



Smithsonian

Anacostia Community Museum

A Finding Aid to the Rev. H. Rhett
James papers, circa 1961-2004, in the
Anacostia Community Museum Archives

Sony Prosper

2011

Anacostia Community Museum Archives
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Collection Overview

Repository:	Anacostia Community Museum Archives
Title:	Rev. H. Rhett James papers
Date:	circa 1961-2004
Identifier:	ACMA.06-037
Creator:	James, H. Rhett, Rev.
Extent:	1.18 Linear feet (3 boxes)
Language:	English .
Summary:	The collection, which measures 1.18 linear feet and dates from circa 1961-2004, documents the personal life and professional activities of Rev. H. Rhett James. The collection is comprised of awards, photographs, books, newspaper clippings, correspondence, invitations, newsletters, oral histories, resumes, audio- and videocassettes, and ephemera.

Administrative Information

Provenance

The Reverend H. Rhett James papers were donated to the Anacostia Community Museum in 2005 by Gregory James.

Processing Information

Processed by Jamar Rahming, 2007 Finding aid updated and encoded by Sony Prosper, 2013

Preferred Citation

Rev. H. Rhett James papers, Anacostia Community Museum Archives, Smithsonian Institution, gift of Gregory James.

Conditions Governing Use

Use of the materials requires an appointment. Please contact the archivist to make an appointment: ACMarchives@si.edu.

Biographical Note

Reverend H. Rhett James was an ardent pastor, African-American educator, and community activist, who played a role in Dallas and the larger Texas community during the Civil Rights era.

Reverend H. Rhett James (1928-2004) was born in Baltimore, Maryland, on December 1, 1928. He received his early education in the public schools of Topeka, Kansas, Nashville, Tennessee and San Antonio, Texas, he enrolled at Virginia Union University, Richmond Virginia. Upon graduation (Bachelor's 1950), he accepted a teaching position in San Antonio, and became the first African American to receive the Masters of Education Degree from Our Lady of the Lake College (1951).

Returning to his Alma Mater, Virginia Union, he taught in the Department of Education and Psychology and received his Masters of Divinity Degree (1958). Moving to Dallas to accept the pastorate of New Hope Baptist church, he enrolled in the Brite College, T.C.U. and became the first African American to receive the Masters of Theology Degree (1961). He received his Ph.D. degree in Urban Administration from the University of Texas at Arlington (1981). He served as pastor of New Hope Baptist church until his retirement in 1986.

As a political and community activist, he headed scores of local organizations working for desegregation and human rights causes. He headed the N.A.A.C.P through severe local desegregation and human rights causes; founder and twelve year Board President of the Dallas O.I.C. (Opportunities Industrialization Center); the first black president of the Dallas War on Poverty (DCCAC); founding Board member of the Dallas Urban League and Board and Budget committee member for the Dallas United Way, ACLU, Southern Historical Association, UNCF and YMCA boards.

Reverend H. Rhett James died on March 14, 2004. He left one daughter and three sons.

Scope and Contents

The Reverend H. Rhett James papers, which date from 1961 to 2004, document the personal and professional life of Reverend H. Rhett James. Very notable are the letters and correspondence between Reverend H. Rhett James and the United States of America President, Lyndon B. Johnson, and his cabinet. The papers include an oral history, a C.V., letters and correspondence, awards, black-and-white photographs, books, clippings, color photographs, ephemera, invitations, newsletters, photographic prints, signatures, audio cassettes, and videocassettes.

Arrangement

The collection is organized into four series: Series 1, Biographical, Series 2, Correspondence, Series 3, Writings, Series 4, Sound Recordings, and Series 5, Photographs. One box contains Series 1, 2, and 3. Box 2 contains Series 3, and Box 4 contains Series 5.

Series 1, Biographical, 1961-2004, is comprised of a typed oral history interview with Dr. H. Rhett James, on December 21, 2002, for the Dallas Public Library's Oral History Project (Box 1/Folder 1), a typed C.V. (Box 1/Folder 2), and other biographical information in the form of newsletters, booklets, certificates, visitor passes, and card invitations.

Series 2, Correspondence, 1962-1999, is arranged alphabetically by correspondent's last name. It is comprised of typed correspondence and letters on various political and community issues. Members of Lyndon B. Johnson's administration figure prominently in this series. The miscellaneous folders contain reproduced correspondence and letters from the Lyndon B. Johnson museum. A set of original envelopes are at the end of folder 15.

Series 3, Writings, 1972, 1992, 1997, is comprised of two books and a NAACP position paper on Dallas Public Schools by Reverend H. Rhett James. The books are titled, *The Audacity to Survive* and *Stamp your own Passport*.

Series 4, Sound Recordings, 1972, 1975, 1981, undated, is comprised of 60 audio cassettes in a box. Three notable cassettes in the box contain Jesse Jackson sermons on Civil Rights, "Silver" Rights, social justice, the black church's role in Black America, and religion's role in America. A majority of the tapes are sermons by H. Rhett James on mind consciousness, spiritual regeneration, empowerment, the Gospel, civil rights, social justice, and economic betterment.

Series 5, Photographs, is comprised of autographed photographs by political personage, family photographs, and other photographs including H. Rhett James with prominent figures, notably one with Martin Luther King Jr. Autographed photographs include Lyndon B Johnson, Benjamin Hoover, and Hubert Humphrey.

Names and Subject Terms

This collection is indexed in the online catalog of the Smithsonian Institution under the following terms:

Subjects:

- African American political activists
- African American religious leaders
- African Americans -- Education
- African Americans -- Employment
- Civil rights
- Discrimination in employment
- Race relations
- School integration

Types of Materials:

- Audiocassettes
- Awards
- Books
- Clippings
- Color photographs
- Correspondence
- Ephemera
- Invitations
- Newsletters
- Oral histories (document genres)
- Photographic prints
- Resumes
- Signatures (names)
- Videocassettes

Names:

- Connally, John Bowden, 1917-1993
- Humphrey, Hubert H. (Hubert Horatio), 1911-1978
- James, H. Rhett, Rev.
- Johnson, Lyndon B. (Lyndon Baines), 1908-1973
- Kennedy, John F. (John Fitzgerald), 1917-1963
- King, Martin Luther, Jr., 1929-1968
- Taylor, Hobart, 1920-

Places:

- Dallas (Tex.)

Container Listing

Series 1: Biographical, 1961-2004

0.17 Linear feet (This series is comprised of a typed oral history interview with Dr. H. Rhett James, on December 21, 2002, for the Dallas Public Library's Oral History Project (Box 1/Folder 1), and a typed C.V. (Box 1/Folder 2). Newsletters, booklets, certificates, visitor passes, and card invitations form the mediums for other biographical information.)

Box 1, Folder 1	Oral History, 2004
Box 1, Folder 2	Curriculum Vitae, 1961 - 1999
Box 1, Folder 3	Family History, Church Biography, 2004
Box 1, Folder 4	Certificate, 1972
Box 1, Folder 5	Visitor's Passes, 1961 - 1962
Box 1, Folder 6	Inaugural Invitations, 1962 - 1976
Box 1, Folder 7	Scrapbook, 1965 - 1983
Box 1, Folder 8	Clippings, 1962 - 1964

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Series 2: Correspondence, 1962-1999

0.17 Linear feet (This series is arranged alphabetically by correspondent's last name. It is comprised of typed correspondence and letters on various political and community issues. Members of Lyndon B. Johnson's administration figure prominently in this series. The miscellaneous folders contain reproduced correspondence and letters from the Lyndon B. Johnson library. A set of original envelopes are at the end of folder 15.)

Box 1, Folder 9	Carter, Clifton C., 1962 - 1964
Box 1, Folder 10	Connally, John, 1962 - 1966
Box 1, Folder 11	Johnson, Lyndon B., 1963 - 1965
Box 1, Folder 12	Perry, Arthur C., 1963 - 1964
Box 1, Folder 13	Taylor, Hobart Jr., 1963 - 1965
Box 1, Folder 14	Miscellaneous, 1962 - 1999
Box 1, Folder 15	Miscellaneous, 1962 - 1999

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Series 3: Writings, 1972, 1992, 1997

*0.1 Linear feet (This series is comprised of two books and an NACCP position paper on Dallas Public Schools by Reverend H. Rhett James. The books are titled, *The Audacity to Survive* and *Stamp your own Passport*.)*

Box 1, Folder 16	The Audacity to Survive, 1992
Box 1, Folder 17	Stamp your own Passport, 1997
Box 1, Folder 18	NACCP Position Paper on Dallas Public Schools, 1972

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Series 4: Sound Recordings, 1972, 1975, 1981, undated

0.64 Linear feet (This series is comprised of 60 audio cassettes in a box. Three notable cassettes in the box contain Jesse Jackson sermons on Civil Rights, "Silver" Rights, social justice, the black church's role in Black America, and religion's role in America. A majority of the tapes are sermons by H. Rhett James on mind consciousness, spiritual regeneration, empowerment, the Gospel, civil rights, social justice, and economic betterment.)

Box 2

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Series 5: Photographs, Undated, 1956

0.1 Linear feet (This series is comprised of autographed photographs by political personage, family photographs, and other photographs including H. Rhett James with prominent figures, notably one with Martin Luther King Jr. Autographed photographs include Lyndon B. Johnson, Benjamin Hoover, and Hubert Humphrey.)

Box 3, Folder 1	Reverend James and Lyndon B. Johnson, Undated
Box 3, Folder 2	Lyndon B. Johnson, Undated
Box 3, Folder 3	Martin Luther King, Jr., 1956
Box 3, Folder 4	Lyndon B. Johnson, Undated
Box 3, Folder 5	Benjamin Hoover, Undated
Box 3, Folder 6	John F. Kennedy, Undated
Box 3, Folder 8	Fabian Bachrach photo, Undated
Box 3, Folder 7	Reverend James
Box 3, Folder 9	Hubert Humphrey, Undated
Box 3, Folder 10	Miscellaneous, Undated
Box 3, Folder 11	Family Photos, Undated

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