Greater Minneapolis Interfaith Fair Housing Program Collection

COLLECTION SUMMARY

Collection number: B504, Accession # 1995.053.0001-0001
Collection repository: Hennepin History Museum
          2303 Third Ave
          Minneapolis, MN 55404
Collection title: Greater Minneapolis Interfaith Fair Housing Program Collection
Dates: 1959-1965
Extent: 1 box
Creator: Louise Walker McCannel
Language of material: English
Processed by: Sophie Hunt, 2019

ADMINISTRATIVE HISTORY

The Greater Minneapolis Interfaith Fair Housing Program promoted “residential dispersion,” or neighborhood desegregation, in Minneapolis and its surrounding communities between 1959 and 1964. It focused on promoting tolerance among white residents through such activities as education, pledge campaigns for sellers and lenders, and supporting social action groups within religious congregations. In addition to addressing housing discrimination in greater Minneapolis, the program served as an experimental model for similar efforts nationwide.

The leadership for this nonprofit included executive director James A. Tillman, Jr., and chair Louise Walker McCannel, along with a board of men and women representing various religious traditions. McCannel, the granddaughter of the Minneapolis lumber baron Thomas Barlow (T. B.) Walker, had previously held a position as curator of the Walker Art Center and was active in numerous other social issues. Tillman was an African American PhD candidate in sociology, who had worked in intergroup relations in the foreign service and university settings before being hired to direct the Greater Minneapolis Interfaith Fair Housing Program. His work as executive director included publishing a wide range of writing: articles for scholarly journals, manuals and guides, and updates describing the work of the program.

The program grew out of the Minneapolis Mayor’s Commission on Human Relations. During its first three years, it received most of its funding from the Christian Council for Social Action of the United Church of Christ, with other large donations from the Walker Foundation, the
Mayor’s Commission, and Hennepin Avenue Methodist Church. In 1963, when the program’s initial grant from the United Church of Christ expired, the Lutheran Church in America and the American Lutheran Church (both predecessors of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America) voted to increase their financial support. Additional contributions came from Presbyterian, Baptist, Methodist, and Jewish congregations.

**SCOPE AND CONTENT**

The Greater Minneapolis Interfaith Fair Housing Program Collection houses organizational records from the full span of this nonprofit’s existence, from 1959 to 1965. The materials originally comprised nine volumes: Corporate Minutes and Records (folder 1); Records (folders 2-4); a collection of writing by James A. Tillman, Jr. (folder 5); two copies of Exhibits Portfolio (folders 6-15); and fiscal year books from the organization’s second, third, and fourth years (folders 16-27). They are now arranged in folders following this original order. The year books were created by Louise Walker McCannel, chair of the Greater Minneapolis Interfaith Fair Housing Program board.

The collection is arranged in three series with no sub-series. The series include:

- Series 1: Organizational meeting minutes and records
- Series 2: Exhibits Portfolio
- Series 3: Louise McCannel year books

Together, these materials document the creation, activities, struggles, and eventual dissolution of a nonprofit that addressed racial discrimination from a private, interracial, and faith-based perspective when this issue was also at the forefront of state and national politics. Thanks to the program’s involvement with religious communities, it is also a useful resource on the activities of Protestant and Jewish congregations in Minneapolis and its suburbs.

**ACCESS**

The collection is open for researches and has no restrictions.

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**RELATED MATERIAL**

Minnesota Historical Society:
• Greater Minneapolis Interfaith Fair Housing Program. Records, 1946-1989 (bulk 1959-1965): contains correspondence, minutes, financial records. These build on, and may in some cases duplicate, the contents of the present collection.

• Greater Minneapolis Council of Churches Collection: see especially Box 26, which contains information on the fair housing campaign of 1960-1963.

• T. B. Walker Foundation and Related Foundations Collection: describes Walker funding for other work by James A. Tillman, Jr.

COLLECTION INVENTORY

Series 1:
Folder
1 Corporate minutes and records, 1960-1964
2 Records - executive committee and board meeting minutes, 1959-1965
3 Records - financial records and progress reports, 1959-1963
4 Records - program proposals, 1959-1961
5 James A. Tillman, Jr. writing, 1962-1963

Series 2:
Folder
6 Exhibits Portfolio – Exhibits 1-2, circa 1962
7 Exhibits Portfolio – Exhibits 3-7, circa 1962
8 Exhibits Portfolio – Exhibits 8-12, circa 1962
9 Exhibits Portfolio – Exhibit 13, circa 1962
10 Exhibits Portfolio – Exhibits 14-22, circa 1962
11 Exhibits Portfolio (duplicate) – Exhibits 1-2, circa 1962
12 Exhibits Portfolio (duplicate) – Exhibits 3-7, circa 1962
13 Exhibits Portfolio (duplicate) – Exhibits 8-12, circa 1962
14 Exhibits Portfolio (duplicate) – Exhibit 13, circa 1962
15 Exhibits Portfolio (duplicate) - Exhibits 14-19, circa 1962

Series 3:
Folder
16 Louise W. McCannel year book, Year 2, September-December 1960
17 Louise W. McCannel year book, Year 2, January-June 1961
19 Louise W. McCannel year book, Year 2 – annual report, September 1961
20 Louise W. McCannel year book, Year 3, September 1961-February 1962
22 Louise W. McCannel year book, Year 3, March-August 1962
23 Louise W. McCannel year book, Year 3 (duplicate), September 1961-February 1962
25 Louise W. McCannel year book, Year 3 (duplicate), March-August 1962
26 Louise W. McCannel year book, Year 4, September 1962-April 1963
27 Louise W. McCannel year book, Year 4, May-August 1963

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