The papers of Damon J. Keith were placed in the Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs by Judge Keith in March of 1994 and opened for research in August of 2002.

Damon Jerome Keith was born on July 4, 1922 in Detroit, Michigan, shortly after his father, Perry Alexander Keith, moved his wife, Annie Louise (Williams) Keith, and their five children from Atlanta, Georgia to take a foundry job at Ford Motor Company's Rouge plant.

After graduating from Detroit's Northwestern High School in 1939, Damon Keith became the first member of his family to attend college, earning a bachelor's degree from West Virginia State College, one of the nation's historically black schools, in 1943. He served three years in the U. S. Army and then, following the advice of his mentor, West Virginia State president, John W. Davis, enrolled in Howard University Law School, where Thurgood Marshall and others were planning the legal strategy for the civil rights battles of the 1950's. He received his LL.B. in 1949 and an LL.M. in labor law from Wayne State University in Detroit in 1956.

Keith spent the early years of his career with the black Detroit law firm of Loomis, Jones, Piper & Colden and on the staff of the Wayne County Friend of the Court. He was one of six Detroit attorneys invited to the White House in 1963 by then President John F. Kennedy to discuss the role of lawyers in the civil rights struggle. In 1964 he and four other black attorneys formed Keith, Conyers, Anderson, Brown & Wahls, setting up shop in what had previously been the all-white legal district of downtown Detroit. During this period he also served as chair of the Michigan Civil Rights Commission and president of the Detroit Housing Commission. In 1967 President Lyndon Johnson, upon the recommendation of Michigan Senator Philip Hart, appointed him to the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Michigan, only the second African American to sit on that court.

Judge Keith served on the district court from 1967 until 1977, becoming chief judge in 1975. During his tenure, he delivered several landmark rulings in civil rights and civil liberties cases: on school desegregation in Davis v. School District of the City of Pontiac (1970); on employment discrimination and affirmative action in Stamps v. Detroit Edison Co. (1973) and Baker v. City of Detroit (1979); and on housing discrimination in Garrett v. City of Hamtramck (1971) and Zuch v. Hussey (1975). But he is most frequently cited for his opinion in U.S. v. Sinclair (1971), dubbed the "Keith decision," which found wiretap surveillance in domestic security cases unconstitutional, absent a court order, a decision unanimously upheld by the United States Supreme Court.
In 1977 President Jimmy Carter appointed Judge Keith to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit where he has served for the past twenty-five years, taking senior status in 1995. In the 1980's he served as chair of the Sixth Circuit and Judicial Conference committees commemorating the Bicentennial of the Constitution.

Over the course of his long career, Judge Keith has played an active role in a number of civic, cultural and educational organizations, including the Detroit YMCA, the Detroit Arts Commission, the Detroit Cotillion Club and Interlochen Arts Academy, and has been a tireless fundraiser for the United Negro College Fund and the Detroit NAACP. In addition, he serves as a deacon of the Tabernacle Baptist Church.

Judge Keith is the recipient of numerous honors and awards, including the NAACP's highest award, the Springarn Medal, in 1974, the American Bar Association's Thurgood Marshall Award in 1997, the prestigious Edward J. Devitt Award for Distinguished Service to Justice in 1998 and honorary degrees from Yale University, Georgetown University, the University of Michigan, Tuskegee University and over thirty other institutions. The Detroit Board of Education has named an elementary and middle school in his honor.

Damon Keith married Dr. Rachel Boone, an internist, in 1953. They have three daughters: Cecile Keith-Brown, Debbie and Gilda.

The first installment of the papers of Damon J. Keith consists primarily of published material documenting important milestones in Judge Keith's career, his precedent-setting judicial decisions and the many honors and awards bestowed upon him for his dedication to the city of Detroit and his pioneering role in ensuring equal justice for all Americans.
Important subjects in the collection:

Affirmative action programs--Law and legislation--Michigan--Detroit
African American judges
African American law students
African American lawyers
Baker v. City of Detroit
Busing for school integration--Michigan--Pontiac
Davis, et al. v. School District of the City of Pontiac (Michigan)
Detroit (Mich.). Police Dept.
Discrimination in employment--Michigan--Detroit
Discrimination in housing--Michigan
Electronic Surveillance--Social aspects--United States
Garrett v. City of Hamtramck
National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. Detroit Branch
Irene McCabe
National Action Group (NAG)
Police, Black
United States. Circuit Court (6th Circuit)
United States. District Court (Michigan: Eastern District)
United States v. Sinclair
Wayne State University Law School
Coleman A. Young
Zuch v. Hussey

Important correspondents in the collection:

Warren Burger
John Warren Davis
George C. Edwards, Jr.
William T. Gossett
Myles Lynk
Charles Renfrew

Non-manuscript material:

Several photographs, a few videotapes, including a history of the Judicial Council of the National Bar Association, and other items of memorabilia received with the collection have been placed in the Archives Audiovisual Department.

Related collections:

Detroit Commission on Community Relations/Human Rights Department
William B. Gould IV New Detroit, Inc.
Contents

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Series I, Personal Files, 1946-1991, Boxes 1-5:
Correspondence, media references to Judge Keith and his family and material related to
honorary degrees and other awards he received and to civic, cultural and educational
institutions and activities with which he was associated, especially the annual Detroit
NAACP Freedom Fund Dinner.

Series II, Speaking Engagements/Publications, 1953-1991, Boxes 5-7:
Files related to Judge Keith's public appearances, including texts of speeches, and to
published book reviews, newspaper articles and speeches.

Series III, Professional Files, 1967-1987, Boxes 7-16:
Files related to Judge Keith's judicial career, including significant cases he handled and
his work for various professional associations.

Series IV, Subject Files, 1948-2001, Boxes 16-20:
Papers, reports, newspaper clippings, magazine articles and other publications on
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10. Correspondence; William T. Gossett, 1969-1980's
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13. Article; "Blacks' faith will see them through," *The Detroit Free Press*, 9 Aug 1985

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4. Article; "The meaning of 'Equal justice—under law,'" *The Cincinnati Post*, 26 Apr 1978
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11. Moot court appearances, 1971-84
15. Speech; "Becoming Involved," Loyola Law School commencement (Los Angeles), 7 Jun 1981
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5. U. S. District Court, Eastern District of Michigan cases; Detroit police affirmative action (Baker v. City of Detroit)-defendants' brief, 1979
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Damon J. Keith Papers, Part II
10.75 linear feet
(18 manuscript boxes, 1 oversized flat box, 2 storage boxes)
1938-2007 (bulk 1957-2006)

Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University, Detroit, MI

Accession Number: 1582

Creators: Damon J. Keith

Acquisition: The second installment of the papers of Damon J. Keith was placed in the Walter P. Reuther Library in July 2007 by Judge Keith as part of the Damon J. Keith Law Collection of African American Legal History. Part II of his papers were opened for research in August 2010.

Language: Material entirely in English.

Access: Collection is open for research.

Use: Refer to the Walter P. Reuther Library Rules for Use of Archival Materials.

Notes: Citation style: “Damon J. Keith Papers, Part II, Box [#], Folder [#], Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs, Wayne State University”


Additional photographs and oversized items are located in the Reuther’s Audiovisual Department.
History
See Part I.

Scope and Content
The second installment of the papers of Damon J. Keith consists of additional personal and professional correspondence received by Judge Keith and of additional published material documenting important milestones in Judge Keith's career, his precedent-setting judicial decisions, his role in ensuring equal justice for all Americans, and the many honors and awards bestowed upon him for his dedication to civil rights and to the City of Detroit. The collection also includes a number of photographs, other audiovisual materials, and physical objects illustrating the life, career, and interests of Judge Keith.

Important Subjects:
Affirmative action programs – Law and legislation – United States
African American judges
African American lawyers
Baker v. City of Detroit
Busing for school integration – Michigan – Pontiac
The Damon J. Keith Center at the Wayne State University Law School
Davis, et al. v. School District of the City of Pontiac (Michigan)
Detroit Free Press v. Ashcroft
Detroit Housing Commission
Detroit (Mich.). Police Dept.
Discrimination in employment – Michigan
Discrimination in housing – Michigan
Electronic surveillance – Law and legislation – United States
Garrett v. City of Hamtramck
Michigan Civil Rights Commission
National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, Detroit Branch
Police, Black
Stamps v. Detroit Edison Company
United States. Circuit Court (6th Circuit)
United States. District Court (Michigan: Eastern District)
United States v. Sinclair
Zuch v. Hussey

Important Names:
David Adamany                                      Nathaniel R. Jones
Richard H. Austin                                   Thomas M. Kavanagh
Eugene F. Black                                     Kwame M. Kilpatrick
James J. Blanchard                                  Frank J. Kelley
Warren E. Burger                                    John F. Kennedy
Jimmy Carter                                        William M. Kunstler
Jerome P. Cavanaugh                                 Pierce Lively
Eric Lee Clay                                       Thomas F. McAllister
William J. Clinton                                  Joseph M. McLaughlin
Series V: Personal Files, circa 1950-2007
Correspondence to and media references to Judge Keith and his family, material related to honorary degrees and other awards he received, and material related to civic, cultural, and educational institutions and activities with which he was associated, especially the annual Detroit NAACP Freedom Fund Dinner.

Materials related to Judge Keith's public appearances and published articles.

Series VII: Professional Files, 1950-2006
Materials related to Judge Keith's legal career and his work for various professional associations, including his time in private practice, various commissions on which he served, and his judicial career, including significant cases he handled.

Series VIII: Subject Files, 1954-2006
Papers, reports, newspaper clippings, magazine articles and other publications on topics and individuals of interest to Judge Keith.

Two metal plaques, two scrapbooks, and degrees, proclamations, citations, plaques, and certificates.
Series X: Audiovisual Material and Physical Objects, circa 1938-2007
Photographs, videocassettes, DVDs, one 8 mm film, two audiocassettes, and reel to reel tapes containing presentation ceremonies, biographical treatments, and subjects of interest to Judge Keith. All videocassettes are VHS unless indicated otherwise.
Arrangement
The Damon J. Keith Papers, Part II, are arranged into six series: Series V (Boxes 21-29), Series VI (Boxes 29-32), Series VII (Boxes 32-36), Series VIII (Boxes 36-38), Series IX (Box 39), and Series X (Boxes 40-41). Series V, VI, VII, and VIII contain materials related to those in Series I, II, III, and IV in Part I. Series V, VI, VII, VIII, and IX are arranged alphabetically by subject. In Series X, the videocassettes, film, and audiocassettes are organized alphabetically by title and the photographs and physical objects are not in order.

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10. U. S. District Court, Eastern District of Michigan, Appointment; Clippings, 1967
11. U. S. District Court, Eastern District of Michigan, Appointment; Congressional Record, 1967

Box 35
1-5. U. S. District Court, Eastern District of Michigan, Appointment; Congratulatory Correspondence, 1967
7. U. S. District Court, Eastern District of Michigan, Appointment; Personal Data Questionnaire, 1966-1967
8. U. S. District Court, Eastern District of Michigan, Appointment; Reception Correspondence and Invitation Lists, 1967
9. U. S. District Court, Eastern District of Michigan, Cases, Detroit Blockbusting (Zuch v. Hussey); Clippings, 1974-1975
10. U. S. District Court, Eastern District of Michigan, Cases, Detroit Blockbusting (Zuch v. Hussey); Opinion, 1975

Box 36
2. U. S. District Court, Eastern District of Michigan, Cases, Detroit Police Affirmative Action (Baker v. City of Detroit); Clippings, 1979, 1983
5. U. S. District Court, Eastern District of Michigan, Cases, Miscellaneous; Clippings, 1971-1977
8. U. S. District Court, Eastern District of Michigan, Cases, Weatherman Bomb Plot; Clippings, 1973
12. U. S. District Court, Eastern District of Michigan, Mediation, Detroit Police Layoffs; Clippings, 1975
13. Wayne County Board of Supervisors; Clippings, Correspondence, 1958, 1963

**Series VIII**

**Box 36**

15. Affirmative Action, Bakke Case; Clippings, 1977-1978
16. African American Judges; Directory, circa 1993

**Box 37**

2. Court Opinions; 1972-2003
3. Edwards, George C.; Clippings, 1995
5. Guinier, Lani; Clippings, 1995, 1998
6. Guinier, Lani, Appointment to Justice Department; Clippings and Transcript, 1993-1994
7. Mandela, Nelson, Detroit Visit; Clippings, 1990
10. Prominent African Americans; Clippings, 1976-2005

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1. Prominent Detroiter; Clippings, n.d., 1967-2002
2. Racism; Articles, n.d., 1984
5. Williams, G. Mennen; Clippings, 1958, 1960
6. Young, Coleman; Clippings, 1974, 1994, 1997

Series IX
Box 39
1. Atlanta University; Honorary Degree, 1975
2. City of Detroit; Proclamation of Judge Damon J. Keith Day, 1988
3. City of Detroit; Testimonial Resolution of City Council to Judge Damon J. Keith, 1981
4. Damon J. Keith Elementary School; Student Scrapbook, 1974
5. The Damon J. Keith Law Collection at Wayne State University; The Calling and the Courage Display Plaque on the Exhibition and the Collection, 1998.
6. The Damon J. Keith Law Collection at Wayne State University; The Calling and the Courage Display Plaque on Judge Damon J. Keith, 1998.
7. Hill, Draper and Sarah; Autographed Editorial Cartoon Featuring Coleman Young, 7 Jan 1982
8. Howard University; Degree, Damon J. Keith, 1949
9. Keith, Cecile and Debbie; Camp Scrapbook on Their Father, 1964
10. Lincoln University; Honorary Degree, 1975
11. Memorabilia; Great Seals of the State of Michigan, Autographed, n.d.
14. Metropolitan Detroit Council of Churches; Layman of the Year, Damon J. Keith, 1964
15. National Association for Equal Opportunity in Higher Education; Presidential Citation to the Honorable Damon J. Keith, 1984
17. State of Michigan, Governor Granholm; Certificate of Tribute to Judge Damon J. Keith, n.d.
19. University of Detroit; Honorary Degree and Citation, 1975
20. University of Michigan; Honorary Degree and Citation, 1974

Series X
Box 40: Videocassettes, DVDs, Film, and Audiocassette
1. A. Alfred Taubman: Lifetime Achievement Award Presentation, Includes Interview of Judge Keith, 2005, DVD-video.
7. City Highlights: Interviews of Attendees at the Keith Soul Luncheon, n.d.
20. Hofstra University: Dedication of the Bill of Rights plaza. 1989
30. Life and Times of a Judge and His Jazz, n.d.
34. Pope Visit, Damon J. Keith, 1987, Beta videocassette.

Box 41: Videocassettes, Audiostream, Reel to Reel Tapes, Photographs, and Physical Objects
Includes photographs of Judge Keith and his spouse, Dr. Rachel Boone Keith, their family, friends, and colleagues in professional and casual settings, circa 1938 - circa 2007 (bulk 1960s-1990s).
Videocassettes, Audiocassette, and Reel to Reel Tapes:
3. Thanksgiving: Mayor’s, 1989.
4. Town Crier, n.d.
5. Tribute to Judge Nathaniel Jones, 1996.

Physical Objects:
1. Cotillion Club; pendant, n.d.
2. Hart Campaign; lapel pin, n.d.
5. NAACP Million Dollar Club Award; medallion on ribbon, 1985.
6. NAACP Life Member; lapel pin, n.d.
7. National Bar Association, Hall of Fame Member; medallion on ribbon, n.d.
8. Swainson Campaign; button, n.d.
9. Swainson Campaign; lapel pin, n.d.
10. Wayne State University Award Honoring Distinguished Leadership in Founding The Damon J. Keith Law Collection; pewter plate, 1999.
11. Wayne University, Detroit Metropolitan Relays; medal, 1938.