

THE MERRILL-PALMER INSTITUTE:
MERRILL-PALMER CORPORATION COLLECTION

Papers, 1916-1981
(Predominately, 1930-1981)
13.75 linear feet

Accession Number 1066
L. C. Number MS

The papers of the Merrill-Palmer Corporation were placed in the Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs as part of the papers of the Merrill-Palmer Institute in January of 1982 and were opened for research in October of 1986.

The Merrill-Palmer Corporation was responsible for the administration and financial affairs of the Merrill-Palmer Institute. From the membership of the corporation a board of trustees and a board of directors were elected to oversee the operation of the Merrill-Palmer Institute. Throughout the sixty years that the Merrill-Palmer Institute existed as an independent institution, prominent citizens from Detroit and the surrounding metropolitan area served as members of the Merrill-Palmer Corporation.

Established by the Wayne County Circuit Court on June 26, 1918, the Merrill-Palmer Corporation was formally approved and recorded by the county clerk's office on July 18, 1918. The Corporation was formed by the court to carry out the will of Lizzie (Pitts) Merrill Palmer who left three million dollars to establish a school for motherhood training. The first meeting of the corporation was held on October 30, 1918 and George L. Canfield, Tracy McGregor, and R. McClelland Brady were elected to be the first Board of Trustees to oversee the financial affairs of the Merrill-Palmer School for Motherhood and Home Training. The school was later renamed the Merrill-Palmer Institute. In October, 1919, the trustees hired the school's first director, Edna Noble White. The Board of Directors, responsible for the school's educational program, was established on November 21, 1919.

In the 1940s, the Merrill-Palmer Institute began to experience a financial strain. As the programs and services were expanded dramatically in subsequent years, the problems increased. By the late 1970's, the financial problems became severe. In order to maintain its existence, the Institute affiliated with Wayne State University in September 1981.

The papers of the Merrill-Palmer Corporation reflect the involvement of the Corporation in the operation of the Merrill-Palmer Institute from its inception in 1918 until its affiliation with Wayne State University in 1981.

Important subjects covered in the collection are:

Board of Directors
Board of Trustees
City of Detroit
Development
Educational Programming
Faculty

Head Start Program
Membership
Merrill-Palmer Presidents
Urban Family
Wayne State University

Among the important correspondents are:

Robert O. Bland
Mrs. Edsel (Eleanor) Ford
Mrs. William Clay (Martha) Ford
Pauline Park Wilson Knapp
Fred Marblestone
Esther McGuinnis
Willaim McKee
Francis Palmer
George Parker III

J. William Rioux
Robert Spencer
Mark C. Stevens
Cleveland Thurber
Peter Thurber
Mrs Lynn A. (Ruth) Townsend
Michael Usdan
Edna Noble White
Martha Wylie

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28 manuscript boxes

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Correspondence, minutes, notes, and reports relating to the operation of the Merrill-Palmer Institute from 1916 to 1981.

Series II, Membership Records, 1926-1981, Boxes 24-28:

Correspondence, news clippings, and biographical material relating to the members of the Merrill-Palmer Corporation.

Non-manuscript Material:

Eight photographs of members of the Merrill-Palmer Corporation have been placed in the Archives Audio-Visual Collection.

Series I
Corporation Records, 1916-1918
Boxes 1-24

Correspondence, minutes, notes, and reports concerning the operation of the Merrill-Palmer Institute. Most of the materials are concerned with the activities of the Board of Directors, the Board of Trustees, and the various committees of each board. There is also information on the activities of the directors and presidents of the Institute. Files are arranged by year. Within each year the files are arranged alphabetically by subject. The arrangement of the files reflects the evolving administrative structure of the Corporation.

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- 4. Planning and Budget; Planning Committee, 1979
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- 24. Citation Award; correspondence, 1980
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- 26. Commencement; invitations, May 1980
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- 8. Financial statements, May-Jul 1980
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- 19. Merrill-Palmer Fund; incorporation, by-laws, 1981
- 20-22. Merrill-Palmer Fund Meetings; minutes, Jul-Aug 1981
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- 24. Transfer to Wayne State University; news clippings, 1980-81

Series II
Membership Records, 1926-1981
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Correspondence, news clippings and biographical materials concerning the members of the Merrill-Palmer Corporation. Most of the material reflects the corporation related activities of individual members. Files are arranged alphabetically by member name then chronologically.

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17. Foley, L. Michael, 1975-77
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22. Lewis, Kathleen McCree, 1979
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24. McCarthy, Mrs. Walter J., Jr. (Alice), 1978-79
25. McCormick, Dr. James P., 1973-79
26. McCutcheon, Aubrey V., Jr., 1975-76
27. McNaughton, John N., 1970-77
28. Mecke, Mrs. Theodore H. (Eleanor), 1969-79
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