

Guide to the Ethel Martin Bolden Papers, ca. 1900-2002

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Author: Bolden, Ethel Evangeline Martin (1918-2002)

Extent: 13.75 linear ft. (11 cartons - at Annex)

3 oversize flat files (Pob – 3 on site)

Most materials stored offsite; advance notice required.

Arrangement:

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Description of Collection

(An earlier version of this essay appeared in the 2007 edition of the University South Caroliniana Society Annual Program)

This collection consists of approximately 13.75 linear feet of manuscripts and related materials providing important insights into the life and work of educator, librarian, and community leader Ethel Martin Bolden (1918-2002) in Columbia and throughout the greater South Carolina area.

Mrs. Bolden believed that sincere leadership could improve the human condition. In a 2001 interview, she said: "My motto is you need to know your heritage, where your ancestors came from, but you are part of a larger realm, part of a larger world. There's not just African Americans in the world, there's not just white people in the world. There are other nationalities and other ethnicities." While "she may not have participated directly in the dramatic activities associated with the Civil Rights Movement, Ethel Bolden is remembered for having "worked her way in to areas where decisions would be made about her race and community." (Georgette L. Mayo, *'A Voice in the Wilderness': Ethel Evangeline Martin Bolden, Pioneer Librarian*, 2002, p. 40)

Born in Charleston, South Carolina, on 4 December 1918, Ethel Martin spent much of her early life in the segregated Columbia, S.C., community known as Edgewood. It was while living there that she traveled across town to attend Booker T. Washington High School. Named for the famed Tuskegee educator, the high school had been established in 1916 and, as Mrs. Bolden recalled in 2001, "represented a tradition of educational aspirations and excellence in Columbia's black community."

After finishing Booker T. Washington High School in 1936, Ethel entered Barber-Scotia Junior College in Concord, North Carolina. It was at this historically African-American college that she first gained experience working in a library. Graduating in 1938, she went on to Johnson C. Smith University in Charlotte, North Carolina, where she majored in English and social studies and earned a B.A. degree in 1940. She returned to Columbia and accepted employment as a teacher at Waverley Elementary School. A year later, Ethel Martin married Charles Frank Bolden. They were the parents of two sons, Charles F. Bolden, Jr., and Warren M. Bolden.

While Mrs. Bolden reared her family, she took periodic library courses at Allen University and Benedict College and other educational institutions. Finding a need to provide library service for children of color in Columbia, she initiated the first all African-American public school library in Columbia at Waverley Elementary School. She later went on to assist other librarians in establishing libraries in many of the capital city's African-American public schools.

Her desire to build upon her knowledge in librarianship can be seen in material reflective of the "State A. & M. College School Library Workshop for Partially Trained Librarians" she attended in 1948. Names of those participating in the workshop are recorded as are their concerns for increasing their competency and improving service in their prospective libraries. Seeking to provide better library service to her patrons, Ethel Bolden believed that she would benefit from more formal training in the field of Library Science.

Bolden eventually left Waverley Elementary School and in 1953 entered Atlanta University. During this period of her life, she later recalled, "My husband kept the boys and I set out for Atlanta University from which I received the degree of Master of Science in Library Service." In 1959, she graduated and went to work as a librarian at the new W.A. Perry Junior High School in Columbia's Edgewood neighborhood.

In 1968, Bolden left W.A. Perry Middle School and was appointed head librarian at Dreher High School, a traditionally all-white institution. A 1988 interview chronicles her departure from Perry, as a consequence of South Carolina's attempt to desegregate public schools, and alludes to the fact that it was Bolden, along with guidance counselor Francena Robinson, a fellow African American, who first integrated the Dreher faculty.

The collection contains an assortment of committee notes, class reunion and commencement pamphlets, and newsletters from various African-American schools in Columbia and from other towns in South Carolina. Among these is the 1969 *Narrative Evaluation Report of the Directory on the Institute for the Training of Elementary Librarians*, documenting the strategies and programs used by Allen University to educate librarians. Bolden served on the staff of Allen's "Institute for Elementary Librarians" that year, and included with the report is her lecture "Evaluation, Selection and Acquisition of Materials for the Elementary School Library."

Letters and newspaper clippings throughout the collection address the social, economic, and political factors that Mrs. Bolden believed affected African-American education. Aware of the many challenges that had arisen in the African-American community following desegregation, she understood the importance of preserving cultural institutions that were in danger of disappearing. In her 1988 interview she argued that many historically black schools "became either elementary schools, middle schools or...went out of existence all together" and, as a result, "we lost that part of our heritage."

Other portions of the collection focus on public schools and colleges at which Bolden studied, taught, or volunteered her time as guest lecturer. Files on Booker T. Washington High School include the names and addresses of the school's Board of Directors, as well as minutes and financial statements, souvenir programs from celebration banquets, and specimen copies of the school's newsletter, *The Comet*.

Included too is information on the history of the Edgewood neighborhood, its cultural and physical geography, and families who lived there.

Ethel Bolden's service activities extended from the schools and libraries to other institutions. Professional and civic organizations with which she served included the NAACP, National Council of Negro Women, Booker T. Washington Foundation, South Carolina State Museum Board of Directors, and Historic Columbia Foundation. Bolden was listed in *Who's Who Among Black Librarians in the Southeast*, *Who's Who of American Women* (4th edition), and *Who's Who in the South/Southwest* (10th edition). She was the recipient of numerous awards, many of which reflect her lifelong service to the Columbia community, and her numerous community activities were recognized by such organizations as the Christian Action Council and the Board of Directors of the Columbia Young Women's Christian Association. In 2002, she received the Order of the Palmetto, South Carolina's highest citizen award, in recognition of her pioneering service to libraries.

Bolden's faith in God and Christian fellowship was a vital part of her life. When she came to live in the Edgewood neighborhood, she joined Ladson Presbyterian Church, Columbia's oldest African-American church. Later, she was a founding member of Northminster Presbyterian Church. Ultimately, she would speak to the congregations of many denominations in Columbia about faith, hope, and community uplift. Among her notes for these speeches, a majority of which deal with the uplift of African Americans, are remarks entitled "Where Do Our Dreams Go?" Her talk was delivered before Lebanon Presbyterian Church, another of Columbia's historic African-American congregations, and asserted that the church "served as a place of peace, hope and spiritual nourishment, special activities and entertainment, education, the development of leadership and self expression."

Bolden also argued that African-American churches, generally, "have favored a passive acceptance of one's worldly condition and have seen their main function in providing escape and consolation to the sufferers." She admonished the members of Lebanon to reach beyond mediocrity, to dream dreams, and to make the impossible into the possible dream.

References to the plight of the African-American community following desegregation are to be found throughout the collection. Materials directly related to the social issues in the Columbia community include two bound manuscripts labeled "Community Development Project Proposals," 1987 and 1989 respectively, both of which attempt to address issues of crime, education, drug abuse, and poverty. Bolden was a proponent of the family as a key element for improving society. In one of her untitled speeches, she wrote that "Black Women as well as Black men must work toward correcting the social ills that contribute to the high unemployment rate of Black men and the great number of Black men in prison

or on drugs. We must be innovative to find creative ways to help young men of today be husbands of tomorrow."

While very much interested in the present, Ethel Bolden believed that understanding America's past, especially the role of African Americans, was crucial to people of color because many of them suffered from inferiority complexes, humiliation, and cultural degradation resulting from a lack of knowledge of their past. She argued that African Americans had made important achievements in society but failed to recognize their own contributions. Bolden recognized that the majority culture sometimes contributed to the problems that afflicted the African-American community.

Criticizing those who wanted to close or change the status of C.A. Johnson High School, she argued in the *Columbia Record* newspaper, 12 August 1985, that "there is a strange mentality present in a people who continue to think that anything black or in a black neighborhood is inferior and must go." In one of her speeches, she noted that "to control a people you must first control what they think about themselves and how they regard their history and culture." In another, she critiqued America's education system, noting that "A major merit of literature is that it broadens and deepens experience. Furthermore, a great literature is relevant to people and to society as they are, and American Literature surely is not relevant if it ignores over 10 percent of the Americans."

Bolden's deep-rooted interest in history is apparent in the newspaper clippings she collected, many of which bear upon the contributions and attainments of people of African descent in the United States as well as in Africa. She remained optimistic that this history and culture would eventually be integrated into books and other publications as well as into the school curriculum. Mrs. Bolden remained a spokesperson for the rights and responsibilities of all citizens until her death on 20 October 2002. Her collected papers bear testimony to the fact that the woman who once said "if love rules your life you cannot help but be involved" made her voice heard by working quietly yet persistently to bring about positive social change within her community.

Augmenting the collection is a unit of material associated with Ethel Bolden's elder son, astronaut Charles Bolden, Jr. (b.1946). Bolden received a B.S. degree from the U.S. Naval Academy in 1968, accepted a commission as a second lieutenant in the U.S. Marine Corps, trained as a pilot, and from 1972 to 1973 successfully flew more than 100 missions into North and South Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia. In 1978, he earned a M.S. degree from the University of Southern California. He was selected as an astronaut candidate in 1980, qualified as a space shuttle pilot in 1981, and subsequently flew four missions in space. In 1992 he was appointed Assistant Deputy Administrator for the National Aeronautics and Space Administration. He held this post until assigned as commander of the 1994 flight of space shuttle *Discovery*. Upon completion of this fourth mission, Bolden left the space program after having logged

more than 680 hours in space. Items that are representative of the period when Bolden was actively involved in the space program are NASA pamphlets, photographs, and posters.

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- 1987
- 1997
- 2000
- Folder 365 Promotional Materials
- 1996
- 2000, n.d.
- Folder 366 Medical University of South Carolina, 7 Jun 1979
- Folder 367 Midlands Technical College, 24 May 1991
- Folder 368 Morris College (Sumter, S.C.)
- Update*, 1999
- Folder 369 South Carolina State College /University (Orangeburg, S.C.)
- 1980-1996
- Folder 370 Stillman College (Tuscaloosa, Alabama)
- 1987
- Folder 371 University of South Carolina
- Correspondence
- 1992 Jan. 17 – 1998 Feb. 11
- Folder 372 Institute for Families in Society
- 1995-2002, n.d.

- Folder 373 Library Education, 1973, n.d.
- Folder 374 "Occasional Papers," Nov 1984
- Folder 375 "Panning for Gold" Workshops (College of Library and Info Sci)
1996-1997
- Folder 376 Programs
1984-1998

Box 6

- Folder 377 Report to the President, 1991
- Folder 378 Statistics and Goals
1991
1994
- Folder 379 Women's Studies
1994-1995
2001-2002, n.d.
- Folder 380 Winthrop College
100th Spring Commencement, 4 May 1986
- Folder 381 Wofford College
General , 16 May 1982
- Folder 382 Commencement Programs
1968-1976
- Folder 383 Marshall Memorial Fellowship Program, 1992

South Carolina

- Folder 384 Advisory Committee to US Commission on Civil Rights, 1995
- Folder 385 African-American History Calendar

General

1990-2001

- Folder 386 Correspondence
- 1989 Nov. 20 – 2000 Jan. 24
- Folder 387 Candidates, 1998 Calendar
- Folder 388 Candidates: Abraham-Bryson
- Folder 389 Burrell-Harris
- Folder 390 Hopkins-McLawhorn
- Folder 391 McLendon-Rutherford
- Folder 392 Sampson- Woods
- Folder 393 Candidate Worksheets
- Folder 394 Newsclippings: Aiken-Fields, 1978-1994
- Folder 395 Finney-Johnson, 1972-2002
- Folder 396 Knightner-Sendak, 1974-1995
- Folder 397 Simkins-Williams, 1973-1993
- Folder 398 African-American Heritage Council
- 1993 June 11 - 1997, n.d.
- Folder 399 African-American HIV/AIDS Council, 1998
- Folder 400 Association of Minorities for Public Administration, 1984
- Folder 401 Athletic Hall of Fame
- 1975-1983
- Folder 402 Aviation Association, 1997
- Folder 403 Commission on Women
- 1984
- 1990

- Folder 404 Department of Education
Authors and Materials for Elementary and Secondary Media Centers
1975
- Folder 405 Lists of Books for Jr.-Sr. High School Libraries, 1968
- Folder 406 "What's Right in SC Schools," 1996
- Folder 407 Educational TV/ERN /SC ETV magazine, *Scene* Black History Month
Feb . 1997
Feb. 1998
- Folder 408 House of Representatives Calendar
1986
- Folder 409 Legislative Black Caucus
1984
1989-1990
1997
1998
2001
- Folder 410 Library Association
1982
1991-1992
- Folder 411 Public Trustee Manual
- Folder 412 Sports
1973
1979
1986
- Folder 413 State Library Ninth Annual Report

1977-1978

- Folder 414 State Museum, South Carolina
 Campaign & Friends of the State Museum
 Aug 1988
 Mar 1989, n.d.
- Folder 415 Commission Annual Report, 1982-83
- Folder 416 *Images* magazine
 Fall 1984-4 Nov 2000
- Folder 417 Newsclippings, Sept-Oct 1988
- Folder 418 "A Spark of Genius," 1990

Box 7

- Folder 419 State Museum Foundation
 "Assessment Study and Development Audit ...," 14 Sept 1995
- Folder 420 Audited Financial Statements
 30 Jun 1994- 6 Apr 2000
- Folder 421 Board of Directors Manual, 1995-1996
- Folder 422 Board of Directors Meetings/Minutes
 29 Jan 1985-23 Mar 2000
- Folder 423 Brochures of the S.C. State Museum Foundation
 1985
 1988
 1990
 1995
 1997

- 1998
- Folder 424 Committee Descriptions & By-Laws
- 1993 Aug. 12
- 1999
- Folder 425 Correspondence
- 1987 June 22 – 1998 Mar. 16
- Folder 426 Observatory/Planetarium/IMAX Theater
- 1998
- 2000
- Folder 427 Promotional Material, n.d.
- Folder 428 Proposed Feasibility/Planning Study & Potential Campaign, 13 Jun 1996
- Folder 429 Three Year Strategic Plan
- 1999-2001
- Apr. 1999
- Folder 430 State Museum Friends
- Friends, 1987-12 Jan 1989
- Folder 431 By-Laws, 2 Jun 1981
- Folder 432 Fifth Annual Mtg. & Celebration of the Charles H. Townes Center
- 22 May 1986
- Folder 433 Supreme Court, 12 Jul 1985
- Folder 434 Task Force on Minority Health, 1990
- Folder 435 Women's Consortium Flame of Justice Award, 5 Dec 1994
- Folder 436 Southern Regional Council, Inc., Publications of
- 1969 Nov.
- 1979 Mar.

	21 Jan 1988
	1991, n.d.
Folder 450	National YWCA
	1964
	1970-1971
	1981-1985
	1990
Folder 451	<i>Interchange / YWCA Interchange</i> newsletter
	Apr-May 1983
Folder 452	Youthbuild Columbia
	Implementation Grant, n.d.
Folder 453	Photographs [see also NASA Photographs, Box 4]
	Bolden family
	1940s-1980s
Folder 454	1950s-1980s
Folder 455	Bolden, Charles F. , Jr.
	1940s-1980s
Folder 456	Bolden, Ethel
	1940s-1980s
Folder 457	1960s-1990s
Folder 458	Patterson Reunion
	1976, n.d.
Folder 459	Sara Brown Baker
	1996

Folder 460	Simkins-Martin Family 1900s-1999
Folder 461	C.A. Johnson High School, n.d.
Folder 462	Johnson C. Smith University 1939-1990
Folder 463-464	1980s, n.d.

Published / Printed Materials

Folder 465	Brochures, Pamphlets, Programs 1939 1958 1963-1979
Folder 466	1980-1989
Folder 467	1990-1999
Folder 468	2000-2002
Folder 469	n.d.
Folder 470	Business Cards, Complimentary Tickets 1972-2004
Folder 471	Church Bulletins / Programs, 1979-2000 Bethel AME (Columbia, S.C.) First Calvary Baptist (Columbia, S.C.) Ladson Presbyterian – USA (Columbia, S.C.) Lebanon Presbyterian (Ridgeway, S.C.) Northminster Presbyterian – USA (Columbia, S.C.) United House of Prayer for All People (Columbia, S.C.)

Whitehall AME (Jenkinsville, S.C.)

Folder 472 Services of Celebration / Commemoration / Honors [Biographical]

1956 Oct. 23 – 2001 Mar. 26 and nd

Funerals:

A.P. Williams, Jr., 2 Jun 1992

Colon Hunter Garrett, Jr., 7 Feb 1996

Edith Hill Dozier, 6 Oct 1993

Hardy Liston, 23 Oct 1956

Joseph Martin, 29 Apr 1988

M. Maceo Nance, Jr., 26 Mar 2001

Modjeska Monteith Simkins, 9 Apr 1992

Pearl Richbourg Sinkler, 10 Aug 1993

Preston Bruce, 21 Dec 1994

Ronald H. Brown, 10 Apr 1996

Sylvia Poole Swinton, 26 Aug 2000

Thomas Sinkler Martin, 26 Oct 1993

Vela Elizabeth Holmes, 5 Oct 1999

William J. Reynolds, 25 Jul 2000

Honors / Recognition:

Carl T. Rowan, 2 Oct 2000

Mrs. Catherine Williams, SC Teacher of the Year, 1983, 24 Nov 1982

Mr. & Mrs. Charles Bruce Bailey, Sr., n.d.

Franklin Delton Turner, Ordination and Consecration as Bishop in the
Diocese of Pennsylvania, 7 Oct 1988

Major General George M. Krausz, 28 Jul 1989

Gordon-Bowman Street Dedication, 18 Nov 1996

Gus Owens, n.d.

I. DeQuincy Newman, 3 Jun 1986

Rep. Kay Patterson, "A Roast 'n' Tribute," 19 Jul 1985

Lincoln Carolina Jenkins, Jr., 19 Jun 1989

Rev. Dr. Lincoln Carolina Jenkins, Sr., 26 Apr 1981

Dr. Martin Luther King, 27 Jan 1997

Mary Gladden Carter, 19 Mar 1995

Matthew J. Perry, Jr., South Carolinian of the Year, 1976

Modjeska Simkins for Columbia City Council, 1983

O. Stanley Smith, Jr., 3 Mar 1987

Weddings:

Annette Vertenah Hopkins and Frank McCoy, 11 Aug 1964

Jeralyn Patricia Boag and Kelvin Andrew Coaxum, 22 May 1982

Marshalita Karen Sims and Alan Clark Peterson, 19 Jul 1980

Other Celebrations:

Archie Chapman Reunion, 23 Nov 1984

Baccalaureate Service, Davidson College, 9 May 1992

Box 8

Audiotapes – (46 tapes)

Anthony Che's Thanksgiving Greetings, 1994

Astronauts

Dr. Art Thomas, Pres. II Central State

Catherine Gonzales, Justice for Women Committee Mtg., Nov 1988

Col. Charles Bolden, Gospel 95, 26 Feb 1995

Col. Charles F. Bolden (motivational)

Col. Charles F. Bolden, SC Education (motivational), 2 Feb 1988

Charles F. Bolden, Jr., Gamma Nu Omega Salute of EMB, 22 Jan 1986

Charles F. Bolden, Jr.

Mr. Charles F. Bolden, WOIC Radio Testimonial

Charles Martin's Story

Che and Kelly, Jun-Jul 1979

Culminating Program-Upward Bound, 21 Aug 1978

Donahue-Rev. Ferrican

Donna Hedrick/Mrs. Palyok

Ethel Bolden (Camp Bellwood)(PW), 1991

Ethel Bolden (at Jenkinsville)

Frederick Douglas Years

Gloria Leevy (Civil Rights)

Instant Replay #9, 13 Oct 1978

Interview with Mrs. Ethel Bolden by Georgette Mayo, 29 Jun 2001

Jennifer James: Thinking in the Future Tense Part 1 & 2

Jennifer James: Thinking in the Future Tense Part 3 & 4

Rev. Jesse Jackson-Benedict College, 8 May 1977

Rev. Jesse Jackson-60 Minutes, 4 Dec 1977

Rev. Jesse Jackson -Columbia, SC, 9 Mar 1989

Dr. Julian Earls, 4 Mar 1988

Kaumboltz, 15 Sept 1977

Kaumboltz, 16 Sept 1977

Lee Corso #4, 13 Oct 1978

Lerone Bennett, Benedict College, Feb 1980

“Lift Every Voice and Sing”, MD Priester

Martin Luther King Speeches

Mary Frances Berry at USC, Jan 1989

Maya Angelou

Monteith at USC

Mosak, 12 Oct 1979

Oral Roberts, Second Command of Faith

Roberts Photograph Collection, 8 Sept 1984

Rosalyn-Gift-T. Kin

Spelling Words

Dr. Wade Noble, History, San Francisco State

Warren, Jr.’s story, 1997

Women’s Day, Bethel AME Church, 20 Mar 1994

[NOTE: One tape is labeled “sounds like Billy Graham” and another is unlabeled. Some commercial tapes are included, such as Oral Roberts and Lee Corso].

Box 9

Memorabilia

[Includes Boy Scout and Cub Scout caps and neckerchiefs; a cloth square with US Naval Academy insignia; collectible cards from Space Missions; Charles F. Bolden, Jr.’s wallet; Space Trivia Challenge.]

Box 10**Serials / Magazines / Newspapers**

15 Journals / Magazines

1967-1991

Newspapers

Harlem Weekly (New York, N.Y.)

29 Dec-4 Jan 1983

The National Leader (Philadelphia, Penn.)

21 Jul 1983

New York Fine Print (Buffalo, N.Y.)

31 May 1974

Box 11

15 Journals / Magazines

1992-2002

Newspapers

The Columbia Record (Columbia, S.C.)

14 Jul 1980

18 Jan 1986

29 Jan 1986

31 Jan 1986

1 Feb 1986

3 Feb 1986

The State (Columbia, S.C.)

4 Feb 1984

29 Jan 1986

4 Feb 1986

11 Jun 1990

21 Sept 1992

4 Feb 1994

USA Today (McLean, Va.)

30 Jan 1986

Oversize Flat Files (*filed on site – PU-3*)

OS Folder 1 NASA, etc. (23 Posters)

1978-2000

OS Folder 2 Black History Posters, etc.

21 posters, 1974-1991, n.d.

OS Folder 3 31 Posters, 1970-1997, n.d.