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Memphis Committee on Community Relations records

Title: Memphis Committee on Community Relation records

Collection No: MSS.0093

Extent: 0.75 cubic feet

Inclusive Dates: 1956-1969

Abstract: Records of the Memphis Committee on Community Relations, Memphis, Tennessee, 1956-1969. Includes some Memphis Chapter, NAACP materials.

Processed by: Grace Neeley, 2022.

Access: Open to all researchers.

Language: English

Preferred Citation: Memphis Committee on Community Relations records, Special Collections Department, University Libraries, University of Memphis

Publication date: 2022 October

Administrative Information

Founded on January 26, 1959, the Memphis Committee on Community Relations was a moderate, interracial group of community leaders who volunteered together to address civil rights issues. Convened by its first Chairman, Attorney Lucius Burch, MCCR was composed of a prestigious group of Memphians, one third of whom were Black.

Included on the Board of Directors were the Reverend Blair Hunt, Msgr. Merlin Kearney, the Reverend J.A. McDaniel, the Reverend H.C. Nabrit, Dean William Sanders, the Reverend S.A. Owen, Dr. Paul Tudor Jones, Dr. R. Paul Caudill, the Reverend Alexander Gladney, the Reverend J.E. Robinson, Carl Carson, Lewis Donelson, the Reverend James Lawson, Rabbi James Wax, Dr. Hollis Price, the Reverend James Elder, Frances Coe, Lt. George W. Lee, the Reverend J.C. Mickle, Msgr. Joseph Leppert, Edmund Orgill, Arthur McCain, A.W. Willis, Dr. Vasco Smith, Harry Wellford, Lester Rosen, Jesse Turner, and the editors of both newspapers, Frank Ahlgren of the Commercial Appeal and Ed Meeman of the Memphis Press-Scimitar.

The group's charter and constitution states that their purpose was to provide a meeting place for calm discussion and such responsible action as may be agreed upon to preserve order, under law, as interpreted by courts of competent jurisdiction and the peace, happiness, and continued progress of the great and growing City of Memphis and all its people. It was to work without publicity to gain its ends, convinced that quiet, behind-the-scenes work could prove that desegregation could take place without dire consequences. Once desegregation was established, the members of the committee believed there would be a precedent upon which an equitable future could be built.

In addition, MCCR tried to influence the City Commission to appoint some Blacks to city commissions and committees, and compiled a suggested list of qualified Blacks. MCCR tried to gain more jobs for Blacks, worked for their admission to private hospitals, and expressed concern about law enforcement and police brutality. During many instances, the committee worked alongside the Memphis, Tennessee, chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.

Scope and contents

Manuscript papers containing correspondence, news clippings, articles, minutes, speeches, etc. of the Memphis Committee on Community Relations. Also contains a folder on the Civic Research Committee and the Memphis NAACP Executive Secretary Reports 1967-1969.

Subject terms

Civil Rights.

Memphis Committee on Community Relations (Memphis, Tenn.)

Race relations in the United States.

Inventory

Box 1

Folder

Memphis Committee on Community Relations:

- 1 Memphis Committee on Community Relations Executive Committee, correspondence, papers, manifesto, notecards, 1960 March 10 – 1964 July 24.
- 2 Executive Committee, booklet, special report, 1968.
- 3 Employment Committee, news clippings, articles, brochures, pamphlets, 1961 July – 1969 May.
- 4 Employment Committee, pamphlets, articles, 1964 July – 1968 February.
- 5 Employment Committee, correspondence, questionnaires, minutes, 1963 May – 1969 March.
- 6 Employment Committee, questionnaires, clippings, 1961 September, 1968 February.
- 7 Speeches, 1956-1966.
- 8 News clippings, 1960-1968.
- 9 Sub-Committee of the Memphis Council on Community Relations, constitution, purpose, by-laws, memoranda, 1963 May, 1967 April.
- 10 Correspondence, 1961 January, 1963 August.
- 11 Committee Members Restudy, constitution, by-laws, resolution, 1963 September, 1966 September.
- 12 Greater Memphis Race Relations, by-laws, minutes, A Freedom Manifesto, 1956 April, 1964 January.
- 13 Memphis Community Relations, correspondence, minutes, 1958 June, 1963 October.
- 14 Sub-Committee Meeting, notes, papers, correspondence, 1956 July, 1959 October.

Box 2

- 15 Sub-Committee Meeting, correspondence, minutes, report, flyer, 1960-1963.

Memphis Chapter, National Association for the Advancement of Colored People:

- 16 Memphis Chapter, National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, reports, letters, memo, and other papers, 1967.
- 17 Memphis Chapter, NAACP, Monthly reports of executive secretary, Maxine A. Smith, 1968 Annual Report of Chapter, 1968 January 1 - December 3.
- 18 Memphis Chapter, NAACP, Monthly reports of executive secretary, Maxine A. Smith, 1969 January – December.

Civic Research Committee:

- 19 Civic Research Committee, articles, clippings, 1958 June – 1959 June.