

THE ERNEST C. SMITH COLLECTION

Papers 1962-1977
(Predominantly, 1964-71)

Accession Number 906
L.C. Number MS

The papers of Ernest C. Smith were placed in the Archives of labor and Urban Affairs in December of 1978 and April of 1979 and were opened for research in July of 1982.

Ernest C. Smith was born December 17, 1925 in Chicago Heights, Illinois. He earned a Bachelor's degree in education at Northern Illinois University in 1949 and a master's degree in human relations at New York University in 1950. Mr. Smith taught social studies in Detroit public high schools becoming a department head.

He was involved in the black civil rights movement and found neither major political party satisfactory as a vehicle for black aspirations. He therefore helped found the Michigan Freedom Now Party, an all-black party which ran candidates in the general election of November, 1964. Mr. Smith was their candidate for U.S. senator and was chairman of the Wayne County Freedom Now Party.

From 1969 to 1977 Mr. Smith and other Detroit teachers were involved in a long legal struggle over the agency shop clause in the Detroit Federation of Teachers contract with the Detroit Board of Education. He was instrumental in the formation and operation of the Detroit Teachers Opposed to Compulsory Unionism. He became active in the Michigan Citizens for Right to Work and other national right-to-work committees.

The papers of Mr. Smith reflect his interest in black political action, his efforts to resist compulsory unionization, and his his position on various civil rights issues.

Important subjects covered in this collection are:

Agency shop	Albert C. Cleague
Agnostic rights	Detroit Federation of Teachers
Black political action	Freedom Now Party
	Right-to-work organizations

Contents

3 manuscript boxes

Series I, Freedom Now Party, 1964-69; Box 1:

Correspondence, minutes, publications and other papers relating to the Freedom Now Party and the campaign of Albert B. Cleague for election to the Detroit Common Council.

Series II, Detroit Public Schools, 1969-77; Boxes 2-3:

Correspondence, legal records and other papers relating to the effort to prevent the establishment of an agency shop in the Detroit public schools. There are also some papers relating to Smith's charges against the Detroit public schools on civil rights issues.

Non-manuscript material

Copies of The Illustrated News and The Detroit Teacher have been placed in the Archives Library. Photographs, posters, buttons, and bumper stickers from the Freedom Now Party, the Cleague campaign, and other campaigns have been placed in the Archives Audio Visual Collections.

Series I
Freedom Now Party, 1964-69
Box 1

Correspondence, minutes, campaign literature, articles, and publications relating to Ernest C. Smith's work for the Freedom Now Party, his candidacy for U.S. senator, and his involvement in the civil rights movement. There is also some information on the 1965 campaign of Albert B. Cleague for election to the Detroit Common Council. Files are arranged alphabetically by subject.

Box 1

1. Black history and culture, c. 1965-69
2. Cleague, Albert B., Jr.; Election campaign for Common Council, 1965
3. Freedom Now Party; Ballots, Nov 1964
4. FNP; Promotional material
5. ; Michigan, 1963-64
6. ; Clippings
- 7-11. ; Wayne Co., - Minutes, Jan-June 1964
12. ; Wayne Co., - Correspondence and reports
13. The Mallet, Feb 29, 1964
14. Northwestern Highschool, c. 1962
- 15-17. Ernest C. Smith; Correspondence 1962, 1964, 1966, 1970
18. ; Drafts of articles and press releases
19. ; Illustrated News articles

Series II
 Detroit Public Schools, 1967-77
 Boxes 2-3

Correspondence, legal papers, press releases, publications, and clippings documenting Smith's involvement in the effort to keep the Detroit Federation of Teachers from establishing an agency shop in the Detroit public school system. There are files from a number of right-to-work organizations which participated in this controversy. There are also extensive files on the court challenges to the DFT agency shop. In addition there are some papers relating to hearings of the Michigan Civil Rights Commission on his charge that his transfer to another school was racially motivated and his successful attempt to gain equal leave provisions for agnostics as for those with religious affiliations. Files are arranged alphabetically by subject.

Box 2

- 1-7. Agency shop; legal challenges, 1970-77
- 8-9. ; legal reference materials
10. Association for Professional Para-Professional & Clerical Employees of Wayne Co.
11. Concerned Educators Against Forced Unionism, 1977
12. Detroit Board of Education; Union membership regulations
13. Detroit Education Association; Mailings to members, 1969-70
14. Detroit Federation of Teachers; Local 231 Agreement, Constitution & By-laws, 1969-71
15. DFT; New directions for DFT, 1970
16. Promotional material. 1970
17. Detroit Teachers Opposed to Compulsory Unionism; Clippings; 1969-77
18. DTOCU; Mailings, 1969-70
19. ; Mailing responses, 1969-70
20. ; Notes
21. ; Press releases, 1969-70
22. ; Telephone records, 1969
23. ; Television coverage, 1969-70

Box 3

1. Inner City Organizing Committee, 1967-70
2. Michigan Citizens for Right to Work; Agendas, constitution & by-laws, 1970-71
3. MCRTW; Correspondence, 1970
4. ; Executive Board minutes, 1970-71
5. ; Mailings, 1969-71
6. ; Newsletter, 1969
7. National Right to Work Committee; Clippings
8. NRTWC; Free Choice, 1969-74
9. ; Legal Defense Foundation, 1972-78
10. ; Newsletters, 1969-73
11. ; Schedules & promotional material
12. Organization of School Administrators and Supervisors (OSAS)
13. Public Employees Against Compulsory Unionism, 1970

Box 3 continued

- 14. Ernest C. Smith; Agnostic rights, clippings, 1971
- 15-19. ; Correspondence, 1969-77
- 20. ; Personal records, 1949-69