



The New York Public Library
Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture,
Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Division

Guide to the

Philip Watson papers

1922-1936

Sc MG 546

Home to Harlem Project funded by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation

Summary

Creator: Watson, Philip, 1901-1981

Title: Philip Watson papers

Date: 1922-1936

Size: 0.02 linear feet (2 folders)

Source: Gift, 409 Edgecombe Avenue Tenants Association, 1988

Revision History: This finding aid was updated by Allison Hughes.

Abstract: Philip Watson was an African-American attorney who practiced law in Harlem and later served as an assistant attorney general for the State of New York. Watson was a member of the Alpha Chapter of the Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity and the Golden Fleece Lodge 7887 in Manhattan. The Philip Watson papers consists of letters (1929-1931), primarily from Elise Johnson prior to her marriage to Watson, and legal papers. Included is a completed questionnaire for Watson's admission to the New York State Bar in 1932 and several affidavits in support of the application. The questionnaire provides biographical information about Watson such as schools attended and his employment record. Of interest is a legal brief for a case Watson argued regarding the refusal of the owner of a bathhouse at Playland in Rye, New York to admit a Black person in 1935. The collection also contains an agreement settling a lawsuit between a local chapter and the national Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, with Watson as the attorney for one of the defendants, his membership certificate for the Alpha Chapter, and a handbook of the constitution and by-laws of the Golden Fleece Lodge.

Preferred citation: [Item], Philip Watson papers, Sc MG 546, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Division, The New York Public Library

Language of the Material: English

Separated Materials:

This collection was separated from the 409 Edgecombe collection (Sc MG 804).

Photographs transferred to Photographs and Prints Division.

Creator History

Philip Watson was an African-American attorney who practiced law in Harlem and later served as an assistant attorney general for the State of New York. Watson was a member of the Alpha Chapter of the Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity and the Golden Fleece Lodge 7887 in Manhattan.

Scope and Content Note

The Philip Watson papers consists of letters (1929-1931), primarily from Elise Johnson prior to her marriage to Watson, and legal papers. Included is a completed questionnaire for Watson's admission to the New York State Bar in 1932 and several affidavits in support of the application. The questionnaire provides biographical information about Watson such as schools attended and his employment record. Of interest is a legal brief for a case Watson argued regarding the refusal of the owner of a bathhouse at Playland in Rye, New York to admit a Black person in 1935. The collection also contains an agreement settling a lawsuit between a local chapter and the national Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, with Watson as the attorney for one of the defendants, his membership certificate for the Alpha Chapter, and a handbook of the constitution and by-laws of the Golden Fleece Lodge.

Key Terms

Subjects

African American lawyers -- New York (State) -- New York
African American women authors
African Americans -- New York (State) -- New York
Black author
Race discrimination -- New York (State) -- New York

Genre/Physical Characteristic

Love letters

Names

Johnson, Elise C.
Watson, Philip, 1901-1981
Golden Fleece Lodge