

# WALTER P. REUTHER LIBRARY

## ARCHIVES OF LABOR AND URBAN AFFAIRS

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# NEWSLETTER 2021



DR. PHIL MASON

IN MEMORIAM

MERRILL PALMER  
SKILLMAN  
INSTITUTE

CENTENNIAL EXHIBIT

NOW OPEN

NEW COLLECTIONS  
NOW AVAILABLE



WAYNE STATE

Walter P. Reuther Library, Archives  
of Labor and Urban Affairs

## NEW COLLECTIONS: DETROIT SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

### MARKETING DEPARTMENT RECORDS

This set of public-facing material includes brochures, fliers, inserts, pocket calendars, and postcards detailing the DSO's performances and other functions.

### GUEST CONDUCTORS

This collection contains biographical information, press material (releases and clippings), photos, and correspondence relating to DSO guest conductors from 1940-2009.

### FELIX AND FAYE ANN RESNIK PAPERS

Felix Resnik was a violinist with the DSO from 1942-2008. This collection offers an overview of the volunteer organizations that fundraised and hosted events on behalf of the orchestra.

### PROGRAM RECORDS

This collection contains DSO programs and schedules ranging from 1907-2013.

# DIRECTOR'S NOTE

## FROM ALIQAÉ GERACI

I am so pleased and proud to introduce the 2021 issue of the Walter P. Reuther Library newsletter. Reuther Library staff are concluding a year of limited on-site operations due to the COVID-19 pandemic, after spending much of the past year adapting and redesigning our archival processes and procedures to accommodate university affiliates according to strict safety protocols, and doing our very best to connect so many of you

with our collections remotely. Now, we are excitedly preparing for a broader reopening to coincide with the Wayne State University fall semester. We can't wait to welcome you back to our Reading Room and exhibit spaces, and we are eager to reconnect with our vast community of researchers, donors, and partner organizations across Detroit, the U.S., and internationally.



# TAYLOR HENNING

NEW UNIVERSITY ARCHIVIST JOINS  
REUTHER STAFF

The Reuther Library welcomes Taylor Henning to its staff as the university archivist. Taylor comes to us from the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, where she held the position of research specialist in the University Archives and in Records and Information Management Services. She holds a Master of Science in Library and Information Science and an M.A. in German Studies.

Taylor is enthusiastic about joining the Reuther “because it’s a one-of-a-kind repository for primary source materials documenting the history of the labor movement, Detroit, and Wayne State. More than that, the values of the Reuther closely align with my own values as an archivist. I am passionate about making archives accessible to all, providing equitable service, engaging with the community, and embracing diversity, and I am thrilled to work in an archives that shares these values and strives to make them a reality.”

Once Taylor arrives at the Reuther, she looks forward to learning more about the history of Wayne State and the university’s archives. Her initial priorities include surveying the unprocessed collections and creating a new records management plan for the university. Regarding her relocation to Detroit, Taylor says, “I couldn’t be more excited to live and work in a place with such a rich culture and strong sense of community.”



## NOW OPEN: JUDGE AVERN COHN PAPERS



Judge Avern Cohn heard cases on tax law, civil rights, and school desegregation during his time on the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Michigan, where he served from 1979-2019. Notable decisions include *John Doe v. University of Michigan*, which ruled the university’s speech code unconstitutional, and *Bradley v. Milliken*, regarding school desegregation. The papers include Cohn’s research materials and writings.

Cohn’s papers include correspondence with leaders in law, politics, and the community. They also reflect leadership in the Jewish community of Detroit, notably as president of the Jewish Welfare Federation. Cohn and his staff created scrapbooks providing an overview of his work, which are available in the collection.

# DR. PHILIP P. MASON

1927-2021



Dr. Philip Parker Mason has passed away at age 94. Starting in 1958, his contributions to the larger archival profession and as a historian reflect a depth and variety that is not often found in the academic community. Many of Mason's accomplishments are outlined in an oral history that is now available for research.

Born in Salem, Massachusetts, in 1927, Mason served in WWII before pursuing bachelor's, master's, and doctorate degrees in history at Boston University (1950) and the University of Michigan (1951 and 1956). While still pursuing his doctorate, he became archivist for the State of Michigan. Thereafter, he was appointed the position of director of the University Archives at Wayne State University with a joint appointment in the Department of History. He retired as director of the Reuther Library and as a distinguished professor of history in 1992 but continued to teach at Wayne State until 2007.

Soon after arriving at Wayne State University, Mason developed relationships with leaders of organized labor, which led to Wayne State

becoming home to the records of the United Auto Workers, the United Farm Workers, and Industrial Workers of the World, among many others. The addition of archival collections associated with the historical development of Detroit followed, including the records of the Detroit Branch of the NAACP and the papers of Rosa Parks, to name a few. These early successes put Dr. Mason in a position to seek funding from the UAW to construct the Walter P. Reuther Library building in 1975, and the Woodcock Wing in 1992.



Dr. Mason, right, shows archival material to United Farm Workers President Cesar Chavez, 1968.

Among his many achievements, Mason established one of the first archival education programs in the United States at Wayne State. Three of his former students went on to become SAA fellows and two of those served as SAA president. Scores of others earned archival positions throughout the United States and Canada.

His vast publication record focused on Michigan history, including the Civil War, copper mining, Harper Hospital, and Prohibition. He published often through Wayne State University Press' Great Lakes Book Series, where he was a founding editor. He also contributed numerous oral histories to the Reuther Library and other organizations.

In service to the archival profession, he founded the Michigan Archives Conference, and the Oral History Association as well as the Michigan In Perspective: Local History Conference and North American Labor History Conference. Most significantly, he served as President of the Society of American Archivists and was named a Fellow, the Association's highest honor. He also chaired SAA's Committee of the Seventies, which significantly transformed the organization.

Following retirement, Mason and his wife Marcia Heringa Mason worked on historical projects including founding the Eagle River Museum in Michigan. Before his passing on May 6, 2021, he divided time between Eagle Harbor, MI, the Detroit Metropolitan area, and Arizona.

### **An oral history detailing Dr. Mason's life and career is now available.**

Conducted in 2019, this new interview explores his early employment as an archivist and historian, development of the Wayne State University Archives and archival education program, and origins of some of our most used archival collections.

We hope his experiences and insight will continue to serve the archival profession through this important oral history.





# 100 YEARS AT THE MERRILL PALMER SKILLMAN INSTITUTE

The Reuther is pleased to host a new exhibit detailing the Merrill Palmer Skillman Institute's 100 years of service to children and families.

Exhibit panels explore the Institute's founders and early days building a scientific program to study early childhood development and daily family life. One of the first programs was the Child Care Center, which admitted children aged 2 to 5. Faculty minded the children during the day, but also observed their behavior and crafted studies about what they learned.

MPSI activities also included training for mothers, nutrition studies, and opportunities for students and faculty to engage in the scientific study of childrearing and homemaking.

Further exhibit panels explore matters of culture and race at the Institute, as well as MPSI's move to become a part of Wayne State University in 1981. Wayne State graduate students explored the Reuther's Merrill Palmer Skillman Institute collections to develop and write the exhibit. From administrative correspondence about funding the school to faculty data on behaviors or photographs of recreational activities, the team carefully developed text and visuals to show the complexities of such an influential institution in Detroit.

The exhibit will be on view in the Reuther's atrium and Woodcock gallery until spring 2022. For more information on building access, visit [reuther.wayne.edu](http://reuther.wayne.edu).



"The most essential of employments [motherhood] remains the most neglected by science, a neglect long hidden behind tradition and sentimentality."

-Julia Lathrop

# NOW OPEN

Bringing new archival collections to the public

## NAACP Detroit Branch Photographs

Since its inception in 1912, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) Detroit Branch has remained one of the largest and one of the most influential arms of the national organization. Powered by a dedicated member base, it has proved successful in challenging and changing laws and local practices, such as restrictive covenants and segregation in schools, businesses, and workplaces.

The NAACP Detroit Branch Photographs document the activities of the organization and its members throughout the mid-century through its annual Fight for Freedom Fund Dinner, membership drives, committee activities, and public demonstrations, and chronicles longstanding support from entertainers, politicians, labor leaders, and activists, including Sammy Davis, Jr., Dick Gregory, Nat King Cole, Walter Reuther, and Coleman Young.

Visit our web galleries to view select images.

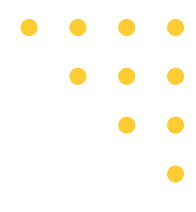


## AFSCME Local 771 Wayne County, Michigan Library Employees Records

The Wayne County, Michigan Library System, established in 1920, built branches across then far-flung rural areas of the county. Librarians in the system organized as AFSCME Local 771 in 1943 and operated out of a building at 3661 Trumbull in Detroit until 1964, when they disbanded. The county library system itself disbanded in 2015 as county library locations closed or converted to municipal libraries.

The records include correspondence, reports, meeting minutes, constitutions, articles, and photographs. Topics include committee work, the Wayne County Civil Service Commission, AFL, AFSCME International, and Council 77.

Local 771 presidents in the collection include Anne Farrington, Zona Williams, Kathryn (Wagner) Sadler, and Isabella Swan.



# WALTER P. REUTHER DIGITAL ARCHIVE

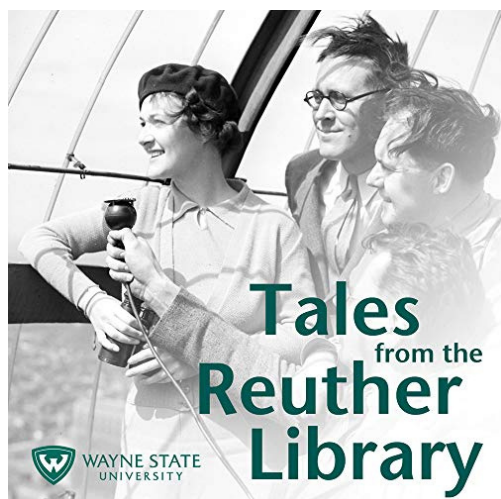
The Reuther is excited to partner with the Walter and May Reuther Memorial Foundation for the Walter P. Reuther Digital Archive Project. With two grants from the foundation of \$35,000 and \$56,000, this online resource will provide a fresh and extensive look at the life and work of labor icon Walter Reuther. The three-year digital initiative centers on digitizing the personal archives of the longtime President of the United Auto Workers, followed by building a dynamic web platform to make the historical records accessible online.

The Walter P. Reuther Digital Archive offers an opportunity to introduce Walter Reuther to new audiences, illustrating his impact within civil rights, labor, and political history as well as the development of the U.S. automotive industry. Once completed, the site will allow users to explore the papers of “America’s labor statesman” through personal notes, historic images, and numerous publications, as well as sound and video from the UAW’s multimedia collections. Archivists are digitizing these one-of-a-kind items so that they may be turned into an accessible web resource for students, historians, and anyone else looking to learn more about Walter Reuther’s legacy.

"This project will put important historical information at the fingertips of the public, near and far, in an interactive way."

- Ruthann Hande, Walter and May Reuther Memorial Fund trustee





The microphones were abuzz this year on *Tales From the Reuther Library*.

The podcast interviewed several authors whose recently published books used archival sources from the Reuther (see page 13). Additionally, director Aliqae Geraci contemplated her first year at the Reuther and first year in a pandemic. Society of Women Engineers archivist Troy Eller English shared the tragicomic story of Lucille Pieti, a 1950 Wayne University engineering graduate turned reluctant Chrysler booth babe. Sean Henry explored the racial pragmatism of the postwar Detroit Interracial Committee.

Salaina Catalano Crumb recounted how American fascism developed and thrived in Michigan from the 1920s through the 1940s. Timothy Minchin examined how the SEIU thrived in the late 20th century when other unions did not. Clay Walker explored how César Chávez's early life prepared him to lead the UFW. Edward McClelland discussed his book *Midnight in Vehicle City: General Motors, Flint, and the Strike That Created the Middle Class*, and contemplated what today's labor movement can learn from workingmen's fight for shared prosperity during the successful 1937 Flint Sit-Down. And Sharon Woodcock shared stories from former UAW president Leonard Woodcock's time as the first U.S. ambassador to the People's Republic of China.

We've got more wonderful interviews lined up for the coming year. Subscribe to *Tales from the Reuther Library* in your favorite podcast app or listen at [reuther.wayne.edu/podcasts](http://reuther.wayne.edu/podcasts).

## TO OUR DONORS:

Reuther Library's network of donors are essential for building collections, advancing strategic initiatives, and facilitating the long-term sustainability of the Archives for generations to come. Donor contributions fund increased access to our distinctive collections through archival description and digitization, digital reformatting and preservation of photographs, audio, and film, investment in hardware and software essential for modern archival operations, and outreach to the communities we document and serve.

Your gifts and suggestions are appreciated and welcome, and we are happy to meet with you to share opportunities in greater detail. Please visit [giving.wayne.edu/donate/reuther](http://giving.wayne.edu/donate/reuther) to donate, or contact director Aliqae Geraci ([aliquae.geraci@wayne.edu](mailto:aliquae.geraci@wayne.edu)) to discuss your project ideas and giving priorities.

## GRADUATE STUDENTS GAIN EXPERIENCE AND DOCUMENT A PANDEMIC

This year, graduate students in the Wayne State School of Information Science's Archival Administration program gained real-world experience while working with Reuther archivists Louis Jones and Troy Eller English to document the community's COVID-19 pandemic experience.

For their fall 2020 archives practicum, Robin Pierce and Sara Law conducted oral history interviews with people in Michigan and in the southern and southeastern United States to learn how the pandemic affected their ability to work.

To make the interviews more accessible, this spring, Robert Browning, Amber Harrison, Kendra Moyer, and Andrew Wilhelme created and edited transcripts of the interviews for an Alternative Spring Break project.

The interviews and transcripts are part of the Reuther Library's growing Community Archive: COVID-19 Experiences Collection.

# STUDENT PROJECTS

## SUPPORTING NEW ARCHIVISTS

Archives students at Wayne State's School of Information Sciences often work with us through the graduate student assistant (GSA) program. GSAs have a chance to take on archives projects, and some choose to help "process" material or prepare it for researchers' use. This year, Brian Schamber processed the John J. Sweeney Papers, Jordan Rossen Papers, and the NOW Metropolitan Detroit Chapter Records.

John Sweeney served as president of the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) from 1980 to 1995 and president of the AFL-CIO from 1995-2009. The collection focuses specifically on the 1995 New Voices Campaign and gives an inside look at how union leaders coordinated their efforts.



The Rossen Papers document the work of a long-time UAW lawyer and Democrat. During his tenure, the UAW legal team led a number of landmark cases in unemployment law, particularly with pregnancy cases. Rossen was also active in the Democratic Party of Michigan and the Young Democrats group from the 1960s.

NOW Metropolitan Detroit Chapter Records contains the organization's public-facing material such as pins, flyers, and particularly their newsletter ranging from 1970-2007.

Lee Allen processed the Cal Patterson Papers, a collection of records from a Detroit businessman and author. The papers offer an inside look at Patterson's work at Michigan Bell and community volunteer work with Grace Hospital and other groups. In addition, the papers include information on Patterson's family life, military service, and student travels.

Both students worked with Reuther staff to find projects that would meet their interests and desired skills. Thank you for your work and the long-term benefit you have given researchers!

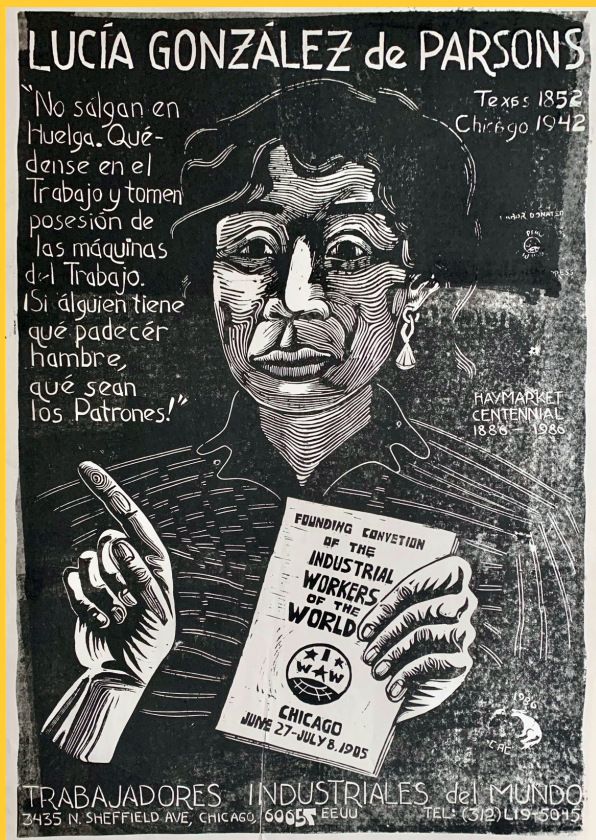
# NOW OPEN

## Recently Published Collections

**THE MICHAEL KERWIN PAPERS** document the work of this long-time UAW staff member and political activist. Kerwin joined UAW Local 174 in 1950 where he became editor of the local's "Union Voice" newsletter and, soon after, joined the UAW's Education Department. His work includes activism for Detroit schools, service as local precinct captain, delegate to the Democratic National Convention, and, in December 2020, as an elector for the State of Michigan. He passed in July, 2021.



The first two series of the collection, covering the 1930s-1950s, are now available. They contain political involvement and election material, as well as extensive records related to the UAW Education Department. Additional series will become available as they are processed.



### IWW PHOTOGRAPHS AND EPHEMERA

The Industrial Workers of the World formed in 1905 and notably organized women, immigrants, and people of color in both union leadership and membership across all industries.

This collection includes material on the Centralia Conspiracy; the Everett Massacre; organization of farm workers; labor conditions; government raids and seizures; deportations; member trials; political prisoners; and various strikes and actions from the 1910s-1990s, including the Lawrence Strike, 1912; the Patterson Strike, 1913; the Harlan, Kentucky mine wars; and the Colorado Coal Strike, 1928. The collection also includes photos of IWW leaders such as William "Big Bill" Haywood, Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, Carlos Tresca, Matilda Rabinowitz Robbins, Mother Jones, Ben Fletcher, Frank Little, Eugene Debs, and Joe Hill.

# REFORMATTING THE FUTURE

## AUDIO VISUAL COLLECTIONS RECEIVE SPECIAL ATTENTION

Audio and moving image collections pose special challenges for archivists, particularly recordings like magnetic tape. Reel-to-reel or cassette tapes and moving image carriers, such as U-matic, Betamax, and VHS cassettes, are all examples of magnetic tape formats, and each present preservation and access concerns. Magnetic tape has a short lifespan of about 10-30 years before decay will render the tapes unreadable. These formats also require vintage playback technology, which is difficult to locate and maintain. The Reuther is home to thousands of such tapes, and like many other archives, we are in a race against time to capture their information before it becomes unsalvageable.



This past winter, the Reuther Library worked with a local vendor to digitize over 200 original audio recordings in two of our most significant urban-related collections: the Kenneth V. and Sheila M. Cockrel Papers and the James and Grace Lee Boggs Photographs and Audiovisual Materials. These collections were selected based on their extraordinary research value and existing preservation concerns.

The recordings include speeches, lectures delivered or attended, interviews, and the proceedings of events and meetings. Both collections speak to the political and philosophical beliefs of their creators and offer an extraordinary roster of speakers, including Stokely Carmichael (Kwame Ture), Rev. Albert Cleage (Jaramogi Abebe Agyeman), Angela Davis, Milton Henry (Gaidi Abiodun Obadale), C.L.R. James, Mel Ravitz, Robert Williams, and Malcom X. Of particular significance are recordings documenting the activities of the Freedom Now Party, the Grassroots Leadership Conference, and the development of the Detroit Alliance for a Rational Economy (D.A.R.E.).

Through another project, the Reuther digitized pieces of the WWJ/WDIV Film and Video Collection, a 335-linear-foot collection of film and magnetic tape from our local NBC affiliate, WDIV, and its predecessor, WWJ, that spans the 1920s through the 2000s. A small grouping of 1-inch open reel tapes were transferred based on content and carrier obsolescence, as this type of tape was used primarily by broadcasters and few machines able to play them exist today. (Continued)

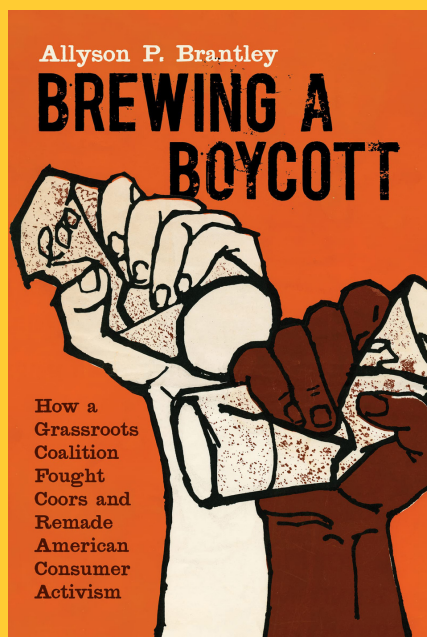


The material includes footage and programs on Detroit's spaces, personalities, and historical events. Topics include the 1967 Rebellion, the New Bethel Incident, scenes from around the city from the 1940s-1960s, local influences such as Aretha Franklin, Malice Green, and Mayor Coleman Young, and footage from prominent visitors such as Nelson Mandela, and John F. Kennedy. This project was made possible through the generosity and support of WDIV and Zero Point Zero Production.

For information about how to access these recordings or questions about these or any of our audiovisual collections, please contact reutherav@wayne.edu.

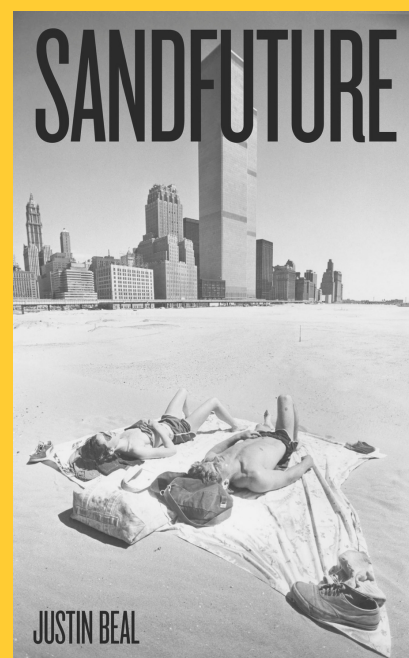
## RECENT PUBLICATIONS

Looking for your next read? Check out these recently published books featuring research conducted at the Reuther.



- *Bootlegged Aliens: Immigration Politics on America's Northern Border* by Ashley Johnson Bavery (Immigration and Ethnic History Society First Book Award winner)
- *The Girl Who Dared to Defy: Jane Street and the Rebel Maids of Denver* by Jane Little Botkin
- *Brewing a Boycott: How a Grassroots Coalition Fought Coors and Remade American Consumer Activism* by Allyson P. Brantley
- *The Long Deep Grudge: A Story of Big Capital, Radical Labor, and Class War in the American Heartland* by Toni Gilpin (International Labor History Association 2020 Book of the Year)
- *Blaming Teachers: Professionalization Policies and the Failure of Reform in American History* by Diana D'Amico Pawlewicz (Society of Professors of Education 2021 Outstanding Book Award winner)

- *Sandfuture* by Justin Beal
- *Communists and Community: Activism in Detroit's Labor Movement, 1941-1956* by Ryan S. Pettengill
- *Akron's Daily Miracle: Reporting the News in the Rubber City* by Stuart Warner and Deb Van Tassel Warner



# FILMS AND SERIES



## *No Sudden Move*

1950s Detroit came alive in Steven Soderbergh's latest film. The AV department consulted during pre-production with period-specific imagery, oral histories, and film clips for historical context. Images from the UAW Photographs appear in the opening credits.

## *Blood Brothers: Nation of Islam*

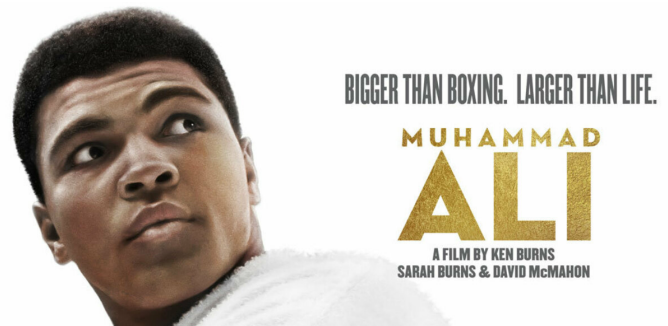
Photographs from the Detroit News Collection appear in A+E Studios' eight-episode limited series based on the praised 2016 non-fiction book *Blood Brothers: The Fatal Friendship Between Muhammed Ali and Malcolm X* by historians Johnny Smith and Randy Roberts.

## *Bending the Arc Towards Justice*

We were thrilled to contribute to this four-part documentary mini-series exploring the history of race in Alabama. Episode one, focused on events surrounding the Selma-Montgomery marches, features images of the slain civil rights activist Viola Liuzzo taken from the Reuther's Viola Liuzzo Photographs.

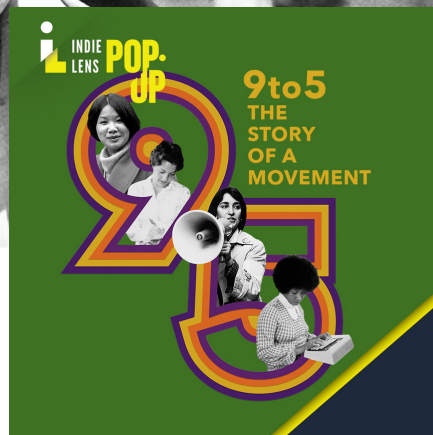
## *Muhammad Ali*

Ken Burns's latest project focuses on three-time heavyweight boxing champion Muhammad Ali, whose exceptional skill and electric personality made him a legend. The film features photographs from the Detroit News Collection. The project will air in September 2021.



## *The Kings*

The Reuther provided nearly two dozen still images and extensive research for Showtime's *The Kings*, a four-part series examining four boxers who ushered in a "boxing renaissance" in the 1970s to 1980s. Watch for the episode on Detroit's pride and joy, 5-time world champion Tommy Hearns.



## EVENTS

### **9to5: The Story of a Movement Screening**

In January, the Reuther partnered with Independent Lens, WKAR Public Media, and the WorkLife Office at Michigan State University to host an online viewing of *9to5: The Story of a Movement*. The documentary, based in part on research done in the Reuther's SEIU collections, details the real-life clerical workers' organizing drive that inspired a fictional adaptation starring Dolly Parton, Jane Fonda, and Lily Tomlin.

After the screening, participants heard from panelists including Kim Cook, an organizer in the documentary, as well as scholars Lane Wyndham and Amanda Walter.

### **Trivia**

In summer 2020, Reuther staff hosted public trivia games, including traditional questions about Detroit notables and labor history as well as picture and video rounds.

Staff shared online trivia skills with the community by jointly hosting an evening with Detroit Democratic Socialists and supporting a labor history trivia event with the Historical Society of Forest Park in Illinois. Thanks to all who joined us online to learn and compete!

## ONLINE EXHIBITS SHOWCASE REUTHER MATERIAL

Each year, archives from the Reuther support online exhibits and education projects across the country.

### American Social History Project: Who Built America?

Intended for classroom use and general audiences, these multimedia resources are designed to reshape the way U.S. history is taught and learned.

### Zinn Education Project: Judge Crockett

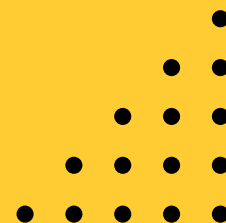
This resource highlights Judge Crockett's efforts to apply justice equally in 1969 Detroit during the New Bethel Incident.

### California Museum

Images used for a short historical film on UFW's Larry Itliong.

### National Parks Service National Historic Landmarks Program: Civil Rights & Housing Discrimination

A study aimed at helping identify important sites for preservation.



# OUR STAFF

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Jon E. Cawthorne, dean of libraries  
Aliqae Geraci, director  
Molly Banes, AV asset production and licensing technician  
Bart Bealmear, ALPA archivist  
Stefanie Caloia, AFSCME archivist  
Brandon Carter, facilities coordinator  
Beck Caterina, digitization technician  
Kristen Chinery, reference archivist  
Elizabeth Clemens, audiovisual archivist  
Meghan Courtney, outreach archivist  
Troy Eller English, SWE archivist  
Aimee Ergas, collections archivist  
Dan Golodner, AFT archivist  
Taylor Henning, university archivist  
Louis Jones, field archivist  
Sarah Lebovitz, SEIU archivist  
Paul Neirink, digital resource archivist  
Timothy Parker, digitization and access services technician  
Dallas Pillen, technical services archivist  
Shae Rafferty, ALUA archivist  
Gavin Strassel, UAW archivist  
Mary Wallace, audiovisual archivist