

Collection #
SC 3255

**FLORABELLE WILSON
COLLECTION ADDITION, 1961–1985**

[Collection Information](#)

[Biographical Sketch](#)

[Scope and Content Note](#)

[Contents](#)

Processed by

Alysha Zemanek
May 2017

Manuscript and Visual Collections Department
William Henry Smith Memorial Library
Indiana Historical Society
450 West Ohio Street
Indianapolis, IN 46202-3269

www.indianahistory.org

COLLECTION INFORMATION

VOLUME OF COLLECTION: 1 manuscript folder, 1 black and white photo folder

COLLECTION DATES: 1961–85

PROVENANCE: Crystal Rhodes, Indianapolis, IN; August 2005

RESTRICTIONS: None

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ALTERNATE FORMATS:

RELATED HOLDINGS: Florabelle Williams Wilson Collection M 0731; Florabelle Wilson Collection Addition M 1133

ACCESSION NUMBER: 2005.0323

NOTES:

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Florabelle Williams Wilson (1927–2008) was born to James S. and Hattie Virginia Hollis Williams on 12 January 1927. She attended the local public schools including School #26 and Crispus Attucks High School. Wilson graduated from high school in 1944. She received a BS in Education from Indiana Central College (now University of Indianapolis) in 1949. She taught at Indianapolis Public School (IPS) #23 for eight years, later returning to school to work on a graduate degree in library science. In 1961, Wilson received an MLS from Indiana University. She married John A. Wilson (27 August 1920–22 June 1990) in 1964.

From 1957 to 1971 Wilson worked as an assistant librarian at the University of Indianapolis. She was director of the library from 1971 until her retirement in 1982. The first full-time African American faculty member at the university, she was also the first black director of an academic library in Indiana. In 1971 she helped plan the interior design and select furnishings for what became the university's Krannert Memorial Library. A past member of the Indiana Library and Historical Board and the Soul People Repertory Board, she served on the Indiana Historical Society Library Committee for nearly two decades. She was a member of the Indianapolis chapter of Zonta International (a women's service organization), Indiana Library Association, and the American Library Association. She was also a life member of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and an elder at Immanuel Presbyterian Church.

While at the University of Indianapolis, Wilson developed the exhibit and slide/lecture presentation "The Black Family in Indianapolis: Invisible Sinew." She was a contributor to other exhibits created during the 1980s including "This Far by Faith: Black Hoosier Heritage," edited by Emma Lou Thornbrough and "Bury Me in a Free Land," developed by Gwendolyn Crenshaw. Wilson also mounted exhibits in conjunction with her West African travels to Senegal, Nigeria, Togo, Benin, Ghana, and the Ivory Coast. She also traveled to France, England, China, Japan, Hong Kong, the Scandinavian countries, Russia, Mexico, and the Caribbean. She presented talks and travelogues to schools, organizations, and historical societies. She created a puppet show titled "Let's Tell the Whole Story" that she used to present African American history programs to public school districts throughout Marion County. She did public service appearances on local television stations, WTTV-4, WFBM-6, WTHR-13, and WISH-8 and Indianapolis area radio stations, WIAN and WGRT.

The recipient of numerous honors, Wilson was named a distinguished alumnus of the University of Indianapolis in 1986 and awarded an honorary Doctor of Letters by the school in 1988. She received service awards from the Indiana Library and Historical Board and the Indiana Library Trustee Association in 1990. In 1993, IPS School #26 presented her with a Career Achievement Award.

Sources:

Materials in the collection

Biographical sketch taken from M 0731 Florabelle Williams Wilson Collection, 1910–2001, Indiana Historical Society

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

This collection addition contains a letter from Florabelle Wilson to Vicki Watkins, dated 3 January 1985, discussing Wilson's upcoming retirement plans. This addition also includes photographs of Krannert Memorial library, other unidentified buildings, and people with connections to the library.

CONTENTS

CONTENTS

Florabelle Wilson to Vicki Watkins, 3 Jan 1985

Photos, 1961–77

CONTAINER

Folder 1

Visual Collections:
Photographs,
Folder 1