

S0150 Pritchard, Gloria (1911- 2002)
Papers, 1910-1983
23 Folders, 169 Photographs

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Gloria Pritchard was born on April 13, 1911 in Newport, Arkansas to Ethel Lynch Griffin and Will Griffin. Her maternal grandfather, Kenneth Lynch, was the youngest brother of John Roy Lynch, a reconstruction congressman from Mississippi. John Lynch chaired the executive committee of the Mississippi Republican Party, was delegate to four national conventions, the first black to chair a Republican national convention in 1884, and fourth auditor of the U.S. Treasury, Family members honored his memory and presented him as a role model for Gloria and her brother, William.

Pritchard grew up in Newport, experiencing many of the problems of Jim Crow segregation. When she was 2, she witnessed the last lynching of a black man in her town. Because there was no separate high school for blacks, she threatened to attend the white high school unless the school district provided her with an education. The school board compromised by allowing her to attend classes at night and on Saturdays. While in high school she taught fourth grade. She then moved to Memphis, Tennessee where she received her teacher certification from LeMoyne-Owen College and took courses in business administration at Henderson College. In 1928 she moved to Missouri to attend Lincoln University. The following year she married her English teacher, James Clinton. They had one child, Dolores, born in 1929, and were divorced in 1939. During the 1930s and 1940s Pritchard taught grade school at Wright City and Williamsburg, Missouri.

She and LaSalle Pritchard married in 1945. Pritchard became involved in community and political organizations as a member of the Americans for Democratic Action, the Dunkers (an international study group), the NAACP, St. Louis Association of Colored Women's Clubs, St. Louis Council of Negro Women, St. Paul's A.M.E. Church, and the Zeta Sigma chapter of Sigma Gamma Rho. In 1957 KATZ radio hired her to host the "World of Women," a public service program specializing in interviews with prominent black women and news of black women's activities.

In 1960 she introduced and hosted the 'Great Negro Artists' show which featured symphonies, operas and folk songs composed or performed by blacks. Her radio fame led to many emcee appearances at clubs, churches, dances and shows.

She founded Letters, Inc., a club where black women could discuss political issues and write their congressmen, senators, or government agencies expressing opinions or urging action. Letters, Inc. was the first black group to work in the Salvation Army Tree of Lights campaign in the early 1960s. In 1961, she and six other black women started the KATZ Educational Fund, (which later became the St. Louis Educational Fund.) The group assisted disadvantaged youth with small donations for shoes or eyeglasses to help them stay in school.

Pritchard directed the Medicare Alert campaign in 1966 to inform the elderly of the new

program. She taught Head Start for the Human Development Corporation but left to work at the Division of Employment Security. She was the first black woman employed as a professional in the St. Louis office.

A strong supporter of Democratic politics, she was a precinct captain for the 26th Ward. She worked on all campaigns but particularly in William Clay's 1968 bid for the U.S. Congress, A.J. Cervantes' 1965 mayor's race, and Warren Hearnes 1964 governor's race. In 1970 Mayor Cervantes named her to the St. Louis Commission on Crime and Law Enforcement.

Pritchard began writing poetry at age seven. She continued to write and in 1931 won a *Reader's Digest* prize for an essay on "The Most Remarkable Person I Ever Knew". In St. Louis she joined the Tuesday Poetry Group, the Poetry Center, the Friday Literary Society, and the Missouri Writers' Guild. In 1953 she published a book of her poems, TREES ALONG THE HIGHWAY. She also wrote for newspapers and periodicals and was the poetry editor of the *Pittsburgh Courier* and an associate editor of the *St. Louis Times*. Her interest in poetry and literature included an appreciation of black art and culture that she emphasized after a trip to Africa.

In 1964 Charles Dennis, a senior statesman of Liberia, invited her to the 117th anniversary of the independence of the Republic. She visited Liberia for two months and attended receptions, dinners, dedications, and balls given by President William Tubman and Vice-president Dr. William Tolbert, Jr. When she returned to St. Louis she planned and produced the first African fashion show in St. Louis at the WOHL Center. Throughout the 1960s and into the 1980s Pritchard continued to stress the importance of African culture in fashion shows, black history pageants, and exhibits. Gloria Griffin Pritchard died on Sept. 23, 2002, and was buried in Burr Oak Cemetery, Alsip, Illinois.

2467 26 May 82 Gloria Pritchard gift
2509 28 Feb 83 Gloria Pritchard gift

FOLDER LISTING

1. Africa, Switzerland, 1964
2. African Correspondence, 1965-1966
3. Certificates and Awards, 1958-1980
4. Correspondence, 1952-1983
5. Political Correspondence, 1952-1977
6. Employment-HDC, 1966; Division of Employment Security, 1969, 1976
7. KATZ Correspondence, 1960-1962
8. KATZ "Great Negro Artists", 1960-1961
9. KATZ Press Releases, 1960-1962
10. KATZ "World of Women" scripts, 1960-June, 1961
11. KATZ "World of Women" scripts, July, 1961-1962
12. John Roy Lynch
13. Newsclippings, 1953-1981
14. Poems, Talks, Writings, 1953-1977
15. Programs and Invitations, 1952-1983
16. Women's Crusade on Crime, Mother's Forum Committee proposal

17. Photographs, 150.1-150.16
18. Photographs, 150.17-150.39
19. Photographs, 150.40-150.58
20. Photographs, 150.59-150.79
21. Photographs, 150.80-150.105
22. Photographs, 150.106-150.118
23. Photographs, 150.119-150.169

INDEX

Afro-American-Fraternalities and Sororities, f. 3, 4, 13, 15
 Afro-American--Poets, f. 14
 Afro-American--Women, f. 1-23
 Afro-American--Women's Clubs, f. 3-5, 13, 15
 Afro-Americans--Civil Rights, f. 13, 14
 Afro-Americans--Employment, f. 5
 Afro-Americans--Societies and Clubs, f. 3-5, 13, 15
 Billups, Kenneth, f. 13
 Cervantes, A.J., f. 5, 13
 Clay, William, f. 5, 13, 15
 Collins, Ruth Philpott, f. 4
 Davis, Julia, f. 5
 Democratic Party, f. 13
 Dennis, Charles C. f. 1
 Dreer, Herman, f. 4, 13
 Dunkers, f. 4, 15
 Ethical Society, f. 4, 5, 15
 Gellhorn, Edna, f. 4
 "Great Negro Artists", f. 8
 Handy, W.C., f. 4, 13
 Human Development Corporation, f. 5, 6
 KATZ Radio, f. 7-11, 13, 15
 Kinloch, Missouri, f. 5
 Letters, Inc., f. 4, 5, 13, 15
 Medicare Alert, f. 6, 13
 Metropolitan Youth Commission, f. 5
 NAACP, f. 13, 15
 National Association of Negro Musicians, f. 4, 13
 National Citizens Redevelopment Corporation, f. 5
 Nations, Caroline, f. 4
 O'Hare, Frank, f. 4, 15
 Peoples, Maggie, f. 5, 13
 Politics, f. 5, 13
 Pritchard, Gloria, f. 1-23
 Radio, f. 7-11, 13, 15
 St. Louis Association of Colored Women's Clubs, f. 3, 13, 15
 St. Louis Council of Negro Women, f. 13, 15
 St. Louis Educational Assistance Fund, f. 13

Segregation, f. 14
Sullivan, Lenor K., f. 2, 5
Symington, Stuart, f. 5
Washington University, f. 14
Women's Crusade Against Crime, f. 16
"World of Women", f. 7, 10, 11
Zeta Sigma Chapter, Sigma Gamma Rho, f. 3, 4, 13, 15