



ArchivesSpace

# **Campbell (Beatrice Murphy) Collection**

## **An inventory of Beatrice Murphy Campbell Collection at DC Public Library**

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English

Describing Archives: A Content Standard

People's Archive, MLK Library

901 G Street NW

Washington, DC

[archives.dcpl@dc.gov](mailto:archives.dcpl@dc.gov)

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## Table of Contents

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Summary Information .....	3
Biographical / Historical .....	3
Scope and Contents .....	4
Arrangement .....	4
Administrative Information .....	5
Controlled Access Headings .....	6
Collection Inventory .....	6
Series 1 .....	6

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## Summary Information

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<b>Repository:</b>	People's Archive, MLK Library
<b>Creator:</b>	Murphy, Beatrice M., 1908-1992
<b>Title:</b>	Beatrice Murphy Campbell Collection
<b>ID:</b>	123
<b>Date [inclusive]:</b>	1979-1989
<b>Physical Description:</b>	0.25 Linear feet
<b>Physical Description:</b>	1 Boxes
<b>Language of the Material:</b>	English
<b>Language of the Material:</b>	English

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

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## Biographical / Historical

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Beatrice Murphy Campbell was born on June 25, 1908 in Monessen, PA. When she was only two years old, her mother died. In 1914 she was brought to Washington, DC where she graduated from Dunbar High School and lived there until her death in 1992. In order to support herself and her son, she worked in various jobs, and other positions. Yet, she managed to achieve an impressive literary career as a poet, editor, columnist, book reviewer and bibliographer. Her literary work was all done under the name Beatrice M. Murphy. She was a dedicated advocate and promoter of African American writers. In 1941 Campbell was diagnosed with an arthritic and inoperable curvature of the spine. Against doctors' orders, despite this condition that required her to wear a body cast and braces, she worked for the Veterans Administration for some eighteen years. In 1954, as a result of anti-communist hysteria, she was accused of subversive activity and was suspended without pay from her position as a clerk with the VA. After a four-month ordeal to clear her name, she was reinstated to her position. In 1959 she retired from that agency on disability. In the late 1960's she became legally blind and soon began to work with her ophthalmologist as a peer councilor to help others to cope with blindness or the threat of a loss of vision. In 1965 Campbell, along with others established The Negro Bibliographic and Research Center, Inc., later renamed The Minority Research Center, Inc. Despite being legally blind, she headed the Center serving as the Director. In addition, she was the Managing Editor for, Bibliographic Survey: The Negro in Print, the Center's publication. Among subscribers to the Bibliographic Survey were Federal government departments and major universities and colleges in the U.S. and abroad. In 1977 her friends incorporated the Beatrice M. Murphy Foundation to encourage the collection and dissemination of books

by and about African Americans. Campbell spent much of her retirement as a community volunteer and was formally recognized for service to the community with nominations and awards. In 1983 she received a meritorious service award from Mayor Marion Barry. These activities included testimony on the D.C. State Plan for the Aging and advocacy for improvement and other community problems and conditions that have an impact and effect on seniors, the elderly blind or the elderly physically disabled. For her outstanding civic contributions The Community Service Award was renamed the Beatrice Murphy Campbell Community Service Award in 1992 upon the passing of Ms. Campbell, a devoted member of the Mayor's Committee on Persons with Disabilities. Throughout most of her life, she lived with numerous health problems, underwent extensive medical treatments and repeated hospitalizations. On May 12, 1992, Campbell died from heart ailments.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

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## Scope and Contents

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This collection consists of seven series that include biographical information, correspondence, documentation of community involvement and service through affiliation with organizations, government agencies and departments and also speeches and testimony.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

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## Arrangement

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Series 1: Biographical (1987-1988 and n.d.): This series consists of biographical information in various forms that are largely type-written, but there is also some hand-written material. Included in this series are chronologies of her literary activity, a draft of an entry that she submitted and that was published in the Dictionary of Literary Biography along with a photocopy of the actual published entry. Series 2: Correspondence (1978-1985 and n.d.): This series is divided into incoming and outgoing correspondence. The incoming correspondence consists of letters—many of them responses initiated by Beatrice Campbell's written inquiries and comments to hospital and city officials and agency executives. The outgoing correspondence consists of letters, memoranda and notes—typed and handwritten. These documents include correspondence to Mayor Marion Barry, Jr., City Council and ANC members and also city agency and department executives and officials. Series 3: Organizations (1980-1989, and n.d.): This series largely documents a small portion Beatrice Campbell's service to the District of Columbia and her volunteer work. Also, on a smaller scale this series documents her commitment to African American authors. This series is divided into four separate subseries: 1) District of Columbia Commission on Aging; 2) District of Columbia Statewide Health Coordinating Council (SHCC); 3) The Beatrice M. Murphy Foundation and; 4) Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP). Series 4: Speeches and Testimony (1979-1984 and n.d.): This series consists of the texts of speeches and testimony delivered before various commissions and at other district hearings on issues related to the conditions and problems

of District of Columbia citizens, such as herself, who were elderly and physically or visually impaired. Series 5: Clippings and a Newsletter (1955-1986, and n.d.): This series consists of clippings. Most of these are photocopies with very few originals. The photocopies include her article written and published in the Washington Post's Outlook section concerning her efforts to clear her name and reputation after being accused of membership in a subversive organization. There is also a photocopy of part of a book chapter on the same subject. There is an undated photocopy of an obituary of her son Alvin Murphy from an unidentified newspaper. Also, there is an original clipping of the District of Columbia's Women's Hall of Fame call for nominees, a clipping about and D.C. Public Library bookmobile service for senior citizens that mentions Campbell. Finally there are three versions of the same issue of a Catholic Church Parish newsletter that notes her designation as Handicapped Person of the Year. Series 6: Awards (1981-1989, n.d): This series consists of items that document a few of (there were other awards and nominations but they are not documented in this collection) Beatrice Campbell's awards and nominations including a self-produced "album" pertaining to her recognition as Handicapped Person of the Year designation. Series 7: Miscellaneous (1980-1985 and n.d.): This series consists of items that cannot be integrated with either of the other series' and that are largely undated. Series 8: Photographs (n.d): This series consists of one photograph.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

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## Administrative Information

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### Publication Statement

People's Archive, MLK Library

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Washington, DC  
[archives.dcpl@dc.gov](mailto:archives.dcpl@dc.gov)

### Processing Information

General processing procedures consisted of discarding duplicates and retaining a maximum of two copies. Metal staples and metal paper clips were removed and replaced with plastic archival clips. Documents were arranged in chronological order with undated items filed in the back of dated material. All documents were then placed into archival, acid free folders. A single loose photograph was placed into an archival Mylar sleeve.

### Conditions Governing Use

There are no restrictions to this collection.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

## Controlled Access Headings

- Women
- African Americans
- Poets
- Authors and publishers
- People with disabilities
- Social advocacy

## Collection Inventory

Series 1		
Title/Description	Instances	
Biographical, 1978-1988	box 1	folder 1
Incoming Correspondence, 1980-1983	box 1	folder 2
Outgoing Correspondence, 1978-1985	box 1	folder 3
District of Columbia Commission on Aging, 1978-1979	box 1	folder 4
District of Columbia Statewide Health Coordinating Council (SHCC), 1980-1982	box 1	folder 5
Beatrice M. Murphy Foundation, undated	box 1	folder 6
Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP), undated	box 1	folder 7
Speeches and Testimony, 1979-1984	box 1	folder 8
Speeches and Testimony, 1979-1984	box 1	folder 9
Clippings and Newsletter, 1955-1986	box 1	folder 10
Awards - Handicapped Person of the Year, 1981	box 1	folder 11
Awards - Handicapped Person of the Year, 1981	box 1	folder 12
Awards - Women's Hall of Fame, D.C. Commission for Women, 1988-1989	box 1	folder 13
Miscellaneous, 1980-1985	box 1	folder 14
Photographs, undated	box 1	folder 15

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)