Guide to the Mildred Pitts Walter Papers

Sean Heyliger
African American Museum & Library at Oakland
659 14th Street
Oakland, California 94612
Phone: (510) 637-0198
Fax: (510) 637-0204
Email: aamlo@oaklandlibrary.org
URL: http://www.oaklandlibrary.org/locations/african-american-museum-library-oakland
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Guide to the Mildred Pitts Walter Papers

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Descriptive Summary
Title: Mildred Pitts Walter papers
Dates: 1963-1968
Collection number: MS 217
Creator: Walter, Mildred Pitts
Collection Size: .25 linear feet (1 box)
Repository: African American Museum & Library at Oakland (Oakland, Calif.)
Oakland, CA 94612


Languages: Languages represented in the collection: English

Access
No access restrictions. Collection is open to the public.

Access Restrictions
Materials are for use in-library only, non-circulating.

Publication Rights
Permission to publish from the Mildred Pitts Walter Papers must be obtained from the African American Museum & Library at Oakland.

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Acquisition Information
Collection donated to the African American Museum & Library at Oakland by Mildred Pitts Walter on October 10, 2017.

Processing Information
Processed by Sean Heyliger, Archivist, October 21, 2017.

Biography / Administrative History
Author, activist, and educator Mildred Pitts Walter (1922- ) was born in Sweetville, Louisiana in 1922 to Paul Pitts, a lumberman, and Mary Ward Pitts and raised in southwestern Louisiana near DeRidder, Louisiana. After graduating from Southern University in 1944, she followed her sister to Longview, Washington to work in the shipyards during World War II and shortly thereafter moved to Los Angeles, California. In Los Angeles, she gained her teaching certificate at California State University allowing her to work as an elementary school teacher and met her husband Earl Lloyd Walter, a fellow graduate of Southern University, at a Methodist church event. They both became active members of the Los Angeles Chapter of the Congress of Racial Equality (C.O.R.E.) fighting for fair employment and fair housing. They picketed banks, retail stores, and other businesses in central Los Angeles that were not hiring non-whites for non-menial positions. Earl
Walter served as the chapter’s branch chairman and they sued builders that would not sell houses to non-white homebuyers and led voter registration drives and desegregation efforts in the American South.

As a teacher, she noticed that many of her African American students had few books that were written that allowed to see themselves as protagonists. With the encouragement of a Los Angeles publisher, she published her first book in 1969, Lillie of Watts, a birthday discovery, which told the story of a young black girl from the Watts neighborhood of Los Angeles. After the success of her first book, she published a sequel, Lillie of Watts Takes a Giant Step (1971), and would publish a total of 22 books for young adult audiences. Many of her books focused on helping children understand the history and struggle of blacks for equality and include award-winning books Girl on the Outside (1982), Trouble’s Child (1985), and Justin and the Best Biscuits in the World (1986). Her books have been awarded the American Library Association’s Coretta Scott King Book Award, the Christopher Award, Parents’ Choice Award for Literature, and has twice been awarded the National Council for the Social Studies’ Carter G. Woodson Book Award.

Scope and Content of Collection
The Mildred Pitts Walter papers document Mildred and Earl Walter’s participation in civil rights protests in Los Angeles in the 1960s as part of the Los Angeles branch of the Congress of Racial Equality (C.O.R.E.) and as parents at Manual Arts High School. The collection is organized into five series: I. Congress of Racial Equality (C.O.R.E.) II. Manual Arts High School (Los Angeles, Calif.) III. Earl Lloyd Walter funeral program IV. Photographs V. Anti-Black Defamation League. The C.O.R.E. materials consist of legal documents filed in the Superior Court of the State of California seeking an injunction and compensation from four Los Angeles home builders that discriminated against non-white homebuyers, a C.O.R.E. pamphlet on segregation in Los Angeles and one issue of the CORE-lator newsletter. The Manual Arts High School (Los Angeles, Calif.) series includes legal documents, photographs, flyers, and press releases documenting students and parents’ 1965 struggle against the Los Angeles Board of Education to build a new boys basketball gymnasium comparable to other all-white schools in the district. Also included in the collection is a press release of the Anti-Black Defamation League opposing the film adaptation of William Styron’s novel The Confessions of Nat Turner, on the grounds that its depiction of Turner was inaccurate and insensitive.

Arrangement

Indexing Terms
The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the library's online public access catalog.
Congress of Racial Equality. Los Angeles Chapter.
Manual Arts High School (Los Angeles, Calif.)
Civil rights movements--California--History--20th century.
Discrimination in housing--California.

Other Finding Aids
Mildred Pitts Walter Papers, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis.

Related Material

Congress of Racial Equality (C.O.R.E.)
Physical Description: 1 folder
Series Scope and Content Summary
Includes legal documents filed in the Superior Court of the State of California seeking an injunction and compensation from four Los Angeles home builders that discriminated against non-white homebuyers, a C.O.R.E. pamphlet on segregation in Los Angeles and one issue of the CORE-lator newsletter
Arrangement
Arranged by format.

Los Angeles Chapter
Box 1:1
“Segregated schools in Los Angeles,” prepared by Education Committee Los Angeles CORE Kenneth B. Fry chairman 1963
No. 822908 Complaint for injunction and damages, Kilkenny Homes Corp., a corporation, Overstone Homes Inc., a corporation, Iliad Homes Corp., a corporation and Altena Two Homes, a corporation plaintiffs vs. Julian Heicklen et. al. Congress of Racial Equality (C.O.R.E.), Superior Court of the State of California for the county of Los Angeles 1963

CORE-lator, no. 107 1964-07

Manual Arts High School (Los Angeles, Calif.)

Physical Description: 1 folder
Series Scope and Content Summary
Includes legal documents, photographs, flyers, and press releases documenting students and parents’ 1965 struggle against the Los Angeles Board of Education to build a new boys basketball gymnasium comparable to other all-white schools in the district.
Arrangement
Arranged by format.

Collateral agreement between Kenneth E. Huckaby et. al. and the Board of Education Los Angeles School District 1965-03-02

Manual Arts High School Dedication Committee, boys’ gymnasium minutes 1968-03-01

Loan approval report 1968-03-01

Memorandum from Guardian General Agency to Marnesba T. Tackett, subject: injunction bond 1965-03-04


"A gymnasium won for the people by the people," circa 1960s

Affidavit in support of a temporary restraining order, Kenneth E. Huckaby, a minor, by and through his guardian ad litem plaintiffs vs. Board of Education of the Los Angeles Unified School District of Los Angeles County defendant (three copies) 1965-02-09

No. 854187 Complaint for declaratory judgment and injunction, Kenneth E. Huckaby et.al. plaintiffs vs. Board of Education of the Los Angeles Unified School District of Los Angeles County defendant circa 1965

MAD POTT (Manual Arts District Parents or Taxpayers and Trust) flyer (three copies) circa 1960s

Los Angeles City Board of Education report of correspondence 1965-02-15

Collection of funds to influence fight for new gymnasium equal to gymnasiums at all-white school in Los Angeles School District press release 1965-02-22
Comments by Mr. Richard T. Cooper at the special building committee meeting, augmented, subject: rehabilitation of the Manual Arts Gymnasium (two copies) 1965-01-25

Box 1:2

Invitation to dedication of boys' gymnasium 1968-03-31

Box 1:2

Dedication of boys' gymnasium program (two copies) 1968-03-31

Box 1:2

Newspaper clippings 1963-1966 and undated

Box 1:3

Earl Lloyd Walter funeral program 1965-06-18

Physical Description: 1 item

Photographs

Physical Description: 10 photographs

Series Scope and Content Summary

Includes ten photographs documenting Los Angeles Branch of Congress of Racial Equality (C.O.R.E.) and MAD POTT's (Manual Arts District Parents or Taxpayers and Trust) struggle for a new basketball gymnasium at Manual Arts High School (Los Angeles, Calif.).

Arrangement

Arranged by photograph identification number.

Box 1:4

Earl Walter wearing “Call off the dogs, JFK! CORE” protest sign [001] circa 1960s

Protesters marching in the Medgar Evers CORE memorial march Southpark Los Angeles, California [002] circa 1960s

Mildred Walter (third from right) standing with group of men and women in front of Manual Arts High School gymnasium exhibit [003] circa 1960s

Manual Arts High School gymnasium “A gymnasium of the people and by the people” exhibit [004 A-B] circa 1960s

Manual Arts High School gymnasium trophy case [005 A-B] circa 1960s


Manual Arts High School map and citizen petition [007] circa 1960s

MAD POTT (Manual Arts District Parents or Taxpayers and Trust) collection box and sign [008] circa 1960s

Mildred Walter (second right) holding MAD POTT (Manual Arts District Parents or Taxpayers and Trust) collection sign with three women in front of the Manual Arts High School gymnasium [009] circa 1960s

Mildred Walter (third right) holding MAD POTT (Manual Arts District Parents or Taxpayers and Trust) collection sign with three women in front of the Manual Arts High School gymnasium [010] circa 1960s


Physical Description: 1 item

Series Scope and Content Summary

Includes Anti-Black Defamation League press release opposing the film adaptation of William Styron’s novel The Confessions of Nat Turner, on the grounds that its depiction of Turner was inaccurate and insensitive.