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Black Pioneers Project Records

2018-2020
1 box (.1 linear feet)
Call no.: RG 050/9



- [About SCUA](#)
 - [SCUA home](#)
 - [Credo digital](#)
- [Scope](#)
- [Inventory](#)
- [Admin info](#)
- [Download](#)
 - [xml version](#)
 - [print version \(pdf\)](#)

[Read collection overview](#)

Moved to action after a successful and illuminating 2016 reunion of Black alumni of the University of Massachusetts Amherst, alumna Dr. Cheryl L. Evans (1968) decided to take on the critical project identified by the group, collecting and documenting the stories of the Black alumni who attended the University between 1960 and 1970. Dubbing these students "Black Pioneers," given the dearth, and then growth, of Black students on campus during the decade, Evans used her connections with alumni and her history as a Black student leader to reach out about recording experiences for preservation and research purposes. In collaboration with Special Collections and University Archives, Evans began the "UMass Black Pioneers Project," and sent an online questionnaire to around 85 alumni in September 2018. The survey addresses alumni's backgrounds, academic and social experiences and support systems on campus, and racial discrimination and activism, as well as current perceptions of the University and advice for students. Participation was voluntary, and is ongoing. If you are a Black Pioneer interested in participating in the survey or project, please contact [Special Collections and University Archives](#).

The UMass Black Pioneers Project Records contain some planning materials and correspondence for the project, and primarily consist of written answers made in response to the "UMass Black Pioneers Survey." In addition to the questionnaire, participants were able to send in physical materials, or upload digital content, such as resumes, or videos of their responses, and the collection contains a few of these. Several participants willing to be interviewed were also connected with UMass Public History graduate students for oral histories in the Fall 2018 semester. These videos are a part of the record group, and there are plans to conduct additional interviews.

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Background on Black Pioneers Project

Moved to action after a successful and illuminating April 2016 reunion of Black alumni of the University of Massachusetts Amherst, alumna Dr. Cheryl L. Evans (1968) decided to take on the critical project identified by the group, collecting and documenting the stories of the Black alumni who attended the University between 1960 and 1970. Dubbing these students "Black Pioneers," given the dearth, and then growth, of Black students on campus during the decade, Evans used her connections with alumni and her history as a Black student leader to reach out about recording experiences for preservation and research purposes. In collaboration with Special Collections and University Archives, Evans began the "UMass Black Pioneers Project," and sent an online questionnaire to around 85 alumni in September 2018. The survey addresses alumni's backgrounds, academic and social experiences and support systems on campus, and racial discrimination and activism, as well as current perceptions of the University and advice for students. Participation was voluntary, and is ongoing.

If you are a Black Pioneer interested in participating in the survey or project, please contact [Special Collections and University Archives](#).

Scope of collection

The UMass Black Pioneers Project Records contain some planning materials and correspondence for the project, including videos of the original reunion in 2016, but primarily consist of written answers made in response to the "UMass Black Pioneers Survey." In addition to the questionnaire, participants were able to send in physical materials, or upload digital content, such as resumes, or videos of their responses, and the collection contains a few of these. Several participants willing to be interviewed were also connected with UMass Public History graduate students in HIS 659, for oral histories in the Fall 2018 semester. These videos, along with a recording of the students' final presentations, are a part of the record group, and there are hopes to conduct additional interviews. Additional material, including news clippings and memorial service programs, were added to the collection to document individuals who passed away and did not participate in the survey.

Inventory

Correspondence

2018 May

Box 1: 1

UMass Black Pioneers Survey

2018 Aug

Box 1: 2

Anonymous surveys

2018-2019

Box 1: 3

[Anderson, Anita](#)

2018 Nov

Brickhouse, William

2018 Oct

Box 1: 4

Brito, Miguel

2018 Sep

Box 1: 5

Bromery, Keith Marcel

2018 Sep

Box 1: 6

Burrell, Jerry

2018 Sep

Box 1: 7

Durant, Charlotte B.

2020 Oct

Box 1: 22

[Evans, Cheryl L.](#)

2018 Aug

Evans, Warren

2018 Oct

Box 1: 8

Gray, C. Vernon

2019 Jan

Box 1: 9

[Griffin, Cheryl](#)

2018 Nov

Janey, Daniel Edward

2019 Apr

Box 1: 21

Kazana, Imani

2018 Nov

Box 1: 10

Kinard, Stanley

2019 Apr

Box 1: 11

Lucas, Wayne

2018 Sep

Box 1: 12

Martin, Elise

2018 Oct

Box 1: 13

Mayo, Walter

2018 Oct

Box 1: 14

[McLemore, Leslie Burl](#)

2018 Nov

Box 1: 15

Pina, Vincent

2018 Sep

Box 1: 16

Saunders, Kwaku Leon

2018 Oct

Box 1: 17

Smith, Gregory

2018 Oct

Box 1: 18

Smith, William H. "Smitty"

2018 Oct

Box 1: 19

Williams, Joanne E.

2018

Box 1: 20

HIS 659 student presentations video

2018

digital

Administrative information

Access

The collection is open for research.

Provenance

Acquired from Cheryl Evans and Black Pioneer participants, 2018-2020.

Processing Information

Processed by Blake Spitz, 2019.

Related Material

For more and related information on UMass students and alumni see:

- [University of Massachusetts Amherst. Classes by Year](#)
- [University of Massachusetts Amherst. Alumni](#)
- [William F. Field Papers](#)
- [Cheryl L. Evans Papers](#)
- [Black Mass Communications Project Collection](#)
- [Drum, a UMass publication of the "Black Literary Experience"](#)

Language:

English

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Search terms

Subjects

- African American college students--Massachusetts
- Racism in education
- University of Massachusetts Amherst--Alumni
- University of Massachusetts Amherst--Students

Genres and formats

- Oral histories (literary works)
- Questionnaires

Link to similar SCUA collections

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