

Record Series #: 1121-110

Name: W. W. Law Working Files
Dates: circa 1960s-2002, no date
Extent/Size: 6 records cartons (6.0 cubic feet)
Language: English

Name of Creator(s):
Westley Wallace 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

Record Series 1121-110, W. W. Law Working Files

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 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, last updated 10 January 2014 (available on the web at <http://www.georgiaencyclopedia.org/articles/history-archaeology/w-w-law-1923-2002>).

Scope & Content:

The W. W. Law Working Files (circa 1960s-2002, no date) includes 6 records cartons of files sorted into general subject categories during archival processing. The records include artifacts and various subject folders related to Law's involvement in the Savannah community and his personal interests. This is a working record series that has been temporarily created and opened to facilitate public access to the records/papers during a multi-year archival project to process the W. W. Law Collection. The W. W. Law Working Files series will shrink as files are pulled out for processing into the final record series/collections.

System of Arrangement & Ordering:

The W. W. Law Working Files (circa 1960s-2002, no date) are arranged by subject or topic. See the attached inventory for more information.

Conditions Governing Access:

None

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

1121-110-GSM-gau (USMARC)

City of Savannah, Municipal Archives, Savannah, Georgia [GSG (OCLC/LYRISIS)]

Record Series 1121-110, W. W. Law Working Files

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.

Sponsors/Funding:

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

Preferred Citation:

Record Series 1121-110, W. W. Law Working Files. City of Savannah, Municipal Archives, Savannah, Georgia.

Processed by:

L. Brooks, May 2016. Revised, M. Kerkhoff, October 2018, June 2019.

Record Series 1121-110, W. W. Law Working Files

Inventory:

Box WWL 1

ARMSTRONG through CITY OF SAVANNAH

- Armstrong
- Asbury United Methodist Church
- Baha'i Community
- Battlefield Park
- Beach High School
- Bethesda
- Bicentennial-National-Georgia Commission
- Bicentennial-National-Savannah Commission
- Bonaventure
- Books, 1 of 2
- Books, 2 of 2
- Brumby Rocker
- Businesses
- Businesses-Restaurants
- Calendars
- Charity Hospital
- Chatham-Effingham-Liberty Regional Library Board
- Chatham County-Savannah Metropolitan Planning Commission
- Chatham County-Savannah MPC-Sign Ordinance, 1976, 1979
- Chatham-Savannah Board of Public Education
- Chatham County
- Churches (general)
- Churches-Baptist
- Churches-Catholic
- Churches-Episcopal
- Churches-Methodist
- Churches-Presbyterian
- City of Savannah, 1 of 2

Box WWL 2

**CITY OF SAVANNAH through GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL
RESOURCES-GEORGIA HISTORIC RESOURCES SURVEY-PORT
WENTWORTH**

- City of Savannah, 2 of 2
- City of Savannah-Police
- Coastal Area Planning and Development Commission
- Coastal Heritage Society
- Colleges
- Congregation Mickve Israel

Record Series 1121-110, W. W. Law Working Files

- Congressional Black Caucus Foundation
- Connors Temple Baptist Church, Savannah, Georgia
- Downtown Neighborhood Association
- Economic Opportunity Authority
- Electric Company PBS Show
- Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Ascension
- Events
- First African Baptist Church, Savannah, Georgia
- First African Baptist Church at Racoon Bluff, Sapelo Island, Georgia
- First Baptist Church, Savannah, Georgia
- First Bryan Baptist Church, Savannah, Georgia
- Fisk University
- Food
- Fort Jackson
- Frank Callen Boys and Girls Club
- Friends of the Library
- Funeral programs
- Georgia Departments (general)
- Georgia Department of Family and Children Services
- Georgia Department of Industry and Trade
- Georgia Department of Natural Resources (general)
- Georgia Department of Natural Resources-Georgia Historic Resources Survey-Industrial Garden City
- Georgia Department of Natural Resources-Georgia Historic Resources Survey-Outer Garden City of Savannah
- Georgia Department of Natural Resources-Georgia Historic Resources Survey-Port Wentworth, 1 of 3

Box WWL 3

GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES-GEORGIA HISTORIC RESOURCES SURVEY-PORT WENTWORTH through MAPS-GEORGIA

- Georgia Department of Natural Resources-Georgia Historic Resources Survey-Port Wentworth, 2 of 3
- Georgia Department of Natural Resources-Georgia Historic Resources Survey-Port Wentworth, 3 of 3
- Georgia Department of Natural Resources-Georgia Historic Resources Survey-Rossignol Hill
- Georgia Department of Natural Resources-Historic Preservation Section
- Georgia Department of Natural Resources-Hofwyl-Broadfield Plantation
- Georgia Department of Natural Resources-State parks and historic sites
- Georgia Department of Transportation-Maps
- Georgia Historical Society
- Georgia Southern University

Record Series 1121-110, W. W. Law Working Files

- Georgia Trust for Historic Preservation
- Georgia Women of Achievement
- Health
- Historic Savannah Foundation, 1 of 2
- Historic Savannah Foundation, 2 of 2
- Housing
- Jekyll Island
- Jobs/Labor
- Law, W. W.
- Lewis, John (U. S. Representative)
- Libraries
- Libraries-Savannah New Materials lists, 1960-1969, no date
- Libraries-Savannah New Materials lists, 1970-1982
- Littering
- Longshoremen
- Louisiana
- Maps (general)
- Maps-Georgia

Box WWL 4

MAPS-SAVANNAH through SAVANNAH CHAPTER OF THE LINKS

- Maps-Savannah
- Maps-Waterways
- Martin Luther King, Jr.
- Martin Luther King, Jr. Observance Day Association, Inc.
- Masons
- Massie School
- Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil
- Military/Veterans
- Model Cities
- Movies
- Museums
- Music
- Music-Songs [reproductions]
- *“One Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church?” The African American Struggle for Incorporation in the Episcopal Church* by Eleanor S. Harrison, 1992
- Organizations
- People
- Politics
- Public Television
- Radio
- Recycling

Record Series 1121-110, W. W. Law Working Files

- Religious material
- “A Report on Endangered and Threatened Plant Species which occur in Georgia,” by David R. Ettman, Archaeological Survey of Cobb and Fulton Counties, Atlanta, Georgia, Georgia Department of Natural Resources, November 16, 1976
- Savannah Area Chamber of Commerce
- Savannah Business League
- Savannah Chapter of the Links

Box WWL 5

SAVANNAH COLLEGE OF ART AND DESIGN through YOUTH

- Savannah College of Art and Design
- Savannah Concert Association
- Savannah Development and Renewal Authority (SDRA)
- Savannah International Trade and Convention Center
- Savannah Jazz Festival
- Savannah Ogeechee Canal
- Savannah River
- Savannah State University
- Savannah Symphony
- Savannah Tour of Homes and Gardens
- Savannah Tourist Coloring Book (unknown author, title, or dates)
- Schools
- Schools-Savannah
- Second African Baptist Church, Savannah, Georgia
- Skidaway Institute of Oceanography
- St. John Baptist Church, Savannah, Georgia
- St. Philip AME Church, Savannah, Georgia
- Theater
- Tourism Brochures (general)
- Tourism Brochures-Georgia
- Tourism Brochures-Savannah
- Tybee Island, Georgia
- United States Departments (general)
- United States Post Office
- USS McFaul Commissioning Day, April 25, 1998
- Youth

Box WWL 6

PERSONAL, ARTIFACTS

- Buttons (general)
- Buttons Envelope 1-ASALH Bicentennial Siege of Savannah
- Buttons Envelope 2-ASALH Civil Rights Museum
- Buttons Envelope 3-ASALH Reverend Andrew Bryan, A. K. Des Verney

Record Series 1121-110, W. W. Law Working Files

- Buttons Envelope 4-Chatham Area Transit
- Buttons Envelope 5-Civil Rights/NAACP
- Buttons Envelope 6-Institutions and Organizations
- Buttons Envelope 7-Lapel Pins
- Buttons Envelope 8-Political, 1 of 2
- Buttons Envelope 9-Political, 2 of 2
- Buttons Envelope 10-Religion/Churches
- Buttons Envelope 11-Savannah Community Relations and Health
- Buttons Envelope 12-Tourism, Advertisement, and Unknown
- Coins
- Matchbooks
- Stamps
- Stickers