

Inventory of the Faculty Records of William B. Hanson, 1909-2005 MSS.0002 MSS.0002

William B. Hanson Faculty Records
1909-2005

Title Statement

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Descriptive Summary

Unit ID

MSS.0002

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Unit Date

1909-2005

Language

English

Abstract

Faculty records of William "Bill" Byrd Hanson, professor at the University of Mary Washington in Fredericksburg, Virginia. Bulk of records document Hanson's efforts to memorialize Civil Rights leader and former UMW professor James Farmer, Jr. Also included are publications on Farmer and audio-visual materials.

Extent

2.5 Linear Feet 5 boxes.

Repository

University of Mary Washington Special Collections and University Archives

Administrative Information

Immediate Source of Acquisition

The bulk of materials were donated to the University of Mary Washington's Special Collections in Simpson Library by Roxane Hanson in 2005.

Biographical / Historical

William "Bill" Byrd Hanson was born November 15, 1940 in Washington, D.C. to Jesse Byrd Hanson and Margaret Ludwig Hanson. Hanson attended Marietta College and received his B.A. in 1964. He pursued his doctoral studies in medical sociology at Brown University and completed his Ph.D. in 1971. On November 28, 1968, Hanson married Roxane "Rocky" Scharry. The couple had two children together: a daughter, Megan, and a son, Jesse. Hanson served as an assistant professor at Providence College and later as associate professor at California State University at Bakersfield. In 1981, Hanson joined the faculty at the University of Mary Washington. He became a tenured professor of sociology and briefly served as chair for the Department of Sociology and Anthropology. Hanson authored a number of academic publications and in 1985 co-edited *Life with Heroin: Voices from the Inner City*.

Hanson was known within the Mary Washington and Fredericksburg community for his social activism. Locally, he acted as board member of the Fredericksburg Area Food Relief Clearinghouse and participated in the Central Virginia Housing Coalition, Thurman Brisben Homeless Shelter, and a nuclear freeze alliance. Hanson was also involved in "Project SOAR", a program offering college preparation classes for minority students. At times his advocacy was deeply personal; as a recipient of organ donation, Hanson was a steadfast supporter of the procedure. On-campus, he campaigned for disability rights and living wages for college employees. His admiration for the Civil Rights Movement further shaped his involvement at UMW. Hanson helped to develop the Martin Luther King Day celebration committee at the university and taught a class called "Civil Rights in the New Millennium".

Hanson became close to Dr. James Farmer, Jr. during the Civil Rights leader's professorship at the University of Mary Washington. The friendship deepened as Farmer's health failed and Hanson became an advocate for Farmer, securing adequate medical care and campaigning for a larger retirement stipend. In his later years, Farmer came to rely upon Hanson for assistance in navigating his financial and personal matters. When Farmer was presented the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 1998, Hanson and his son Jesse both attended the ceremony and reception.

Following Farmer's death in 1999, Hanson and his son were invited to a private memorial service at the Farmer home. Hanson became a strong supporter for commemoration of Farmer and was heavily involved in the University of Mary Washington James Farmer tributes, including the Farmer bust on Campus Walk. He also contributed to the establishment of the James Farmer Multicultural Center and fought attempts to relocate or defund the center.

Hanson was diagnosed with idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis and received a lung transplant in 1996. The same year, he started teaching part-time at the University of Mary Washington. Hanson passed away January 31, 2005 in Fredericksburg, Virginia after battling with the disease for nearly ten years.

Scope and Contents

This collection contains the faculty records of William "Bill" Byrd Hanson. While series 1-4 relate exclusively to Hanson, the bulk of records document the career of James Farmer, Jr. and various tributes following his death.

Series 1-4 contain materials on William Byrd Hanson during his professorship at the University of Mary Washington. Included are Hanson's curriculum vitae from August 1980 and June 1986; correspondence regarding Hanson's illness and death; a collection of newspaper and magazine articles featuring Hanson; and tribute materials.

Materials from Series 5 pertain to James Leonard Farmer, Jr. (1920-1999) and his father (1886-1961). Subseries A consists of audiovisual materials, dated between 1964 and 1996. Recordings include radio and television interviews, audio lectures, and video from tributes to Farmer.

Subseries B documents James Farmer, Jr.'s involvement in the Fellowship of Reconciliation (FoR) and the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE). Correspondence addressed to Farmer include letters from Richard A. Hayden (undated), George Houser (undated), and Richard K. MacMaster of Bluffton College (September 21, 1992). Records from FoR National Council Meetings are dated April 10-11 and September 11-13, 1942, comprised of minutes and reports from the following FoR members: Charlotte Bentley, James Farmer, Jr., Caleb Foote, Marion Frenyear, Larry Henderson, George Houser, Harold Stone Hull, Carl J. Landes, A.J. Muste, Dennis Nyberg, Sheldon Rahn, Constance Rumbough, Bayard Rustin, John Nevin Sayre, John M. Swomley, Jr., David White, and Herman Will, Jr.

Farmer's memorandum to A.J. Muste on the "Brotherhood Mobilization" also can be found within the

subseries.

Subseries C contains general materials on Farmer, primarily publicity materials, publications, and correspondence prior to and immediately following his death.

Subseries D holds a 1909 poem written by Farmer, Sr., in memoriam of Lillie M. Whitney, his high school teacher, and "James Leonard Farmer: Texas' First African-American Ph.D.", an article written by Gail K. Beil, undated. Note: The article also can be found in *East Texas Historical Journal* 36, no. 1 (Spring, 1998): pp. 18-25.

During Farmer's professorship at the university, Mary Washington College's Multicultural Center was renamed the James Farmer Multicultural Center in honor of the civil rights leader. Subseries E contains various correspondence and publications related to the Multicultural Center, primarily concerning budget cuts and relocation proposed in 2000.

The James Farmer Scholars Program was similarly initiated in honor of Farmer and Subseries F contains publicity materials promoting the program.

The bulk of materials can be found in Subseries G, a collection of tributes to Farmer. Folders 1-4 contain correspondence, publications, publicity materials, and photographs concerning tributes during Farmer's lifetime, particularly his receipt of the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 1998. Folders 5-8 pertain to tributes immediately following Farmer's death: publicity materials, publications, correspondence and working notes primarily for the September 1, 1999 memorial at the University of Mary Washington.

A year after Farmer's death, the James Farmer Multicultural Center was subject to controversial budget cuts and relocation. On November 10, 2000, Hanson and other members of the university organized a commemorative reading of James Farmer's autobiography *Lay Bare the Heart* in support of the Center. Folders 9-12 contain materials related to the reading, including publicity materials (programs, fliers), correspondence, book excerpts selected for the reading, and working notes.

Folders 13-16 document the unveiling of the James Farmer bust on April 20, 2001, followed by the inaugural address of James Farmer Visiting Professor of Human Rights Andrew Young. The folders contain publicity materials and publications for the unveiling. Correspondence and working notes from the series focuses on preparation for the unveiling ceremony, primarily in identifying potential invitees for the ceremony. Correspondents include UMW faculty and staff, anarchist Joffre Stewart, Donald Carleton of the University of Texas, Gail K. Beil, and Reverend Wyatt Tee Walker.

Keywords

African Americans -- Civil rights.

Farmer, James, 1920-1999

Hanson, William Byrd, 1940-2005

Arrangement

Series are arranged alphabetically.

The collection is organized into five series: (1) Biographical Materials, (2) Correspondence, (3) Publications, (4) Tribute Materials, and (5) James Farmer Materials.

The latter series is divided into six subseries: (A) Audiovisual Materials, (B) FoR and CORE, (C) General Materials, (D) James Farmer, Sr., (E) James Farmer Multicultural Center, (F) James Farmer Scholars Program, and (G) Tributes.

Description of Subordinate Components

Biographical Materials

Unit ID 1

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/1356

Unit Date 1980-1986

Mixed Materials 1 (Box)

Correspondence

Unit ID 2

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/1357

Unit Date 1995-2005

Mixed Materials 1 (Box)

Publications

Unit ID 3

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/1358

Unit Date 1993-2005

Mixed Materials 1 (Box)

Tribute Materials

Unit ID 4

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/1359

Unit Date 2005

Mixed Materials 1 (Box)

James Farmer, Jr.

Unit ID 5

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/1360

Unit Date 1909-2001

Audiovisual Materials

Unit ID A

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/1361

Unit Date 1964-1996

FoR and CORE

Unit ID B

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/1362

Unit Date 1941-1992

General Materials

Unit ID C

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/1363

Unit Date 1961-2001

James Farmer, Sr.

Unit ID D

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/1364

Unit Date 1909

James Farmer Multicultural Center

Unit ID E

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/1365

James Farmer Scholars

Unit ID F

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/1366

Unit Date 2001

Tribute Materials

Unit ID G

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/1367

Unit Date 1966-2001

Scope and Contents

Bill Hanson was very involved with the committees that planned the memorial tribute and the construction of the bust outside of Farmer Hall. Among other contents, this sub-series contains meeting agendas, schedules, correspondence and memos from the committees, notes, drafts of publicity materials, and invitation lists.