

Papers of Alyce Laurayne Farrar-James BHC- MSS 0051

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Bridgeport History Center, Bridgeport Public Library

Bridgeport History Center
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Summary Information

Repository:	Bridgeport History Center, Bridgeport Public Library
Creator:	Farrar-James, Alyce Laurayne
Title:	Papers of Alyce Laurayne Farrar-James
ID:	BHC-MSS 0051
Date [inclusive]:	1963-2019
Date [bulk]:	1989-2013
Physical Description:	5.38 Linear Feet
Language of the Material:	English .
Abstract:	Alyce Laurayne Farrar-James (June 9, 1926-May 6, 2019) was heavily involved in the city of Bridgeport's social, economic, and political life. She worked as a local organizer for Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. in the state of Virginia, and took her experience back to Bridgeport where she helped transform the city by taking on such diverse roles such as City Council, Board of Directors for the Young Christian Women's Association, teaching within the Bridgeport school system and so much more. This collection represents a small portion of a remarkable legacy.

Preferred Citation

Papers of Alyce Laurayne Farrar-James (BHC-MSS 0051), Bridgeport History Center, Bridgeport Public Library.

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Biographical / Historical

Alyce Laurayne Farrar-James (June 9, 1926-May 6, 2019) was heavily involved in the city of Bridgeport's social, economic, and political life. The Farrar family itself has deep roots in the Little Liberia community, Bridgeport's safe haven for American and African born Black people escaping slavery in the south prior to the Civil War, as well as a place for the Indigenous residents of Connecticut to reside. Her mother, Alice Gertrude, was active and socially involved

as well, and in the past has been kind enough to share her life experiences through an oral history.

Alyce herself was a graduate of Howard University and the University of Bridgeport. She worked under the direction of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. himself as a local coordinator while living in Richmond, Virginia - some of this experience is documented in the collection.

In continuing her work for social justice, inclusion, and fairer representation within the City of Bridgeport, Farrar-James worked in a number of roles within the city's government and within the community. These positions include City Council (for the East End of Bridgeport), a teacher within the Bridgeport school system, and sitting on the Board of Directors for the Young Christian Women's Association in Bridgeport. She worked to eliminate Mount Trashmore, engaged in civil rights lawsuits to ensure greater equity in the Bridgeport school system, and so much more. It is also worth noting that her family was always heavily involved in education in Bridgeport, and Alyce's elder sister, Geraldine Whiting Johnson, was the first African American woman to be superintendent of Bridgeport schools.

In her personal life, Farrar-James married Anthony F. James. Together they had three sons, and were part of a much larger extended family with many nieces, nephews, and grandchildren.

The family's obituary of Alyce Laurayne Farrar-James is far more capable of expanding upon her many accomplishments in life, the true scope of her work, and the lives she touched during a remarkable life. <https://www.bakerfuneralservices.com/obituary/alyce-james>

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Scope and Contents

The bulk of the material within the collection relates to the most modern portion of Farrar-James' life, mostly from 2000 onward. There is a focus on personal spirituality and interests, but that is not the collection's exclusive domain. Series II and III can be best understood as snapshots of her interests and work in the 2000s, with an emphasis on education and local matters. The fifth series represents genealogy research on Farrar's family, but also work done to help Little Liberia and the Freeman houses gain recognition as a part of their restoration efforts. The folder labels, such as Auntie, center the personal nature of the research.

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Arrangement

The papers of Farrar-James arrived with one box of office files in original order, and the rest of the material simply packaged together to make transport easier. Many folders had Farrar-James' labels, and those have been kept whenever possible.

This collection consists of five series. Series I, personal papers, is dominated by spiritual writing where she cites passages from the Bible and elaborates and contemplates them. These writings relate the passage to elements of her personal and work life, and run from about 2000-2019. There are two folders, placed at the very start of the collection, relating to her work in the Civil Rights movement.

Series II, office files, contains files from her office in original order. Series III, public office and working files relate to her various public positions in the City of Bridgeport such as that of the Board of the Education as well as organizations whose causes she championed.

Series IV, commendations and awards, hold paper and three-dimensional awards for her service.

The final series in the collection is series V, family papers, which includes extensive information about the Farrar family and the Little Liberia community,

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Administrative Information

Publication Statement

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Controlled Access Headings

- Bridgeport (Conn.)
- Bridgeport (Conn.)--History
- Education
- Educational change
- Social justice
- Connecticut--Politics and government
- African American women
- King, Martin Luther, Jr., 1929-1968

Collection Inventory

Series I, Personal papers

Title/Description	Instances	
Correspondence about involvement with Southern Christian Leadership Conference and meeting Martin Luther King Jr., September 25, 1963	box 1	folder 1
Writing on US Constitution, Civil Rights, Martin Luther King Jr., undated	box 1	folder 2
Spiritual writings, 2000-2010	box 1	folder 3-10
Spiritual writings, 2013-2019 and undated	box 2	folder 1-4
Writings on health and fitness, 2019	box 2	folder 5

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Series II, Office files

Title/Description	Instances	
News articles, 2007	box 3	folder 1
Board of Education Saffeeleer omni., 2004-2005	box 3	folder 2
Program from Howard University and notes, undated	box 3	folder 3
Action Team Network – Bridgeport Board fo Education, Rebecca Johnson, Esq, 2007	box 3	folder 4
News articles, 2008-2009	box 3	folder 5
Carol Birkes, The Victory, 2007-2009	box 3	folder 6

Papers of Alyce Laurayne Farrar-James BHC-MSS 0051

Warren Harding High School education plan and research, 2007-2009	box 3	folder 7
Freedom of information act requests and responses, 2008	box 3	folder 8
Complains of discrimination forms [RESTRICTED ACCESS], 2007	box 3	folder 9
Black woman, undated	box 3	folder 10
Drop out factors, 2004-2007	box 3	folder 11
News clippings, 2008	box 3	folder 12
Ranee witness, 1987-2001	box 3	folder 13
Chief Brian Norwood celebration, October 28, 2008	box 3	folder 14
Classified intelligence, 2008-2009	box 3	folder 15
My witness, Ruth Gonchar, 1984	box 3	folder 16
State senate campaign and other, 1986	box 3	folder 17
Students case against Bridgeport, 1997-2005	box 3	folder 18
CMT COP scores and drop out, 2009	box 3	folder 19
Michael Brown, mayoral candidate, DC, 2009	box 3	folder 20
The Israel of God, 2001-2002	box 3	folder 21
News articles, 2005	box 3	folder 22
Rainee, misc. speeches, letters, (1968-2014)	box 3	folder 23
Letters of reference and others,, (1991-2009)	box 3	folder 24
Speech writings, some raps, 1990s-2006	box 3	folder 25
Bridgeport Post, Black Profiles, 1990	box 6	folder 1
SAFEE legal defense fund, 2004	box 3	folder 26
Full Disclosure: the truth about the AIDS epidemic, 1995	box 3	folder 27
NEU, 1989	box 3	folder 28
Bridgeport, Rediscover Us, undated	box 3	folder 29
The Ganim File, 2002-2006	box 3	folder 30
SAFEE/ER material, 2005-2007	box 3	folder 31
NEU files,, 1994-2007	box 3	folder 32
Mailing lists, 1988-	box 3	folder 33
Bridgeport Board of Education ad hoc committee, 2008	box 3	folder 34
News articles, 1991-1992	box 3	folder 35
Greater Bridgeport area directory of congregations, 2004	box 3	folder 36

Bridgeport Public Schools strategic Plan campaign, 2007 and 2012	box 3	folder 37
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Series III, Public office and working files

Title/Description	Instances	
City council, 1989	box 4	folder 1
Correspondence of thanks during time as Alderwoman, 1991-1992	box 4	folder 2
Letters and awards of recognition, 1993-2000	box 4	folder 3
Statues regarding gift card fees, 2005	box 4	folder 4
Material related to SC 18833 [Connecticut Supreme Court case regarding Bridgeport Board of Education], 2010-2012	box 4	folder 5
Davis, Ferrar-James vs. Bridgeport Board of Education, Ramos, Bellinger, 2011	box 4	folder 6
News articles, 1948-1989	box 4	folder 7
News articles, 1986-1988	box 4	folder 8
News articles about Geraldine Johnson, 2008	box 4	folder 9
Rainnee and Christmas tree Lighting, tea sip honors, YWCA salute, 1968-1993	box 4	folder 10
Yes We Can! Documentary by Bill Bucky, 2000	box 4	folder 11
Celebratory concert planning, 2011	box 4	folder 12
Charles B. Tisdale scholarship...[program], 2018	box 4	folder 13
Brooklawn academics 6th grade Thank You Ms. James book, undated	box 4	folder 14
Materials likely from NAACP award, undated	box 4	folder 15
Photographs from March to Reform Cities, undated	box 4	folder 16
100 Outstanding Women in Connecticut resume, 2003-2009	box 5	folder 1
Race, ethnicity, and citizenship in the United States, 150 years after Dread Scott vs. Sandard, 2007	box 5	folder 2
Action for Bridgeport Community Development Inc annual report, 2007	box 5	folder 3

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Series IV, Citations and awards

Title/Description	Instances		
Official citations, 2009-2017	box 6	folder 3-4	
Two Connecticut General Assembly Official Citations for years of service, 2009 and 2013	box 6	folder 3	item 1-2
Official citation for service to Bridgeport, Richard Blumenthal, Connecticut Attorney General	box 6	folder 4	item 1
Certificate of Special Recognition for being recognized as Trailblazer by Heritage Scholarship Society, Congressman Jim Himes, 2013	box 6	folder 4	item 2
Official citation for receiving the Ella Anderson NAACP Image Award, George Jepson, Connecticut Attorney General, 2017	box 6	item 4	item 3
Official citation for receiving the Ella Anderson NAACP Image Award, Senator Richard Blumenthal, 2017	box 6	folder 4	item 4
City of Bridgeport Alderman plaque, 1989	box 7	folder 1	
Award from Prayer Tabernacle Sisterhood, 1993	box 7	folder 2	
Award from YWCA Salute to Women, 1993	box 7	folder 3	
Award for assisting with US Census, 2000	box 7	folder 4	
Vote handbill for Board of Education, 2007	box 7	folder 5	
Award from NECC/NEPS, 2009	box 7	folder 6	
Award from Heritage Scholarship Society, 2013	box 7	folder 7	
Small box with a cross and prayer, undated	box 7	folder 8	
Key to city of Bridgeport from Mayor Mary Moran, undated	box 7	folder 9	

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Series V, Family papers

Title/Description	Instances	
[Speech] delivered by Alice G. Farrar for the graduating minority affairs reception, Cornell University, 1990	box 5	folder 4
Alice G. Farrar; Little Liberia, 1992-2000	box 5	folder 5-8
Auntie [Lillian Whiting Hamilton], -2008	box 5	folder 9

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