

Collection #  
P0507

**WILLIS KIRK  
COLLECTION, CA. 1950–2007**

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Processed by

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

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## **COLLECTION INFORMATION**

VOLUME OF  
COLLECTION: 2 folders

COLLECTION  
DATES: ca. 1950s; 2007

PROVENANCE: Willis Kirk, Vallejo, California, March 2011

RESTRICTIONS: None

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ALTERNATE  
FORMATS:

RELATED  
HOLDINGS:

ACCESSION  
NUMBER: 2011.0064

NOTES:

## **BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH**

An Indianapolis native, Willis Kirk (1928—) graduated from Crispus Attucks High School under the tutelage of music teacher, Russell Brown in 1946. After service in the United States Army during the 1950s, he went to college on the GI bill. He went on to receive a bachelor degree and an MA at Butler University and a PH.D at Walden University.

Kirk got married in 1955. He taught in the Indianapolis Public Schools for twelve years. During the early 1960s he worked part time as a business agent for the Indianapolis Musicians Local 3. During the late 1960s, he moved his family to California. He taught music at the public schools in Oakland. During his career as a teacher in Indiana and California, Kirk also played many professional musical performances.

Later, he worked as a counselor for City College of San Francisco. From 1988 - 1991 he served as the president of the college.

Kirk has played with Lionel Hampton, J.J. Johnson, Jimmie Coe, Slide Hampton, Earl Hines, Dizzy Gillespie, Eddie Harris, Charlie Parker, Tiny Bradshaw, John Hendricks, Mills Brothers, Wes, Monk, and Buddy Montgomery, and Melvin Rhyne. He has recorded with Earl Hines in Brazil and with David Hardiman's San Francisco All Star Big Band. He wrote and recorded the jazz oratorio, "Rejoice! Rejoice!"

Sources:

Materials in the collection

[http://www.afm6.org/archive\\_WillisKirk.htm](http://www.afm6.org/archive_WillisKirk.htm) accessed on November 25, 2011.

## SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The collection contains two photographs and a newsletter. One image, ca. 1950s, represents an inside scene of Henri's Café Lounge, a club that was located at 408 Indiana Avenue in Indianapolis. Owned by Henry Vance, the club that offered night time entertainment was also a popular lunchtime venue for downtown workers. The musicians included in the image are Wes Montgomery on the guitar; Willis Kirk on drums; Monk Montgomery on bass; and Buddy Montgomery on piano.

The second image is a photograph of Kirk playing the drums during a Tribute to Max Roach concert at the Diego Rivera Theatre (located at the City College of San Francisco) on December 11, 2007. There is also an issue of the newsletter, *City Currents* (Volume XXII, Number 19, December 17-23, 2007), which contains this photograph and an article about the image.

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Wes, Buddy, and Monk Montgomery and Willis Kirk  
with their instruments at Henri's Café Lounge in  
Indianapolis, ca. 1950s

Willis Kirk playing the drums during a Tribute to Max  
Roach concert at the Diego Rivera Theatre; *City*  
*Currents*, 12-17-2007

### CONTAINER

Photographs:  
Folder 1

Photograph  
Folder 2

## CATALOGING INFORMATION

For additional information on this collection, including a list of subject headings that may lead you to related materials:

1. Go to the Indiana Historical Society's online catalog:  
<http://opac.indianahistory.org/>
2. Click on the "Basic Search" icon.
3. Select "Call Number" from the "Search In:" box.
4. Search for the collection by its basic call number (in this case, P0507).
5. When you find the collection, go to the "Full Record" screen for a list of headings that can be searched for related materials.