Helen Burleson, 1974
13. Freedom Now Party, 1964-1965
14. Full Employment Action Council; Research Paper #1
15. Greater Opportunities Industrialization Center, 1974-1975
16. Henderson, Erma L., 1972-1974
17. Highlander Folk School, 1957-1975
18. Highlander Folk School, Meeting, 1955
19. International Afro-American Museum, Inc., 1967-1973

**Box 3**

1. Joanne Little Defense Committee; Minutes and Membership List, 1975
2. King, Coretta Scott; autographed magazine, January 1966
3. Labor Materials, 1955-1971
4. Martin Luther King, Jr. Center for Social Change, 1972-1976
5. NAACP, 1952-1965
6. NAACP, 1970-1975
7. NAACP; *Crisis*, 1967-1969
8. "NAACP Reporter," Nov-Dec 1971 and Apr-Jun 1973
9. National Conference (4th) on the Problem of Working Women, May 1956
10. National Council of Negro Women, 1955
11. Neighborhood and Community Activities, 1959-1976
12. Political Education Project (PEP), c. 1967
13. Politics, Detroit, 1970-1976

14. Prayer Pilgrimage for Freedom, 1957
15. PUSH Foundation, 1975

**Box 4**

1. "Scenic Wonders of Dixieland"; Guidebook, 1940
2. "1776" Playbill, 1969
3. Shaw College, 1971-1976
4. Southern Christian Leadership Conference, 1962-1965
5. Southern Christian Leadership Conference, 1971-1975
6. Southern Christian Leadership Conference; "Drum Major," Aug 1971
7. Southern Christian Leadership Conference; "Soul Force," 1968-1972
8. United Community Services of Metropolitan Detroit, 1973
9. Urban Alliance, 1973-1975
10. Urban Forum (Michigan State University), 1973-1974
11. Vaughn, Jackie III, 1968-1972
12. Vietnam; Anti-War Materials, 1972-1975
13. Women's Conference of Concerns, 1974-1975
14. Women's Activities and Organizations, 1964, 1972-1976
15. Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, 1968-1976
16. Women's Public Affairs Committee of 1000, Inc., 1964-1969
17. Women's Public Affairs Committee of 1000, Inc., 1971-1975

**Clippings, 1955-1976**  
**Oversize Box 1**

Clippings, primarily from the Detroit Free Press, the Detroit News, and the Michigan Chronicle.

Clippings, 1955-1976, n.d.  
Calendar (Detroit Metro Mutual Assurance Co.), 1958

**Newspapers/Newsletters, 1965-1976**  
**Oversize Box 2**

Issues of newspapers and newsletters published by various community and religious organizations.

Birmingham World, Dec 1974-Apr 1976  
Black-Polish Conference Newsletter, 1972-1973  
Detroit Community Voice, 1973  
For My People," 1973-1976  
The Ghetto Speaks, 1968  
INFO, 1966  
Michigan Democrat, 1973, 1975  
The Militant, 1965  
News and Letters, Aug and Sep 1966, Dec 1975  
The Southern Patriot, Feb 1967-Sep 1975  
The Spirit of Detroit, 23 Jun 1975, 28 Jul 1975  
Miscellaneous Newspapers, A-D  
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