



Smithsonian

National Museum of American History Kenneth E. Behring Center

Guide to the Shaun D. Parker Papers

NMAH.AC.1204

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2010

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Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives Center, National Museum of American History
Title:	Shaun D. Parker Papers
Date:	1984-2000
Identifier:	NMAH.AC.1204
Creator:	Robinson, Robert David, 1962- Parker, Shirl A., 1951-2000 (Creator)
Extent:	1 Cubic foot (3 boxes)
Language:	English .
Summary:	Collection documents the childhood, medical history, treatment, and educational assessments of Shaun D. Parker, a Washington D.C. resident born in 1984 to single mother Shirl A. Parker.

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

The collection was donated by Robert D. Robinson in 2009.

Provenance

The papers were found abandoned when the house where the family lived was being emptied and ready for sale in 2009 after Rosie's death. They were saved and donated to the Archives Center, National Museum of American History, Smithsonian by Robert D. Robinson who was contracted to clean out the house.

Processing Information

Processed by Leah Blue (volunteer), 2010; supervised by Franklin A. Robinson Jr., archivist, and Vanessa Broussard Simmons, archivist.

Preferred Citation

Shaun D. Parker Papers, Archives Center, National Museum of American History

Restrictions

The collection is open for research use.

Original legal and medical records are restricted. Researchers must use reference copies of legal and medical records; personal identifiable information has been redacted. Researchers must handle unprotected photographs with gloves.

Conditions Governing Use

Collection items available for reproduction, but the Archives Center makes no guarantees concerning copyright restrictions. Other intellectual property rights may apply. Archives Center cost-recovery and use fees may apply when requesting reproductions.

Biographical / Historical

Shaun Demetrius Parker was born two months prematurely in 1984, in Washington D.C. at George Washington Hospital to single mother Shirl A. Parker (1951-2000). At a young age, Shaun was diagnosed with mental retardation, and began attending schools that could implement Individualized Education Programs so Shaun could thrive academically and socially. By the time he entered his adolescence, Shaun was able to rejoin mainstream classes and become involved in extracurricular activities such as the Young Marines. Shirl Parker was heavily involved in her son's life and diligently kept records of Shaun's medical history as well as his psycho-educational profiles. She continually fought for Shaun to have access to the best educational resources and the best life possible. She made sure Shaun was involved in family and church activities. Shirl also documented Shaun's life outside of school, taking numerous photographs of him at different ages and of various family members.

The papers end in early 2000. By this time Shaun and Shirl were living with her parents James E. Parker (1908-1999) and Rosie Parker (1916-2009) in Northeast Washington, D.C.. According to the papers Shaun's father, Ronnie M. Miller, had no contact with his son and his whereabouts were unknown. Shirl died in October 2000 and Shaun's whereabouts are unknown. He was most likely admitted to a group home around the time of his mother's death. The papers were found abandoned when the house where the family lived was being emptied and ready for sale in 2009 after Rosie's death. They were saved and donated to the Archives Center, NMAH, Smithsonian by Robert D. Robinson who was contracted to clean out the house.

Scope and Contents

Collection consists of the documentation assembled by Shaun's mother, Shirl. The materials are useful for understanding the medical identification and treatment of a child with special needs in the latter twentieth century. It also aids in our understanding of how the educational system in a major city attempts to address the needs of this type of child with the assistance and support of a parent.

Series 1: Scrapbook, 1986-1999, undated, includes professional portraits and candid photographs of Shirl and Shaun Parker taken over the course of Shaun's childhood. The photographs include unnamed friends or relatives and document significant events such as Christmas, Easter, and Shaun's kindergarten graduation. The photographs also include a wedding and a female relative or family friend preparing for a school dance, possibly a prom. Special attention was paid to several of Shaun's birthdays (third, fourth and fifth) and three classroom birthday parties are documented. Of particular interest are the classroom blackboards, where the daily class agenda is visible. There is one school portrait of Shaun at the age of eleven, and one of a Special Olympics event (bowling), where Shaun won third place. This series also contains documents that were originally included within the photograph album, but were removed for preservation purposes. These documents include certificates and progress reports from various schools as well as Sunday school and other church programs. There are certificates awarded to Shaun and certificates awarded to Shirl. The materials include a fingerprint and identification card for Shaun, as well as his birth certificate, his preschool diploma and a program from the Young Marine's Commencement, dated March 14, 1997. The original pagination has been maintained.

Series 2: Medical Records, Educational Assessments, 1984-2000, undated, includes Shaun's medical records, medical history, medical assessments, psycho-educational profile, and educational assessments kept by Shirl. This series also includes legal documents such as social security claims, release forms, and requests for the continuance of disability stipends. Some of the records and assessments are not dated, or the date is indecipherable or illegible. The discernible years cover the period 1984-1999. Medical assessments document Shaun's diagnosis and trace his physical, cognitive, and social development, and treatment. There are letters written by Shirl requesting hearings to determine Shaun's eligibility for disability and Social Security benefits and a letter of inquiry to an attorney named Ronald L. Drake. There is correspondence from Mamie D. Lee School, a special needs educational facility, outlining the school's program levels, Shaun's Individualized Education Program, and patient rights concerning confidentiality.

The records also include Shirl's personal comments on Shaun's progress as documented on several questionnaires. The series covers Shirl's search for a group home for Shaun at the age of fifteen after she began to care for her aging parents, and her own health began to decline. The original folder holding these records has been retained, though it is in poor condition, as notes are written on the cover. The original medical records, educational assessments, and legal documents are restricted as they contain personally identifiable information and are not available for research. These records have been photo-copied and are available through redacted copies.

This series also contains Shaun's Speech and Language Portfolio, 1999-2000, undated, consisting of essays, rubrics, drawings, and other papers done by Shaun while attending Kramer Junior High School. Materials include multiple drafts of essays and homework assignments covering such subjects as geography, science, grammar, mathematics, social studies, and chemistry. The essays include creative works on various topics such as running a race and participating in the Young Marines. Some of the papers are graded and show the progression from a rough draft to a final draft. Some of the essays and papers are dated, while others are undated. A notice of a Washington D.C. Health Fair is included among the schoolwork as well as a crayon and pencil drawing of a racecar and one black and white photograph dated "1964" of a statue of what appears to be a Tyrannosaurus Rex. The location of the photograph is not given. The original portfolio and the pagination have been retained.

Arrangement

Collection is arranged into two series.

Series 1: Scrapbook, 1986-1999, undated

Series 2: Medical and Educational Records, 1984-2000, undated

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

- Early childhood development
- Education -- Washington, (D.C.)
- Intellectual disability
- Learning disabilities
- Premature infants

Types of Materials:

- Certificates -- 20th century
- Correspondence -- 20th century
- Legal documents -- 20th century
- Photographs -- 1980-2000
- Scrapbooks -- 20th century

Names:

- Parker, Shaun D., 1984-

Container Listing

Series 1: Scrapbook, 1986-1999, undated

Box 1 Scrapbook, 1986-1999, undated

Box 2, Folder 1 Reference copies of scrapbook pages, 1986-1999, undated

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Series 2: Medical and Educational Records, 1984-2000, undated

Box 2, Folder 2	Medical records and educational assessments, redacted, 1984-1992, undated
Box 3, Folder 1	Medical records and educational assessments, originals, 1984-1992, undated Notes: Restricted
Box 2, Folder 3	Medical records and educational assessments, redacted, 1993-1999, undated
Box 3, Folder 2	Medical records and educational assessments, originals, 1993-1999, undated Notes: Restricted
Box 2, Folder 4	Legal documents, redacted, 1993-1999, undated
Box 3, Folder 3	Legal documents, originals, 1993-1999, undated Notes: RESTRICTED
Box 2, Folder 5	Speech and language portfolio, 1999-2000, undated

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