



ArchivesSpace

Smith (Damu) Papers

An inventory of Damu Smith Papers at DC Public Library

This finding aid was produced using ArchivesSpace on May 05, 2021.

English

Describing Archives: A Content Standard

People's Archive, MLK Library

901 G Street NW

Washington, DC

peoples.archive@dc.gov

Table of Contents

Summary Information	3
Biographical / Historical	3
Scope and Contents	4
Arrangement	4
Administrative Information	4
Related Materials	5
Controlled Access Headings	5
Collection Inventory	5
Series 1	5

Summary Information

Repository:	People's Archive, MLK Library
Creator:	Smith, Damu (Leroy Wesley), 1951-2006
Title:	Damu Smith Papers
ID:	116
Date [inclusive]:	1990-1994
Physical Description:	2.5 Linear feet
Physical Description:	1 Boxes
Language of the Material:	English
Language of the Material:	English

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Biographical / Historical

LeRoy Wesley Smith was born on December 6, 1951 to Sylvester and Vernice Smith in St. Louis, Missouri. Throughout his high school years, Smith participated in a program called the administered by Jesuit priests called Sophia House, a project dedicated to developing leadership skills in young black men. At Sophia House Smith learned about civil rights struggles. When Smith was 17 years old, he attended a black solidarity rally hosted by the Black United Fund in Cairo, Illinois which began his involvement in civil rights justice at home and within the African diaspora. Smith graduated from Vashon High School in 1970 and entered St. John's University in Collegeville, Minnesota. It was here that he started to become more organized in his activism, as head of the Organization of African American Students. He and his fellow students took over the administration building and demanded changes to the climate of hostility for black students on campus. During his college days, Smith changed his name to Damu Amiri Imara, a Swahili name meaning blood, strength and leadership. Smith moved to D.C. in 1974, and became active in community organizations. Smith was one of the first black activists to target environmental racism worked with a number of organizations including the National Alliance against Racial and Political Violence, the American Friends Service Committee, Greenpeace USA, National Black Independent Political Party, National Black Environmental Justice Network, and Black Voices for Peace for which he was the founder and co-chair. Smith passed away on May 5, 2006.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Scope and Contents

The Damu Smith papers document Smiths' involvement in activism and community organizations. Among the records are biographical material, notes, photographs, audiocassette tapes, and research files. The research files cover Angola, South Africa, Korea, Iraq, the environment, and organizations such as the French Street Umoja Connection, Louisiana Cancer Alley, and the National Alliance Against Racist and Political Repression.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Arrangement

Processed without series.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Administrative Information

Publication Statement

People's Archive, MLK Library

901 G Street NW
Washington, DC
peoples.archive@dc.gov

Revision Description

Finding aid revised to be more evergreen. 2020-08-26

Custodial History

Gift of Lynn Moore, 2006.

Conditions Governing Use

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Processing Information

This collection is unprocessed. It was accessioned by the Library, and was placed in archival containers upon its receipt. A descriptive container listing was created to facilitate access.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Related Materials

Related Materials

District of Columbia Africana Archives Project, DCAAP.0067, Special Collections Research Center, George Washington University, Gelman Library.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Controlled Access Headings

- African Americans
- Community organization
- Racism
- Environmentalism
- Political activists
- Photographs
- Health

Collection Inventory

Series 1	
Title/Description	Instances

Africa Miscellaneous, 1987	Box 1	Folder 1
Africa Miscellaneous, 1987-1993	Box 1	Folder 2
Africa Miscellaneous, 1994	Box 1	Folder 3
Africa Miscellaneous, 1990	Box 1	Folder 4
Africa Food Crisis, 1986	Box 1	Folder 5
Africa - Southern Africa Summer Project, 1986-1988	Box 1	Folder 6
Africa - Angola, 1985-1990	Box 1	Folder 7
Africa Angola, 1986-1990	Box 1	Folder 8
Africa - Angola, 1990 1990	Box 1	Folder 9
Africa - Angola, 1990 1990	Box 1	Folder 10
Africa Angola, 1990 1990	Box 1	Folder 11
Africa Angola, 1991 1991	Box 1	Folder 12
Africa - Angola, 1988 - 1990	Box 1	Folder 13
Africa Angola (No date), undated	Box 1	Folder 14
Damu Smith Photos, undated	Box 1	Folder 15
Damu Smith Collection, 2004-2006	Box 1	Folder 16
Black Americas Stake in the Struggle for Disarmament and Peace, 1980	Box 1	Folder 17
The US Attacks on Angola, undated	Box 1	Folder 18
Damu's Notes and Statements, undated	Box 1	Folder 19
National Rainbow Coalition and Million Man March, 1991	Box 1	Folder 20
Towards a Southern Strategy for Green Peace, undated	Box 1	Folder 21
Louisiana, 1996-1997	Box 1	Folder 22
Arusha Tanzania, 1987	Box 1	Folder 23
Environmental Justice Pamphlet, undated	Box 1	Folder 24
African American Church Leaders Environmental Justice/Racism Fact Finding Mission, 1997	Box 1	Folder 25
Southern Louisiana Aids Coalition Week Long Capacity Building Training, 2004	Box 1	Folder 26
National Environmental Justice Advisory Council (1 of 2), 2002	Box 1	Folder 27
National Environmental Justice Advisory Council (2 of 2), 2002	Box 1	Folder 28
Environment, 1990	Box 2	Folder 1
Environment, 1991-1992	Box 2	Folder 2
Environment, 2000		

	Box 2	Folder 3
Environment, 1991	Box 2	Folder 4
SOC Leadership Conference, 1992	Box 2	Folder 5
Environment, 1991-1994	Box 2	Folder 6
Environment Greenpeace, 1990	Box 2	Folder 7
Environment Greenpeace, 1999-2001	Box 2	Folder 8
Environment Greenpeace, 1989	Box 2	Folder 9
Environment Greenpeace, 1990	Box 2	Folder 10
Environment Greenpeace, 1990	Box 2	Folder 11
Environment Greenpeace, 1997-2001	Box 2	Folder 12
Greenpeace, 1997	Box 2	Folder 13
Essence Magazine Letter, 2001	Box 2	Folder 14
Environment Greenpeace, 2000	Box 2	Folder 15
Calls for Support, 1996	Box 2	Folder 16
Environment Greenpeace, 1990	Box 2	Folder 17
Greenpeace, 1996	Box 2	Folder 18
Environment NBEJN, 2001-2002	Box 2	Folder 19
Environment NBEJN, 2002-2003	Box 2	Folder 20
Environment NBEJN, 2005	Box 2	Folder 21
Louisiana Cancer Alley, 2001	Box 3	Folder 1
Louisiana Cancer Alley, 2001	Box 3	Folder 2
Louisiana Cancer Alley, 1997-1998	Box 3	Folder 3
Louisiana Cancer Alley, 1997-1998	Box 3	Folder 4
Louisiana Cancer Alley, 2000	Box 3	Folder 5
Louisiana Cancer Alley, 1998-200	Box 3	Folder 6
Louisiana Cancer Alley, 1999	Box 3	Folder 7
Louisiana Cancer Alley, 1930-1998	Box 3	Folder 8
Louisiana Cancer Alley, 1998	Box 3	Folder 9
Louisiana Cancer Alley, 1990-1998	Box 3	Folder 10
Louisiana Cancer Alley, 1999	Box 3	Folder 11
Louisiana Cancer Alley, 2000-2002	Box 3	Folder 12
Louisiana Cancer Alley, 1995-1998	Box 3	Folder 13

Louisiana Cancer Alley, 1997-1998	Box 3	Folder 14
Louisiana Hurricanes, 2005	Box 3	Folder 15
Louisiana Hurricanes, 2005	Box 3	Folder 16
Middle East, 1983-2002	Box 3	Folder 17
Middle East, 1991-2005	Box 3	Folder 18
Other, 1992-1995	Box 3	Folder 19
Other, 1983-2005	Box 3	Folder 20
Other Clippings, 1985-1994	Box 4	Folder 1
Other- Notes/Notebooks, 1995	Box 4	Folder 2
Other- Notes/Notebooks, 1995	Box 4	Folder 3
Other- Clippings, 1992-2006	Box 4	Folder 4
Other- Notes/Notebooks, 1992	Box 4	Folder 5
Other- Notes/Notebooks, undated	Box 4	Folder 6
Other - Notes, undated	Box 4	Folder 7
Other - Notes, 1992	Box 4	Folder 8
Other - Notes, 1987	Box 4	Folder 9
Other - Notes, undated	Box 4	Folder 10
Other - Notes, undated	Box 4	Folder 11
Other - Notes, undated	Box 4	Folder 12
Other - Notes, undated	Box 4	Folder 13
Other - Notes, undated	Box 4	Folder 14
Peace, 2003	Box 5	Folder 1
Peace, 1982-2002	Box 5	Folder 2
Peace, 2005	Box 5	Folder 3
Peace, 2002-2003	Box 5	Folder 4
Peace, 2002-2005	Box 5	Folder 5
Prisons, 1970	Box 5	Folder 6
Peace, 1995-2003	Box 5	Folder 7
Peace, 1992-2005	Box 5	Folder 8
Other Letters (1:2), 1983-2002	Box 5	Folder 9
Other Letters (2:2), 1983-2002	Box 5	Folder 10
Other Letters, 1989-2003	Box 5	Folder 11

Other Letters, 1984-2002	Box 5	Folder 12
Other Letters, 1992-2005	Box 5	Folder 13
Email to Damu, 2005	Box 5	Folder 14
Other Clippings, 1998-2002	Box 5	Folder 15
Other Bios, 1983-2006	Box 5	Folder 16
Damu Articles, 1983-1987	Box 5	Folder 17
Other Bios, 1977-2005	Box 5	Folder 18
Other Bios, 2000	Box 5	Folder 19
Other Bios, 2005	Box 5	Folder 20
Other Bios, Undated	Box 5	Folder 21
Awards Circa, 1990	Box 5	Folder 22
"Spirit in Action", 2002	Box 5	Folder 23
Recommendations, 1980	Box 5	Folder 24
Notes, 1992-2005	Box 5	Folder 25
Speaking Engagements, 2001	Box 5	Folder 26
Letter Head, Undated	Box 5	Folder 27
Haiti, 1991-1995	Box 6	Folder 1
Health, 2005	Box 6	Folder 2
Health, 2004	Box 6	Folder 3
Health, 2003	Box 6	Folder 4
Health, 1992-2004	Box 6	Folder 5
Housing, 2005	Box 6	Folder 6
Housing, 1985-2005	Box 6	Folder 7
Human Rights, 1985-2005	Box 6	Folder 8
Human Rights, 1993	Box 6	Folder 9
Louisiana Cancer Alley, 1970-1995	Box 6	Folder 10
Louisiana, 1997	Box 6	Folder 11
Louisiana, 1992-2004	Box 6	Folder 12
Louisiana - Cancer Alley, 1992	Box 6	Folder 13
Louisiana - Cancer Alley, 1992-2001	Box 6	Folder 14
Louisiana - Cancer Alley, 1998	Box 6	Folder 15
Korea, 1990	Box 6	Folder 16

Korea, 1990	Box 6	Folder 17
Korea, 1990	Box 6	Folder 18
Korea, 1995	Box 6	Folder 19
Korea, 1989-1992	Box 6	Folder 20
Korea, 1990	Box 6	Folder 21
Iraq, 2005	Box 6	Folder 22
Iraq, 1991	Box 6	Folder 23
Iraq, 1991-2001	Box 6	Folder 24
Iraq, 1991-2003	Box 6	Folder 25
Korea, 1990	Box 6	Folder 26
Photograph, undated	Box 6	Folder 27
Environmental Justice Workshop, 2002	Box 7	Folder 1
Environment, 1990	Box 7	Folder 2
Environment, 1993-1997	Box 7	Folder 3
Environment, 1992-1993	Box 7	Folder 4
Environment, 1995-2000	Box 7	Folder 5
Organization Correspondence, 1994-1995	Box 7	Folder 6
Organization Correspondence, 1995	Box 7	Folder 7
Legal Paperwork, 1996	Box 7	Folder 8
National Black Environment, 2000	Box 7	Folder 9
Environmental Justice Workshop, 2003	Box 7	Folder 10
Environment, 2002	Box 7	Folder 11
Environment Articles, 1990	Box 7	Folder 12
Correspondence, 1994-1995	Box 7	Folder 13
Environment, 1995-2000	Box 7	Folder 14
Memorandums, 1994-1995	Box 7	Folder 15
Environment Articles, 1990	Box 7	Folder 16
"Sustainable America", 1996	Box 7	Folder 17
Other Notes, Undated	Box 8	Folder 1
Other Notes, Undated	Box 8	Folder 2
Other Notes, Undated	Box 8	Folder 3
Other Notes, Undated	Box 8	Folder 4

Other Notes, Undated	Box 8	Folder 5
Other Notes, Undated	Box 8	Folder 6
Other Notes, Undated	Box 8	Folder 7
Other Notes, Undated	Box 8	Folder 8
Other Notes, Undated	Box 8	Folder 9
Other Notes, Undated	Box 8	Folder 10
Other Notes, Undated	Box 8	Folder 11
Miscellaneous, 1985	Box 9	Folder 1
Africa- other, 1989	Box 9	Folder 2
Million Man March Commemorative Anthology, 1996	Box 9	Folder 3
Photographs, undated	Box 9	Folder 4
Clippings, 1970	Box 10	Folder 1
Campaign to Stop Government Spying, 1978	Box 10	Folder 2
National African American Network Against Gulf Intervention African American Conference Invite, 1991	Box 10	Folder 3
National Alliance Against Racist and Political Repression, 1978	Box 10	Folder 4
National Black Environmental Justice Network Speaking Invitation, 2004	Box 10	Folder 5
Meeting Overview, 1979	Box 10	Folder 6
Organizations Inc. Awards Celebration, 2005	Box 10	Folder 7
Organization of African American Students Correspondence, 1970	Box 10	Folder 8
Rainbow Coalition Membership Renewal, 1994	Box 10	Folder 9
Clippings, 1972	Box 10	Folder 10
United Methodist Seminars on National and International Affairs "Racism in the U.S Program Schedule, 1984	Box 10	Folder 11
Historical Magazines/Journals, 1980-2001	Box 10	Folder 12
US News and Time Magazines, 2005	Box 10	Folder 13
Africacare Day, 1990	Box 10	Folder 14
Stand for Truth - Notes, 1988	Box 10	Folder 15
Africa Articles, undated	Box 10	Folder 16
Miscellaneous, undated	Box 10	Folder 17
Memo re. African American Objectors to Gulf Crisis, 1991	Box 10	Folder 18
National Black Environmental Justice Network Correspondence, 2003	Box 10	Folder 19

Reference Desk/ Pan African Student Union, undated	Box 10	Folder 20
Africa - South Africa (Anti Apartheid), 2004	Box 10	Folder 21
Subseries: Event /Program, 1989	Box 10	Folder 22
Family/ Personal Lits of Relatives, 1979	Box 10	Folder 23
Civil Rights/Liberties, 2006	Box 10	Folder 24
ANC Office Procedures, undated	Box 10	Folder 25
Community: Advisory Neighborhood Commission ANC Manual, 1991	Box 10	Folder 26
Miscellaneous, undated	Box 10	Folder 27
EPA Grants Program Pre Application Kit, 1994	Box 10	Folder 28
National Black Caucus State Leg. Briefing, 1989	Box 10	Folder 29
Community ANC Meeting Flyer, 1993	Box 10	Folder 30
Public Health Statement on Mercury, undated	Box 10	Folder 31
List of ANC Commissioners, 1993	Box 10	Folder 32
Damu Smith Ballot Profile, undated	Box 10	Folder 33
Community: Advisory Neighborhood Commission Damu Smith Flyer, undated	Box 10	Folder 34
Community: Advisory Neighborhood Commission ANC Stationary, undated	Box 10	Folder 35
Greenpeace: Incoming Correspondence, 2000	Box 10	Folder 36
Textual Drafts, undated	Box 10	Folder 37
Africa: Sub-Series: Reports, 2003	Box 10	Folder 38
Greenpeace Events, 2000	Box 10	Folder 39
Clippings, 2002	Box 10	Folder 40
Medical Physical Exam, undated	Box 10	Folder 41
Family Personal Thank you Card, undated	Box 10	Folder 42
Notes on Housing Apartment Outreach Strategy, undated	Box 10	Folder 43
Miscellaneous, undated	Box 10	Folder 44
Damu Smith Address, undated	Box 10	Folder 45
Article re: DS Health, 2005	Box 10	Folder 46
Millions More Movement Conference, 2005	Box 10	Folder 47
National African American Network, undated	Box 10	Folder 48
Subject Article Files, 1993	Box 10	Folder 49

Photos, undated	Box 10	Folder 50
Notebook, undated	Box 10	Folder 51
Handwritten Notes, undated	Box 10	Folder 52
Environment, undated	Box 11	Folder 1
Environment, undated	Box 11	Folder 2
Environment, 1996-2005	Box 11	Folder 3
Environment, 1992-1994	Box 11	Folder 4
Environment, 1994-1995	Box 11	Folder 5
Environment, 1994-1995	Box 11	Folder 6
Environment, 1994-1995	Box 11	Folder 7
Environment, 1996	Box 11	Folder 8
Damu's Writings, undated	Box 11	Folder 9
State of the Race, 2004	Box 11	Folder 10
Photos, undated	Box 11	Folder 11
Photos, undated	Box 11	Folder 12
Photos, undated	Box 11	Folder 13
Photos, undated	Box 11	Folder 14
Photos, undated	Box 11	Folder 15
Assignment Photography Price Flyers, undated	Box 11	Folder 16
Daytime Planner, 2000	Box 11	Folder 17
The Reporter's Enviornmental Handbook, 1995	Box 11	Folder 18
Africa (South Africa) ANC Journals, 1991	Box 12	Folder 1
Africa (South Africa) ANC Journals, 1994	Box 12	Folder 2
Africa (South Africa) ANC Constitution, undated	Box 12	Folder 3
Africa (South Africa) ANC Trip Travel Materials, 1994	Box 12	Folder 4
PostCards, undated	Box 12	Folder 5
Africa (South Africa), 1978-1987	Box 13	Folder 1
Africa (South Africa), 1988-1990	Box 13	Folder 2
Africa (South Africa), 1990-1999	Box 13	Folder 3
Africa (South Africa), undated	Box 13	Folder 4
Africa (South Africa) Anti Apartheid, undated	Box 13	Folder 5
Southern Organizing Committee for Economic and Social Justice Racism Conference, 1992	Box 13	Folder 6

Southern Organizing Committee for Economic and Social Justice Programs, 1992-1994	Box 13	Folder 7
Southern Organizing Committee for Economic and Social Justice Correspondence, 1991-1994	Box 13	Folder 8
National Alliance Against Racist and Political Repression Terrence Johnson Case, 1979	Box 13	Folder 9
National Alliance Against Racist and Political Repression Washington 10 Clippings, 1977	Box 13	Folder 10
National Alliance Against Racist and Political Repression Washington 10 Case Synopsis, undated	Box 13	Folder 11
National Alliance Against Racist and Political Repression "What Has to Be Done: Theory and Practice of Mass Struggle, undated	Box 13	Folder 12
Black Voices for Peace Correspondence, 2003	Box 14	Folder 1
Black Voices for Peace Event Invitation, 2003	Box 14	Folder 2
Black Voices for Peace Programs, 2004-2006	Box 14	Folder 3
BlcK Voices for Peace Acknowledgements, 2005	Box 14	Folder 4
Black Voices for Peace Event Program, 2005	Box 14	Folder 5
Awards Reception Invitations, 2005	Box 14	Folder 6
French Street UMOJA Connection Correspondence, 1985-1986	Box 14	Folder 7
French Street UMOJA Connection Flyers, 1985-1991	Box 14	Folder 8
French Street UMOJA Connection Organization Meetings, 1986-1987	Box 14	Folder 9
French Street UMOJA Connection Press Releases, 1986	Box 14	Folder 10
French Street UMOJA Connection Memorandums, 1987	Box 14	Folder 11
French Street UMOJA Connection Mission Statement, undated	Box 14	Folder 12
National African American Tobacco Prevention Network Website Printout, 2003	Box 14	Folder 13
National African American Tobacco Prevention Network Draft Letter to Black Magazines, undated	Box 14	Folder 14
National African American Tobacco Prevention Network Correspondence, 2003	Box 14	Folder 15
Damu Interview - Anti War Rally CSPAN etc. Video Tape, 2003-2004	Box 15	Folder 1
NBC Toxic Avenger etc. Video Tape, 1994	Box 15	Folder 2
James McHenry Elementary School Music Fest Highlights Video Tape, 2002-2006	Box 15	Folder 3
Nightlife Town Hall Meeting Video Tape, undated	Box 15	Folder 4

Tape for Whats Poisoning our Communities Video Tape, undated	Box 15	Folder 5
Damu Smith Weta Now w/ Bill Mowers Video Tape, 2002	Box 15	Folder 6
unlabeled Video Tape, undated	Box 15	Folder 7
Angola The Struggle Continues Video Tape, 1987	Box 15	Folder 8
Louisiana Enviornmental Action Network Homeer LA News Coverage Video Tape, undated	Box 15	Folder 9
Coming to the Light Jesus People Against Pollution, undated	Box 15	Folder 10
Cassettes and DVDs, undated	Box 16	Folder 1
Cassettes, undated	Box 17	Folder 1
Cassettes, undated	Box 18	Folder 1
Cassettes, undated	Box 19	Folder 1
Cassettes, undated	Box 20	Folder 1
Buttons, undated	Box 21	Folder 1
Posters and Movie Reels, undated	Box 22	Folder 1
Newspapers (Flatbox), undated	Box 23	Folder 1
Slides, undated	Box 24	Folder 1
Cassettes, undated	Box 25	Folder 1
Cassettes, undated	Box 26	Folder 1
Oversized Posters, undated	Box 27	Folder 1
Cassettes, undated	Box 28	Folder 1
Cassettes, undated	Box 30	Folder 1
Cassettes, undated	Box 31	Folder 1
Cassettes, undated	Box 32	Folder 1

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)