

Kennedy Florynce photographs

Florynce Kennedy photographs
c.1973-1976

Title Statement

Kennedy Florynce photographs Florynce Kennedy photographs MSS 16784

Author: Ellen Welch

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Profile Description

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Descriptive Summary

Unit ID

MSS 16784

Unit ID

[Archival Resource Key](#)

Unit ID

/repositories/3/resources/1524

Unit Date

c.1973-1976

Mixed Materials

BW 53 (box)

Container

1 (folder)

Language

English

source

James Arsenault and Co.

Extent

.03 Cubic Feet 1 letter folder 4 letter-sized photographs

Repository

Albert and Shirley Small Special Collections Library

Administrative Information

Conditions Governing Access

The collection is open for research use.

Immediate Source of Acquisition

This collection was purchased from James Arenenault by the Small Special Collections Library at the University of Virginia Library on 03 March 2023.

Preferred Citation

MSS 16784, Florynce Kennedy photographs, Albert and Shirley Small Special Collections Library, University of Virginia Library.

Biographical / Historical

Florynce Kennedy (February 11, 1916 – December 21, 2000) was an American lawyer, radical feminist, civil rights advocate, lecturer, entertainer, and activist.

She experienced poverty in the Great Depression and racism in her mostly white neighborhood but was given a strong sense of identity and security from her parents. Kennedy remembered a time when her father had to be armed with a shotgun in order to ward off the Ku Klux Klan presence that was trying to drive her family out.

In 1944 she began classes at Columbia University School of General Studies, majoring in pre-law and graduated in 1949. However, when she applied to the university's law school, she was refused admission. Kennedy met with the dean and threatened to sue the school. They admitted her. She was the only black person among eight women in her class. Kennedy graduated from Columbia Law School in 1951.

In 1971 she founded the Feminist Party, which nominated Shirley Chisholm for president. She also helped found the National Women's Political Caucus. Kennedy was a lawyer for the Women's Health Collective and 350 plaintiffs in a similar lawsuit about abortion in New York. She worked tirelessly for women's issues and to defeat all oppression. According to Sherie Randolph, in her book *Florynce "Flo" Kennedy: The Life of a Radical Black Feminist*,

"My main message is that we have a pathologically, institutionally racist, sexist, classist society. And that niggerizing techniques that are used don't only damage black people, but they also damage women, gay people, ex-prison inmates, prostitutes, children, old people, handicapped people, native Americans. And that if we can begin to analyze the pathology of oppression... we would learn a lot about how to deal with it."

Kennedy kept revisiting the same aim: "urging women to examine the sources of their oppression. She spoke of day to day acts of resistance that we can all take..."

In 1997, Kennedy received a Lifetime Courageous Activist Award, and the following year was honored by Columbia University with their Owl Award for outstanding graduates. In 1999, the City University of New York awarded her the Century Award.

Florynce describes herself in this way, "I'm just a loud-mouthed middle-aged colored lady with a fused spine and three feet of intestines missing and a lot of people think I'm crazy. Maybe you do too, but I never stop to wonder why I'm not like other people. The mystery to me is why more people aren't like me."

With an immeasurable impact on civil rights and equality for all, Kennedy's legacy serves as a reminder that Black women are often at the core of social and political progress, despite being overlooked by history. An empowering figure for women today, Kennedy is remembered for her flamboyance and ferocity that she never apologized for.

Source: "Florynce Kennedy." Wikipedia. Accessed 5/30/23. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Florynce_Kennedy

Militano, Hannah. "Who Was Flo Kennedy? Learn All About the Fiery Black Feminist and Civil Rights Activist." *L'Officiel*. 2/09/21. <https://www.lofficielusa.com/politics-culture/who-was-florynce-flo-kennedy-black-feminist-activist>

Content Description

This collection contains four black and white photographs (roughly trimmed to 8 x 10 inches or slightly larger) featuring Florynce 'Flo' Kennedy (1916-2000) speaking. Kennedy was an American lawyer, feminist, and activist who founded the Feminist Party in 1971. Each photograph is stamped in red ink with the Examiner Reference Library. The stamps are dated 1973-1976. Three photos include a newspaper clipping of the same image pasted onto the verso, with "Examiner" captioning the photo and including photo credits including Paul Gines, Lynott, and Teresa Zabaia. One picture is stamped with a caption on the verso: "Flo Kennedy at Hookers Convention."

Keywords

Women political activists

African Americans -- Civil rights

African Americans -- Photographs

Feminism -- United States

James Arsenault and Co.

Kennedy, Florynce, 1916-2000