

# MOZEL SANDERS COLLECTION, 1978 - 1996

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Collection #:  
SC 2637

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## Table of Contents

[User Information](#)  
[Historical Sketch](#)  
[Scope and Content Note](#)  
[Cataloguing Information](#)

Processed by:  
Wilma L. Gibbs  
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## USER INFORMATION

VOLUME OF COLLECTION: 1 folder

COLLECTION DATES: 1978 - 1996

PROVENANCE: Betty Beverly-Stigger, IVY Tech State College, One West 26th Street, Indianapolis, IN 46208

RESTRICTIONS: None

REPRODUCTION RIGHTS: Permission to reproduce or publish material in this collection must be obtained in writing from the Indiana Historical Society.

ALTERNATE FORMATS: None

RELATED HOLDINGS: None

ACCESSION NUMBER: 1998.0025

NOTES:

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## HISTORICAL SKETCH

Mozel Sanders (25 May 1924 - 1 September 1988), the son of Moses and Bertha Sanders, was born in East St. Louis, Illinois. He spent his early life in Canton, Mississippi, where he attended school and later joined the Civilian Conservation Corps.

Sanders accepted the call to the ministry while in Cleveland, Ohio, in 1943. During his early ministry he was a vocalist and recording artist who toured the country and preached revivals. In 1959 he became the pastor of Mount Vernon Missionary Baptist Church in Indianapolis. Under his leadership the church significantly increased its membership and relocated to 709 N. Belmont Avenue, remaining on the near westside of the city. For several years, Sanders hosted "The Way Out," an early morning gospel program, aired on WTLC-FM, a local radio station. .

A civic leader, Sanders was at the helm of the Indianapolis Opportunities Industrialization Center (OIC), a national job training program, for many years. He was also instrumental in the development of other OIC programs around the state. During the early 1960s, Sanders formed a group known as the Fair Share Organization. The purpose of the organization was to boycott stores and industries throughout the city to encourage the hiring of more African Americans, especially in management training programs.

Mozel Sanders was best known for the founding of an annual citywide Thanksgiving dinner. The dinner started in 1974 when Sanders and a few volunteers served a small group of people the traditional Thanksgiving dinner at the Mount Vernon Missionary Baptist Church. Each year the number of participants grew, and the program became too large for the church. Early on dinners were carried out and delivered. Cooking facilities at other locations (e.g. Turkeys were cooked at Winona, Methodist, and Indiana University hospitals) were used to supplement the church's kitchen. By the late 1970s, the dinner activities moved to the Foster Motor Lodge (formerly located at 2154 N. Illinois St.). Outgrowing the lodge, the Thanksgiving dinner moved to Arsenal Technical High School. It has been estimated that in 1987--the last Thanksgiving before Sanders's death, over 16,000 people were fed with the help of 200 volunteers.

In 1996, the Mozel Sanders Thanksgiving Day Dinner volunteers (estimated at more than 500) fed 30,000 people at Arsenal Technical High School.

Sources: Materials in the Collection; "Mozel Sanders Dinner Served at Tech High," *Indianapolis Star*, 29 November 1996, B6.

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## SCOPE AND CONTENT

The one-folder collection contains several items pertaining to Mozel Sanders, pastor at Mount Vernon Missionary Baptist Church (1959 - 1988), in Indianapolis. There are program booklets that commemorate Sander's 20th and 21st pastoral anniversaries. They are dated 1979 and 1980, respectively. A 1978 yearbook includes historical images of the church structure, located at 1045 N. Traub Street, and later at 709 N. Belmont Avenue; biographical information on Sanders; and several photographs of church groups (trustees, deacons, choirs, and ushers) and individuals.

Mozel Sanders's funeral was held at the Indiana Convention Center on 10 September 1988. A program of the service contains a lengthy obituary. Sanders was posthumously named the *Indianapolis Star's* Man of the Year for 1988. Columnist Dan Carpenter's article (8 January 1989, B 1), contained within the collection, provides details.

During an induction ceremony held in 1996, Crown Hill Cemetery designated Sanders a "Pillar of Society." The program booklet is also included within the collection. A photograph of Mozel Sanders sitting at a microphone before an unidentified group is in Visual Collections Color Storage.

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## CATALOGUING INFORMATION

MAIN ENTRY: Sanders, Mozel, 1924-1988

SUBJECT ENTRIES: Sanders, Mozel, 1924-1988--Death and burial

Mount Vernon Missionary Baptist Church (Indianapolis, Ind.)

Afro-American clergy--Indiana--Indianapolis

Afro-American churches--Indiana--Indianapolis--Photographs

Thanksgiving Day.

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