

**Record Series #: 1121-111**

**Name:** W. W. Law Pamphlet collection  
**Dates:** 1845-2003, no date (bulk 1940-2003)  
**Extent/Size:** 2,260 items [38 records cartons (38.0 cubic feet)]  
**Language:** English

**Name of Creator(s):**

Westley Wallace Law (W. W. Law)

**Biographical History:**

W. W. Law (1923-2002) was a prominent Civil Rights leader, local historian, historic preservationist and community leader in Savannah, Georgia.

Westley Wallace Law was born on January 1, 1923 in Savannah, Georgia, the oldest of three children of Geneva Wallace and Westley Law. He was greatly influenced by his mother, Geneva W. Law, grandmother, Lillie Belle Wallace, mentor, Reverend Ralph Mark Gilbert, and scoutmaster, John S. Delaware. Both Reverend Gilbert and John Delaware were officials in the Savannah chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). Law joined the NAACP Youth Council in high school and later served as its president. He attended Georgia State Industrial College (now Savannah State University) before being drafted into the U. S. Army during World War II. After he completed his military service, he finished his bachelor's degree in biology. Law was a long-time boy scoutmaster for Troop 49 which was made up of boys from First Bryan Baptist Church, of which he was a member and Sunday school teacher. He was a mail carrier for the United States Postal Service for over forty years.

From 1950-1976 Law served as President of the Savannah chapter of the NAACP. During the 1960s, he led weekly mass meetings at Bolton Street Baptist Church and St. Philip A.M.E. Church during which he urged "passive resistance to segregation" and nonviolent protests. He was involved in efforts to desegregate Grayson Municipal Stadium, department store lunch counters on Broughton Street, and the beaches at Tybee Island. He led an eighteen-month boycott of Broughton Street merchants. Law is largely credited for helping to keep Savannah's Civil Rights movement more peaceful than those in other southern cities. In 1961, he was fired from his postal job because of his Civil Rights activities, but reinstated after national NAACP leaders and President John F. Kennedy came to his defense.

After finishing his run as NAACP president, he focused his efforts on preserving Savannah African American History. He established the Savannah-Yamacraw Branch of the Association for the Study of Afro-American Life and History (ASALH), the King-Tisdell Cottage Museum, Beach Institute African American Cultural Center, the Ralph Mark Gilbert Civil Rights Museum, and the Negro Heritage Trail Tour. He also helped bring attention to and preserve Laurel Grove South Cemetery, the City's historically African American municipal cemetery.

Law received honorary doctorates from the Savannah College of Art & Design and Savannah State University. He was honored by the National Trust for Historic Preservation and the Georgia Trust for Historic Preservation for his preservation efforts in the community. W. W. Law died on July 28, 2002 at his home in Savannah. He willed his home and belongings to

**Record Series 1121-111, W. W. Law Pamphlet collection**

Remer K. Pendergraph who formed the W. W. Law Foundation to celebrate and continue the work of W. W. Law. The Foundation in turn donated his collections, documenting Savannah's civil rights movement, historic preservation, and African American history, to the City of Savannah for preservation and access to the public.

*For more information on W. W. Law see:*

Elmore, Charles J. "W. W. Law (1923-2002)." New Georgia Encyclopedia. 12 February 2016. Web. 01 April 2020. (Available online at:  
<https://www.georgiaencyclopedia.org/articles/history-archaeology/w-w-law-1923-2002>).

*Scope & Content:*

The W. W. Law Pamphlet collection (1845-2003, no date) includes 2,260 pamphlets, booklets, manuals, guides, reports, and brochures pertaining to a variety of topics including: African American history and culture; local publications; civil rights; government; religion; organizations; and more. There are over one hundred pamphlets that focus on Savannah topics including: history; architecture; organizations; directories; and business reports. Items of note include, "The Savannah Tribune: 'Building a Positive Image for Black Savannah,'" (circa 1970s), and "The Road to Justice: Three Major Statements on Civil Rights by President Lyndon B. Johnson," (circa 1960s) with an autograph card signed by President Lyndon B. Johnson.

*System of Arrangement & Ordering:*

The items in the W. W. Law Pamphlet collection are catalogued in the following major categories to facilitate research and discovery:

- Education
- Government
- Historic Preservation
- Local
- Military
- Miscellaneous
- Museums
- Postal Service
- Religion
- Scouts
- Tourism

Most of the major categories have additional sub-categories to assist researchers in further identifying their subject matter.

The following inventories are available and are keyword searchable:

- [Inventory by ID Number/Category](#)
- [Inventory by Title](#)
- [Inventory by Date](#)
- [Inventory by Author](#)
- [Inventory by Publisher](#)

**Record Series 1121-111, W. W. Law Pamphlet collection**

***Conditions Governing Access:***

Collection is stored offsite and researchers must request desired records at least one (1) full business day before research appointment for access.

***Conditions Governing Reproduction and Use:***

Please read carefully the statement on copyright below. ***Permission to reproduce does not constitute permission to publish.*** Researchers who plan publication are asked to discuss this with the archivist first for written permission. While most of the Municipal Archives collections are public records and in the public domain, not all are, and the Municipal Archives may not be the owner of copyright for all its archival materials. Researchers are responsible for obtaining any necessary permission to publish from the holder of copyright. In the event that the Municipal Archives becomes a source for publication, a copy of the publication is requested for the Municipal Archives.

**NOTICE: WARNING CONCERNING COPYRIGHT RESTRICTIONS**

The copyright law of the United States (Title 17, United States Code) governs the making of photocopies or other reproductions of copyrighted material.

Under certain conditions specified in the law, libraries and archives are authorized to furnish a photocopy or other reproduction. One of these specified conditions is that the photocopy or reproduction is not to be "used for any purpose other than private study, scholarship, or research." If a user makes a request for, or later uses, a photocopy or reproduction for purposes in excess of "fair use," that user may be liable for copyright infringement.

This institution reserves the right to refuse to accept a copying order if, in its judgment, fulfillment of the order would involve a violation of copyright law.

***Related Collections:***

Record Series 1121-107, W. W. Law Book collection, City of Savannah Municipal Archives, Savannah, Georgia.

Record Series 1121-108, W. W. Law Periodical collection, City of Savannah Municipal Archives, Savannah, Georgia.

***Access Points:***

African Americans--Civil rights  
African Americans--Education  
African Americans--History  
Boy Scouts of America.  
Christian writings  
Education--Integration  
Federal government--United States  
Georgia--History  
Georgia--Politics and government  
Historic preservation  
Local government--United States  
Municipal government publications--United States  
Museums.  
Race relations  
Savannah (Ga.).

**Record Series 1121-111, W. W. Law Pamphlet collection**

Savannah (Ga.)--History

School desegregation

State governments--United States

State government publications--United States

Tourism

United Methodist Church (U.S.).

United States--Armed Forces

United States Commission on Civil Rights

United States--Politics and government--20th century

United States Postal Service.

***Sponsors/Funding:***

Chatham County, Georgia, Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (SPLOST) funding.

***Preferred Citation:***

Record Series 1121-111, W. W. Law Pamphlet collection. City of Savannah Municipal Archives, Savannah, Georgia.

***Processed by:***

E. Rountree, September 2019.