

S0552 Grant, David M. (1903-1985)
Papers, 1917-1986
18 Folders, 7 Photographs

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Mildred Grant donated the papers of David M. Grant to the Western Historical Manuscript Collection at the University of Missouri-St. Louis November 11, 1995

David Grant was an African American lawyer and civil rights leader. He was born January 1, 1903 in the Mill Creek Valley area of St. Louis. Grant attended the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor from 1920 to 1923. Grant worked as a waiter in Hot Springs, Mackinac Island, French Lick, and West Palm Beach. He also worked as a club car porter on railroads out of St. Louis.

In 1927 Grant began attending Howard University Law School in Washington, D. C. He graduated in 1930. Grant was admitted to the Missouri Bar in 1930, the Federal Bar in 1938, and to the Bar of the United States Supreme Court in 1948.

When Grant return to St. Louis in the 30s, he became active in Democratic politics. It was unusual because in that era of history most African Americans voted for the Republican Party out of respect for Abraham Lincoln.

In 1931 Grant organized the first African American picket for economic justice. It was against the newly built Woolworth Company dime store located on Franklin Avenue. Grant was responsible for helping African Americans to be employed in the store. Later Grant was instrumental in organizing the Colored Clerks Circle, a union which picketed establishments which refused to employ African Americans.

In 1943 Grant helped picket the Southwestern Bell Telephone Company. The picket led Southwestern Bell to open offices with black employees in black neighborhoods.

In 1945 Grant brought suit against Washington University requesting that the University accept African American students or lose its tax exempt status. He took the case all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court, but he dropped the suit when Washington University integrated in 1948.

In 1950 Grant became the first black appointed to the St. Louis Police Retirement Board. In 1952 he was instrumental in bringing Josephine Baker to St. Louis to give a benefit homecoming performance at Kiel Auditorium on behalf of the committee protesting overcrowding in the St. Louis black schools. Because Josephine Baker could not stay at the Chase Hotel she stayed at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Grant.

In 1960 Grant served with Eleanor Roosevelt on the National Democratic Platform Committee. He helped to write the civil rights plank for the Kennedy-Johnson campaign. In 1961 Grant was appointed as a member of the Missouri State Advisory Committee to the

U.S. Commission on Civil Rights. In 1962 President John Kennedy appointed Grant as a delegate to represent the United States at the celebration of Uganda's independence. David Grant died on August 12, 1985.

SCOPE AND CONTENT

The David M. Grant papers document David Grant's career as a civil rights leader; a lawyer; and a politician. The papers include personal material pertaining to his family history; speeches and articles from 1961-1975; and correspondence from 1936-1956.

The papers also contain information on Josephine Baker dating from 1927-1952. They include a draft of a proposed civil rights plank to be submitted to the Platform Committee of the Democratic National Convention in 1960, and awards, photographs, newsclippings and memorabilia pertaining to Grant's involvement in the Civil Rights Movement, the law, and the political arena.

FOLDER LIST

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1. David Grant Personal Papers, 1917-1978
2. Genealogy, 1968-1985
3. Speeches and Articles, 1961-1975
4. Correspondence, 1936-1956
5. Josephine Baker, 1927-1952
6. Democratic National Platform Committee, 1960
7. Awards and Tributes, 1917-1985
8. Speeches and Articles by Others, 1917-1982
9. Oral History Transcript, 1979
10. Newspaper clippings, 1932-1985

BOX 2

11. Newspaper clippings, 1936-1985
12. Photographs, (7) 1950s to 1980s
13. Recordings, audio reel tape (1) and cassettes (2), address to Soldan High School, 1958
14. Recordings, cassette (1), David Grant radio spot in favor of \$79 million bond issue, n.d.
15. Recordings, audio reel tapes (2) and cassettes (5), deposition for murder trial of Eddie Steve Glenn, n.d.
16. Recordings, audio reel tape (1) and cassette (1), deposition during murder trial of McCullough, n.d.
17. Recordings, cassette (1), motorcycle recorded at 1:45 a.m. Saturday morning to illustrate neighborhood nuisance, n.d.
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OVERSIZE: Poster: Creed of the American Negro Citizen, AD 1942; Credo Committee Chairman David Grant.

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