

Ramon S. Scruggs, Sr. Papers
12 linear feet (19 MB, 2 OS, 1 film reel)
1935-1985, bulk 1960-1974

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

Finding aid written by Gavin Strassel on July 11, 2014.

Accession Number: UP002428

Creator: Ramon S. Scruggs, Sr.

Acquisition: The collection was donated by Marie Scruggs Inniss on May 23, 2014.

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: "Ramon S. Scruggs, Sr. Papers, Box [#], Folder [#], Walter P. Reuther Library, Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs, Wayne State University"

Related Material: A video reel was transferred to the Reuther Library's audiovisual department.

Originals of the following items have been moved to the vault and photocopies left in corresponding boxes: Letters from Richard M. Nixon (Boxes 1 and 8), Nelson A. Rockefeller (Box 2), and Hubert H. Humphrey (Box 8).

Originals of items specified by the donor were returned to them and photocopies left in the corresponding box.

Abstract

Best known as the first African-American member of management at both Michigan Bell Telephone Company and AT&T, Ramon S. Scruggs, Sr. served as an influential civil rights figure in the American business community. Scruggs' career began at the Rumford Baking Company as a National Sales Representative in 1932, the first African-American to hold such a prominent position in the food industry. He left the company to join the Detroit Urban League and local YMCA branch, starting a relationship with community organizations, which he maintained even after his return to the business world. 1939 saw Scruggs become the first African-American white-collar employee at Michigan Bell, and he continued to integrate higher levels of management at the telephone company. In the following years, Scruggs' pioneering successes brought him national attention and he traveled the country speaking on behalf of African-American professionals. He also became involved politically, campaigning for and meeting with figures such as Richard Nixon and Hubert H. Humphrey. By 1963, Scruggs had been promoted to AT&T's headquarters staff where he led projects regarding race and business practices from a national platform until his retirement ten years later. Scruggs' community work included serving on the Board of Trustees at Fisk University, the NAACP Special Contribution Fund, and the Children's Hospital of Michigan.

Scruggs grew up in Nashville and stayed in Tennessee to attend college at Fisk University. After retiring he moved to Los Angeles. In 1984, he was slain there during a home invasion. Through the example of his business acumen and advocating spirit, Scruggs is credited for opening up numerous managerial-level opportunities to African-Americans in corporate America.

The Ramon S. Scruggs Papers are comprised of materials relating to Scruggs' social advocacy and business dealings. The largest section of the collection belongs to the Correspondence series, which contains official and personal messages related to his numerous daily activities. The Political and Social Activism series encompasses materials from the social causes he participated in, such as transcripts of the numerous speeches he gave around the country in the 1960s. Records related to his various employers, the Professional Affiliations series includes publications on racial issues he helped create for Michigan Bell and AT&T. Finally, the Audiovisual and Oversize series mostly contains photographs of special events attended by Scruggs, notably a testimonial luncheon held in his honor in 1963.

Important Subjects:

Affirmative action programs--United States
African American businesspeople
Civil rights
Civil rights movements
Corporations--Public relations
Public relations

Important Names:

Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity
AT&T
Bell Telephone Company

Bishop College
Central Michigan University
Children's Hospital of Michigan
Cobo, Albert E. (Albert Eugene), 1893-1957
Dancy, John C. (John Campbell), 1888-1968
Detroit (Mich.)
Detroit Urban League
Fisk University
Fisk University. 1932 Class
Humphrey, Hubert H. (Hubert Horatio), 1911-1978
McCree, Wade H. (Wade Hampton), 1920-1987
Michigan Bell Telephone Company
Miriani, Louis C.
National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. Detroit Branch
National Board of the Young men's Christian Associations
National Urban League
Nixon, Richard M. (Richard Milhous), 1913-1994
Romney, George W., 1907-1995
Young Men's Christian Association (Detroit, Mich.)

Series 1: Correspondence, 1935-1977 (Boxes 1-11)

The series contains mostly incoming and some outgoing messages from Scruggs' daily business and humanitarian activities.

Series 2: Political and Social Activism, 1950-1985 (Boxes 11-16)

The series includes materials from the social causes Scruggs participated in, notably the Detroit Urban League and NAACP. Transcripts of speeches given by Scruggs in the 1960s comprise the bulk of the series.

Series 3: Professional Affiliations, 1939-1974 (Boxes 16-18)

The series contains records related to Scruggs' work at the Michigan Bell Telephone Company, AT&T, and the Rumford Baking Company.

Series 4: Audiovisual and Oversize Materials, 1940-1973 (Boxes 19-22)

The series mostly contains photographs of special events and meetings attended by Scruggs, notably a testimonial luncheon held in his honor in 1963.

Arrangement

The collection is arranged into 4 series.

Series 1: Correspondence, 1935-1977 (Boxes 1-11)

The series is arranged chronologically.

Series 2: Political and Social Activism, 1950-1985 (Boxes 11-16)

The series is arranged by subject or record type, beginning with social organizations, followed by awards and honors, speeches and speaking engagements, and news clippings. Chronological order is loosely followed for the secondary arrangement.

Series 3: Professional Affiliations, 1939-1974 (Boxes 16-18)

The series is arranged by either subject or record type, beginning with organizational records of Scruggs' employers, followed by materials from his testimonial luncheon and retirement ceremony, publications produced by Bell Telephone Company, and news articles about his employment. Chronological order is loosely followed for the secondary arrangement.

Series 4: Audiovisual and Oversize Materials, 1940-1973 (Boxes 19-22)

The series is arranged by record type, photographs and oversize materials, with a secondary arrangement of grouping materials chronologically. Oversize items are arranged by size in their box.

Series 1

Box 1

- 1 Fisk University and Rumford Baking Company, correspondence, 1935 (1 of 2)
- 2 Fisk University and Rumford Baking Company, correspondence, 1935 (2 of 2)
- 3 Early years at Michigan Bell, correspondence and news clippings, 1939-1950s
- 4 W.A. Cardinal, correspondence, 1939-1960s
- 5 Correspondence, 1930s
- 6 Political involvement, correspondence and new clippings, 1940-1962 **Letter from Richard M. Nixon moved to vault**
- 7 Correspondence, 1940s
- 8 Letters of congratulations, 1940-1957 (1 of 3)
- 9 Letters of congratulations, 1940-1957 (2 of 3)
- 10 Letters of congratulations, 1940-1957 (3 of 3)
- 11 Correspondence, 1950-1953
- 12 Louis C. Miriani, correspondence, 1953-1954
- 13 Albert E. Cobo, correspondence, 1954-1955
- 14 Correspondence, 1954-1955
- 15 Correspondence, 1956-1958
- 16 Correspondence, 1959
- 17 Letters of thanks to Scruggs, correspondence, 1950s-1960s
- 18 Correspondence, and notes on Detroit, 1950s-1960s

Box 2

- 1 General race issues, correspondence and news clippings, 1950s-1970s
- 2 Urban League, correspondence, 1950s-1070s (1 of 2)
- 3 Urban League, correspondence, 1950s-1070s (2 of 2)
- 4 Special events and meetings, correspondence and memos, 1950s-1970s
- 5 Correspondence, 1960-1961
- 6 Correspondence, 1961-1962
- 7 Correspondence, 1962 **Letter from Nelson A. Rockefeller moved to vault**
- 8 Letters of congratulation scrapbook, 1962 (1 of 3)
- 9 Letters of congratulation scrapbook, 1962 (2 of 3)
- 10 Letters of congratulation scrapbook, 1962 (3 of 3)
- 11 Correspondence, 1963 (1 of 2)
- 12 Correspondence, 1963 (2 of 2)
- 13 Letters of congratulations for AT&T promotion, 1963

Box 3

- 1 Letters of congratulation for AT&T promotion scrapbook, 1963 (1 of 2)
- 2 Letters of congratulation for AT&T promotion scrapbook, 1963 (2 of 2)
- 3 Correspondence binder, 1963-1964 (1 of 5)
- 4 Correspondence binder, 1963-1964 (2 of 5)
- 5 Correspondence binder, 1963-1964 (3 of 5)
- 6 Correspondence binder, 1963-1964 (4 of 5)
- 7 Correspondence binder, 1963-1964 (5 of 5)
- 8 Correspondence, 1964
- 9 Correspondence, 1964 (1 of 5)
- 10 Correspondence, 1964 (2 of 5)
- 11 Correspondence, 1964 (3 of 5)

Box 4

- 1 Correspondence, 1964 (4 of 5)

- 2 Correspondence, 1964 (5 of 5)
- 3 Correspondence binder, 1964 (1 of 2)
- 4 Correspondence binder, 1964 (2 of 2)
- 5 Special events, correspondence, 1964-1972
- 6 Ronald S. Callvert, correspondence, 1964
- 7 Ronald S. Callvert, correspondence, 1964-1969 (1 of 10)
- 8 Ronald S. Callvert, correspondence, 1964-1969 (2 of 10)
- 9 Ronald S. Callvert, correspondence, 1964-1969 (3 of 10)

Box 5

- 1 Ronald S. Callvert, correspondence, 1964-1969 (4 of 10)
- 2 Ronald S. Callvert, correspondence, 1964-1969 (5 of 10)
- 3 Ronald S. Callvert, correspondence, 1964-1969 (6 of 10)
- 4 Ronald S. Callvert, correspondence, 1964-1969 (7 of 10)
- 5 Ronald S. Callvert, correspondence, 1964-1969 (8 of 10)
- 6 Ronald S. Callvert, correspondence, 1964-1969 (9 of 10)
- 7 Ronald S. Callvert, correspondence, 1964-1969 (10 of 10)
- 8 Speaking engagements, correspondence, 1964-1972
- 9 Correspondence, 1965 (1 of 3)

Box 6

- 1 Correspondence, 1965 (2 of 3)
- 2 Correspondence, 1965 (3 of 3)
- 3 Correspondence, 1965
- 4 Correspondence binder, 1965 (1 of 2)
- 5 Correspondence binder, 1965 (2 of 2)
- 6 Memos to McDuffy, correspondence, 1965
- 7 Correspondence binder, 1965 (1 of 3)
- 8 Correspondence binder, 1965 (2 of 3)
- 9 Correspondence binder, 1965 (3 of 3)
- 10 Correspondence, 1966 (1 of 2)
- 11 Correspondence, 1966 (2 of 2)
- 12 Correspondence, 1966

Box 7

- 1 Correspondence binder, 1966 (1 of 2)
- 2 Correspondence binder, 1966 (2 of 2)
- 3 Embassy inspection team, correspondence, 1966
- 4 Correspondence, 1967 (1 of 4)
- 5 Correspondence, 1967 (2 of 4)
- 6 Correspondence, 1967 (3 of 4)
- 7 Correspondence, 1967 (4 of 4)
- 8 Correspondence binder, 1967 (1 of 3)
- 9 Correspondence binder, 1967 (2 of 3)
- 10 Correspondence binder, 1967 (3 of 3)
- 11 Correspondence, 1967

Box 8

- 1 Bell Telephone, correspondence, 1968 (1 of 4)
- 2 Bell Telephone, correspondence, 1968 (2 of 4)
- 3 Bell Telephone, correspondence, 1968 (3 of 4)

- 4 Bell Telephone, correspondence, 1968 (4 of 4)
- 5 Correspondence, 1968 **Letter from Richard M. Nixon moved to vault**
- 6 Book materials, correspondence, 1968
- 7 Letter from Hubert H. Humphrey, 1968 March **Letter from Hubert H. Humphrey moved to vault**
- 8 Christmas card list, 1968 (1 of 2)
- 9 Christmas card list, 1968 (2 of 2)
- 10 Speaking engagements, correspondence, 1968-1972 (1 of 3)
- 11 Speaking engagements, correspondence, 1968-1972 (2 of 3)
- 12 Speaking engagements, correspondence, 1968-1972 (3 of 3)
- 13 Correspondence, 1969

Box 9

- 1 Correspondence binder, 1969
- 2 Correspondence, 1969
- 3 Alpha Phi Alpha, correspondence, 1960s
- 4 Charles C. Diggs, correspondence, 1960s
- 5 Speaking engagements, correspondence, 1960s (1 of 3)
- 6 Speaking engagements, correspondence, 1960s (2 of 3)
- 7 Speaking engagements, correspondence, 1960s (3 of 3)
- 8 NAACP, correspondence, 1960s
- 9 Articles written by Scruggs, clippings and correspondence, 1960s
- 10 Speaking engagements for Urban League and Bell Telephone, correspondence, 1960s-1970s
- 11 George Romney, correspondence, 1960s-1970s
- 12 Fisk University, correspondence, 1960s-1970s
- 13 Correspondence, 1970

Box 10

- 1 Correspondence, 1971
- 2 Correspondence binder, 1971-1972 (1 of 3)
- 3 Correspondence binder, 1971-1972 (2 of 3)
- 4 Correspondence binder, 1971-1972 (3 of 3)
- 5 Correspondence, 1972 (1 of 2)
- 6 Correspondence, 1972 (2 of 2)
- 7 Correspondence, 1973 (1 of 2)
- 8 Correspondence, 1973 (2 of 2)
- 9 Correspondence binder, 1973

Box 11

- 1 Correspondence, 1974-1977
- 2 Correspondence, 1970s
- 3 Correspondence, undated

Series 2

- 4 YMCA, 1939
- 5 Biographical data, 1942-1972
- 6 Autobiography materials, 1973
- 7 Alpha Phi Alpha fraternity, 1940s-1950s
- 8 Alpha Phi Alpha special events, 1950s
- 9 Alpha Phi Alpha publications, 1950s
- 10 Embassy inspector, Brussels, 1966
- 11 Public Relations Society of America, 1968
- 12 Congressional Black Caucus, 1970s

- 13 NAACP, 1970-1973 (1 of 2)
- 14 NAACP, 1970-1973 (2 of 2)
- 15 National Urban League, 1970s
- 16 Hampton Fund, 1970s
- 17 Fisk University events, programs, 1982
- 18 Detroit Urban League "Distinguished Warriors" event, 1985 February
- 19 Central Michigan University honorary degree scrapbook, 1965
- 20 Award certificates, 1966-1973
- 21 Award certificates, 1980

Box 12

- 1 Speeches A-F, 1964-1967 (1 of 5)
- 2 Speeches A-F, 1964-1967 (2 of 5)
- 3 Speeches A-F, 1964-1967 (3 of 5)
- 4 Speeches A-F, 1964-1967 (4 of 5)
- 5 Speeches A-F, 1964-1967 (5 of 5)
- 6 Speeches G-P, 1964-1967 (1 of 6)
- 7 Speeches G-P, 1964-1967 (2 of 6)
- 8 Speeches G-P, 1964-1967 (3 of 6)
- 9 Speeches G-P, 1964-1967 (4 of 6)

Box 13

- 1 Speeches G-P, 1964-1967 (5 of 6)
- 2 Speeches G-P, 1964-1967 (6 of 6)
- 3 Speeches Q-Z, 1964-1967 (1 of 5)
- 4 Speeches Q-Z, 1964-1967 (2 of 5)
- 5 Speeches Q-Z, 1964-1967 (3 of 5)
- 6 Speeches Q-Z, 1964-1967 (4 of 5)
- 7 Speeches Q-Z, 1964-1967 (5 of 5)
- 8 Speeches, 1968-1969 (1 of 12)
- 9 Speeches, 1968-1969 (2 of 12)
- 10 Speeches, 1968-1969 (3 of 12)

Box 14

- 1 Speeches, 1968-1969 (4 of 12)
- 2 Speeches, 1968-1969 (5 of 12)
- 3 Speeches, 1968-1969 (6 of 12)
- 4 Speeches, 1968-1969 (7 of 12)
- 5 Speeches, 1968-1969 (8 of 12)
- 6 Speeches, 1968-1969 (9 of 12)
- 7 Speeches, 1968-1969 (10 of 12)
- 8 Speeches, 1968-1969 (11 of 12)
- 9 Speeches, 1968-1969 (12 of 12)

Box 15

- 1 Speeches and speaking engagements, 1960s-1970s
- 2 Speeches, 1960s-1980s
- 3 Programs from speeches, 1969
- 4 "Black and White: A Personal Perspective" speech, 1972
- 5 Event programs, 1950s-1970s
- 6 Speaking engagement expenses, 1960s-1970s

- 7 Michigan events and news, 1950s-1960s
- 8 Magazine articles about Scruggs, 1947-1973
- 9 News clippings, 1940s
- 10 Political involvement, news clippings, 1940s-1962
- 11 News clippings, 1950s-1960s

Box 16

- 1 Articles about Scruggs, newspaper clippings, 1963-1973 (1 of 3)
- 2 Articles about Scruggs, newspaper clippings, 1963-1973 (2 of 3)
- 3 Articles about Scruggs, newspaper clippings, 1963-1973 (3 of 3)
- 4 Publications on race and business, newsletters and pamphlets, 1960s-1970s

Series 3

- 5 Rumford Baking Company, correspondence, 1939
- 6 Bell Systems materials, 1950s
- 7 Meeting of African-American section heads at Bell Telephone, 1972 September (1 of 3)
- 8 Meeting of African-American section heads at Bell Telephone, 1972 September (2 of 3)
- 9 Meeting of African-American section heads at Bell Telephone, 1972 September (3 of 3)
- 10 Section heads meeting, 1972 (1 of 2)
- 11 Section heads meeting, 1972 (2 of 2)
- 12 Michigan Bell and AT&T, correspondence, 1940s-1970s
- 13 Bell Telephone hiring practices, news clippings and correspondence, 1939-1947

Box 17

- 1 Testimonial luncheon, program and speeches, 1963
- 2 Letters of congratulations for retirement, 1973
- 3 Retirement letters of congratulations from Bell Telephone, 1973 (1 of 9)
- 4 Retirement letters of congratulations from Bell Telephone, 1973 (2 of 9)
- 5 Retirement letters of congratulations from Bell Telephone, 1973 (3 of 9)
- 6 Retirement letters of congratulations from Bell Telephone, 1973 (4 of 9)
- 7 Retirement letters of congratulations from Bell Telephone, 1973 (5 of 9)
- 8 Retirement letters of congratulations from Bell Telephone, 1973 (6 of 9)
- 9 Retirement letters of congratulations from Bell Telephone, 1973 (7 of 9)
- 10 Retirement letters of congratulations from Bell Telephone, 1973 (8 of 9)
- 11 Retirement letters of congratulations from Bell Telephone, 1973 (9 of 9)
- 12 Retirement testimonial luncheon scrapbook, 1974 January (1 of 3)
- 13 Retirement testimonial luncheon scrapbook, 1974 January (2 of 3)
- 14 Retirement testimonial luncheon scrapbook, 1974 January (3 of 3)
- 15 Retirement testimonial luncheon, invitation and programs, 1974 January

Box 18

- 1 *The Bell System and the City*, magazine, 1968-1970
- 2 Pamphlets and bulletins written by Scruggs, 1960s-1970s
- 3 Bell Telephone and AT&T publications, 1960s-1970s
- 4 *The Bell Company as Equal Rights Employers*, 1972 August
- 5 AT&T affirmative action booklet, 1977
- 6 Articles about Scruggs, news clippings, 1939
- 7 Scruggs at Michigan Bell, news clippings, 1940s-1960s
- 8 Detroit newspaper clippings, 1960s
- 9 Detroit and AT&T news clippings, 1960s-1970s

Series 4

Box 19: Photographs

- 1 Third Annual Marketing Clinic, photographs, 1956 April
- 2 Michigan Bell and AT&T events, photographs, 1950s-1980s
- 3 Plaques, photographs, 1950s-1970s
- 4 Testimonial luncheon scrapbook, photographs, 1963 January (1 of 5)
- 5 Testimonial luncheon scrapbook, photographs, 1963 January (2 of 5)
- 6 Testimonial luncheon scrapbook, photographs, 1963 January (3 of 5)
- 7 Testimonial luncheon scrapbook, photographs, 1963 January (4 of 5)
- 8 Testimonial luncheon scrapbook, photographs, 1963 January (5 of 5)
- 9 Central Michigan University honorary degree, photographs, 1965
- 10 Central Michigan University honorary degree, photographs, 1965 February
- 11 Central Michigan University honorary degree scrapbook, photographs, 1965
- 12 Bishop College honorary degree, photographs, 1966
- 13 Political and societal events, photographs, 1960s 1 of 2)
- 14 Political and societal events, photographs, 1960s (2 of 2)
- 15 Award ceremonies and honorific events, photographs, 1960s
- 16 Testimonial luncheon, photographs, 1973

Box 20

- 1 Events and meetings at Michigan Bell, photographs, [1940]
- 2 Alpha Phi Alpha convention, photograph, [1953]
- 3 Scruggs performing telephone demonstration, photograph, [1940s]
- 4 Scruggs presenting at public relations workshop, photograph, [1954]
- 5 Achievement Award presented to Michigan Bell Telephone Company, photograph, 1953
- 6 Michigan Chronicle Home Service Exposition, photograph, [1950s]
- 7 Ramon Scruggs elected president of Detroit Urban League, photograph, [1950s]
- 8 Booker T. Washington Trade Association Exhibit, scrapbook, 1950

Box 21

- 1 Michigan Bell Telephone Company lecture-demonstration by Scruggs, poster, [1940s]
- 2 Letters from the friends of Ramon S. Scruggs, scrapbook, [1963]
- 3 City of Detroit testimonial resolution for Scruggs, photograph copy, 1963
- 4 Alpha Phi Alpha 32nd annual dinner, photograph, 1964 June 6
- 5 Alpha Phi Alpha 39th annual convention, photograph, 1953 December 27
- 6 Alpha Phi Alpha reception, photograph, undated

Box 22

- 1 Hudson and Scruggs on WXYZ, video reel, undated