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Descriptive Summary

Title: Anna D. Kelly Papers,

Dates: 1930s - 1999


Abstract: Anna D. Kelly (1913-2007) is known for her efforts to connect Lowcountry African Americans with the Highlander Folk School, most notably recruiting Septima Clark. A graduate of the Avery Normal Institute in Charleston, South Carolina, Kelly was a charter member of the Avery Institute of African American History and Culture. She then played a crucial role in establishment of the Avery Research Center.

The collection includes personal papers and photographs related to Anna D. Kelly and her family. Materials also include clippings, photographs, and other material related to Kelly's civic involvement, such as her celebrated commitment to the social work profession, her Catholic affiliation and church involvement, and her work with organizations like the Charleston County Library, the Foster Grandparent program, and the South Carolina Commission on Aging. The collection also contains documents, photographs, and correspondence related to the Avery Normal Institute, Avery's Class of 1932 and class reunions, programs and exhibits of the Avery Institute of Afro-American History and Culture, and the planning and establishment of the Avery Research Center.

Extent: 1.75 linear feet (4 archival boxes)

Repository: Avery Research Center at the College of Charleston

Call Number: AMN 1083

Language of Material: Material in English

Biographical Note

Anna Bernice Dewees Kelly of Charleston, born on November 13, 1913, was the daughter of the John M. and Bernice Scott Dewees. Kelly was a 1932 graduate of Avery Normal Institute in Charleston, South Carolina. She earned a B.A. from Fisk University in 1949 and a M.A. in Social Work from Atlanta University.

During her early years, Kelly worked with various civil rights organizations in Charleston and the South. In 1951, she was hired as director of the Coming Street YWCA's teenage program and later served as its executive secretary.

On a conference trip to Washington, D.C., Kelly met an executive from the Highlander Folk School in Tennessee who suggested that she attend a Highlander workshop. She did, and subsequently recruited Septima P. Clark to attend, who in turn recruited Esau Jenkins. Thanks to their efforts, Lowcountry African Americans were introduced to grassroots organizing, and a number of Civil Rights campaigns, both in South Carolina and throughout the South, were initiated.
Kelly played a crucial role in the establishment of the Avery Research Center. A charter member of the Avery Institute of African American History and Culture, Mrs. Kelly served in several administrative roles, as treasurer and on the publication committee of the original AIAAHIC's newsletter. She began the collection of materials that grew to become the Avery Research Center archives.

Kelly was heavily involved in Charleston civic life. She was member of St. Patrick's Catholic Church, where she served as president and secretary of the Parish Council. She also served as president of St. Patrick Women's Guild, and as treasurer and president of Charleston Deanery Council of Catholic Women. She was recognized by the Charleston County Council as a member of the Board of Trustees of the Charleston County Library in 1981. Kelly was a member of Our Lady of Guadalupe and the Jubilee Committee. She was also a member of the Philis Wheatly Literary and Social Club, the League of Women's Voters and other social and political organizations. She was treasurer, secretary, and director of the National Foster Grandparents Organization. As a member of the South Carolina Commission on Aging, Kelly was invited to attend a White House conference on Aging in 1971.

Kelly was married to the late Peter Kelly, M.D. She had two siblings, Cornelius Dewees and Margrurute DeWees, who preceded her in death.

Anna D. Kelly died on November 28, 2007.

Collection Overview

The collection includes personal papers and photographs related to Anna D. Kelly and her family. Materials also include clippings, photographs, and other material related to Kelly's civic involvement, such as her celebrated commitment to the social work profession, her Catholic affiliation and church involvement, and her work with organizations like the Charleston County Library, the Foster Grandparent program, and the South Carolina Commission on Aging. The collection also contains documents, photographs, and correspondence related to the Avery Normal Institute, Avery's Class of 1932 and class reunions, programs and exhibits of the Avery Institute of Afro-American History and Culture, and the planning and establishment of the Avery Research Center.

Collection Arrangement

1. Personal Papers and Photographs, 1930s-1990s
2. Civic Involvement, 1966-1990s
3. Avery Institute and Avery Research Center, 1873-1999

Restrictions

Access Restrictions

No restrictions.

Copyright Notice

The nature of the Avery Research Center's archival holdings means that copyright or other information about restrictions may be difficult or even impossible to determine despite reasonable efforts. The Avery Research Center claims only physical ownership of most archival materials.

The materials from our collections are made available for use in research, teaching, and private study, pursuant to U.S. copyright law. The user must assume full responsibility for any use of the materials, including but not limited to, infringement of copyright and publication rights of reproduced materials. Any materials used for academic research or otherwise should be fully credited with the source.
Related Material

**Oral History Interview with Anna D. Kelly** by Edmund L. Drago, August 20, 1984 [AMN 500.001.014]

Subject Headings

African Americans -- Social conditions -- South Carolina -- History -- 20th century.
African Americans -- South Carolina -- Charleston -- History.
Avery Institute of Afro-American History and Culture -- History.
Avery Normal Institute -- Alumni and alumnae.
Avery Normal Institute -- History.
Avery Research Center -- History.
Civil rights workers -- South Carolina -- Charleston -- History -- 20th century.
Dewees family -- Photographs.
Kelly family -- Photographs.
YWCA -- Officials and employees.

Administrative Information

Preferred Citation

[Identification of item], Anna D. Kelly Papers, Avery Research Center, College of Charleston, Charleston, SC, USA.

Processing Information

Processed by Mia Fischer and Amanda Ross, February 2010

Encoded by Amanda Ross, May 2010

Funding from the Council on Library and Information Resources supported the collection processing and encoding of this finding aid.
Detailed Description of the Collection

1. Personal Papers and Photographs, 1930s-1999
   Box 1 Folder 1 Anna D. Kelly: Biographical Clippings, 1955-1979
   Box 1 Folder 2 Anna D. Kelly: Planner, 1972
   Box 1 Folder 3 Greeting Cards and Birth Announcements
   Box 1 Folder 4-5 Photographs: Anna Kelly, Family, and Others, 1930s-1990s
   Box 1 Folder 6-7 Photographs: Dewees Family and Others, 1940s-1999
   Box 1 Folder 8 Photographs: Charleston Area
   Box 2 Folder 9 Photographs: Vacations

2. Civic Involvement, 1966-1990s
   Box 2 Folder 10 Civic Involvement: Correspondence
   Box 2 Folder 11 Charleston County Library
   Box 4 Charleston County Library: Award
   Box 2 Folder 12-13 Church-Related Materials
   Box 2 Folder 14 Church-Related Photographs
   Box 2 Folder 15 Church-Related Photographs: National Council of Catholic Women
   Box 2 Folder 16 Foster Grandparent Program
   Box 2 Folder 17 Social Work
   Box 2 Folder 18 South Carolina Commission on Aging
   Box 2 Folder 19 YWCA

3. Avery Institute and Avery Research Center, 1873-1999
   Box 3 Folder 20 Avery Institute and Avery High School: Graduation and Programs, 1873-1954
   Box 3 Folder 21 Avery Institute: Photographs, 1952-1980s
   Box 3 Folder 22 Avery Normal Institute: Class of 1932 - Reunions and Cox Scholarship, 1977-1990
   Box 3 Folder 23 Avery Normal Institute: Class of 1932 - Reunion Photographs, 1977-1999 and undated
   Box 3 Folder 24 Avery Research Center: Proposal and Establishment, 1978-1990
   Box 3 Folder 25 Avery Research Center: Newspaper Clippings, 1981-1999
   Box 3 Folder 26 Avery Institute of Afro-American History and Culture: Programs and Exhibits, 1980-1987
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