

MS-332

Don L. Crawford Papers

**Special Collections and Archives
Wright State University Libraries**

**Processed by:
Timothy Binkley
March 2004**

Introduction

The Don L. Crawford Papers were given to Wright State University Special Collections and Archives by Agatha Crawford Payne, Don's widow, in January of 2004. 2.5 boxes (approximately 2.5 linear feet) of materials were received. The donor gave some additional papers in January of 2005.

The collection includes newspaper clippings, magazine articles, scrapbooks, correspondence, speech notes and publicity, photographs, certificates, and campaign literature. Most items are by or about Don L. Crawford, Jr., one of Dayton's best-known African American leaders of the 1960s-1980s. A few items in the collection relate to other Crawford family members Don L., Sr., Agatha Crawford Payne, and Donella Crawford.

The Don L. Crawford papers date between 1918 and 2003. However, the vast majority of materials date to the 1960s and 1970s. This collection documents Dayton politics and race relations as reflected in the life and career of an extraordinary man.

There are no restrictions on the use of the Don L. Crawford Papers.

The Don L. Crawford Papers are organized into 4 series:

- Series I: Personal Papers
- Series II: City of Dayton
- Series III: Civic and Professional Organizations
- Series IV: Family Papers

Biographical Sketch

Don L. Crawford, Jr., Dayton's first African American City Commissioner and Clerk of Commission, was born in Clinton, Kentucky in 1921. He studied mathematics and physics at Kentucky State University, where he earned a B.S. degree in 1942. Crawford continued his studies at universities in the United States and in Puerto Rico and took a position as a high school mathematics instructor and basketball coach for two years. He then entered the U.S. Navy in World War II, serving as a Quartermaster Petty Officer on patrol craft and aircraft carriers in several theaters.

In 1946, Don found employment in Dayton as a social work administrator. He was voted "Outstanding Young Man of 1954" by the Dayton Junior Chamber of Commerce- the first of many significant public recognitions. Don served as Boy Scout Executive, and later as Associate Executive Director of the Dayton Area Welfare Council. In 1961, Crawford was elected to the Dayton City Commission. In 1965, he was re-elected and served two years before accepting the position of Executive Assistant and Clerk of the City Commission, a position he held for the next 23 years.

During his years of public service, Don Crawford was recognized for his strong leadership, especially in the area of human relations. He gave leadership to diverse civic and professional organizations and was in the forefront of many social improvement efforts. Throughout his career, Crawford was in demand widely as a public speaker. Many saw him as the public face of Dayton- the city's good will ambassador to the world.

Crawford retired in 1990. He died in December of 2000 at the age of 78. In 2002, a public park in Dayton was named in his honor.

Scope and Content Note

The Don L. Crawford Papers document the life of an important 20th century community leader. Through these papers, researchers may gain insight into politics and race relations in mid-to-late 20th century Dayton, Ohio.

Series I: Personal Papers

The personal papers of Don L. Crawford, Jr., document his private life, his rise to prominence as a public speaker and civil servant, and the many special honors and awards he received during (and even after) his lifetime. This is the largest series in the Don L. Crawford Papers. It is rich in correspondence, newspaper articles, and public speaking related materials. The race relations study materials (folder 7) include items from the National Urban League, Dayton Public Schools and Dayton and Montgomery County Public Library.

Series II: City of Dayton

The City of Dayton papers relate to Don Crawford's election to the Dayton City Commission, his work as a Commission member (1961-1967), and his work as Clerk of the Commission (1967-1990). The folders in this series are surprisingly thin. They contain some campaign publications, a few City of Dayton publications, and a small number of miscellaneous Commission-related documents. Of special note, this series includes some White House, Congressional and National Conference of Mayors event invitations. This series also includes two oversized aerial photographs of downtown Dayton taken around 1970.

Series III: Civic and Professional Organizations

Series III contains reports, newsletters, publications and other papers reflecting Don Crawford's membership in (and leadership of) a variety of civic, business and fraternal organizations. Like series II, the materials in series III are not very extensive. The strongest topic covered in series III is Don's long-term relationship with the Boy Scouts of America, Miami Valley Council.

Series IV: Family Papers

The final series in this collection contains materials by and about Don L. Crawford's father, Don L. Crawford, Sr., Don Jr's wife, Agatha Crawford Payne, and their daughter, Donella Crawford. The items relating to Donella Crawford are the strongest part of this series. Series IV features newspaper articles, photographs, a WWI post card and booklet from Don Crawford, Sr., and items relating to Donella's school years.

Container Listing

Series I	Personal Papers		Date
Box	File	Item	
1	1	Biographical Data	1960s-2000
	2	Photographs	1922, 1960s-1990s
	3	Correspondence	1950s
	4	Correspondence	1960s
	5	Correspondence – Congratulations Cards	1960s
	6	Correspondence	1970s
	7	Correspondence	1980s
	8	Correspondence	1990s
	9	Correspondence	Undated
	10	Public Speaking – Publicity and Programs	1950s
	11	Public Speaking – Publicity and Programs	1960s
	12	Public Speaking – Publicity and Programs	1970-1988
2	1	Speeches and Poems	1958-1970s
	2	Speech Notes	1957-1969
	3	Speech Notes	1971-1989
	4	Speech Notes	Undated
	5	Awards and Honors	1950s-1980s
	6	Awards and Honors	1990s
3	1	Kentucky State College Publications	1938, 1941
	2	Newspaper Column: “This I Believe” by Don Crawford	1960s
	3	Newspaper Clippings	1960s
	4	Newspaper Clippings	1970s
	5	Newspaper Clippings	1980s
	6	Newspaper Clippings	1990-2002
	7	Newspaper Clippings	Undated
	8	Magazine and Newspaper Articles	1960s
	9	Race Relations Study Materials	1966-1971
4	1	Scrapbook – College, Boy Scouts, Public Speaking	1942-1958
5	1	Scrapbook – “Outstanding Young Man of 1954”	1955-1956
6	1	Scrapbook – Newspaper articles	1961-1963
7	1	Scrapbook – Newspaper articles	1962-1964

Series II: City of Dayton

Box	File	Item	Date
8	1	Dayton City Commission – Elections	1961, 1966
	2	Dayton City Commission – City Commissioner	1961-1967
	3	Dayton City Commission – Clerk of Commission	1967-1990
Oversize		Dayton – Aerial Photographs of Downtown *IN OVERSIZE LOCATION 31, FILE 7	Circa 1970

Series III: Professional and Civic Organizations

8	4	Boy Scouts of America	1955-1991
	5	Community Welfare Council	1963
	6	Dayton League for Good Government	1963
	7	Frontiers of America	1950s-1960s
	8	M.L. King National Holiday Celebration	1987
	9	National Conference of Christians and Jews	1960s
	10	National Forum for Black Administrators	1990
	11	Ohio Municipal League	1973-1975

Series IV: Family Papers

8	12	Don L. Crawford, Sr. – W.W.I., Birthday Telegram, Memorial Service	1918-1986
	13	Agatha Crawford Payne – Article, letters	1966, 2001-2003
	14	Donella Crawford – Church and School Papers	1958-1968
	15	Donella Crawford – Magazines, Articles, Speeches, Wedding Invitation	1967-1972
	16	Donella Crawford – Senior Portrait	1968