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Guide to the

Jean Sindab papers

1970-1995

Sc MG 610

Compiled by Robyn Hjermsstad, 2015

Summary

Creator: Sindab, N. Jean (Nellie Jean)

Title: Jean Sindab papers

Date: 1970-1995

Size: 13 linear feet (31 boxes)

Source: Donated by the Jean Sindab Estate, 1997.

Abstract: Dr. Jean Sindab (1944-1996) was an African American scholar and activist for environmental, social, and racial justice. The Jean Sindab papers date from 1970 to 1995 and contain professional files that document subjects of interest to Sindab; organizations for which she worked; conferences that she organized or attended; and local, grassroots, and governmental initiatives related to environmental and racial justice in the United States, Latin America, and Africa. The collection also holds travel diaries and appointment books.

Access: Advance notice required.

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Processing note: Compiled by Robyn Hjermsstad, 2015

Creator History

Dr. Jean Sindab (1944-1996) was an African American scholar and activist for environmental, social, and racial justice. Between 1980 and 1995, through governmental and religious programs, Sindab led

successful campaigns to end global and environmental racism. Central to her work were the connections between environmental, economic, racial, and sociopolitical justice within a global context, particularly in African countries and American cities. She was an advisor to Jesse Jackson and the Rainbow Coalition from 1986 through Jackson's 1988 presidential campaign, and served as a consultant to several United Nations agencies, including the Center Against Apartheid, the Council for Namibia, and the Institute for Namibia in Lusaka, Zambia.

Born Nellie Jean Sindab in Cleveland, Ohio, Sindab was raised in Brooklyn, New York. After earning her bachelor's degree in African History from Hunter College in 1974, she completed three advanced degrees from Yale University: master's degrees in International Relations (1976) and Political Science (1977); and a Ph.D., also in Political Science. She completed her dissertation, *The Impact of Expatriates on Zambian Development*, in 1984. Among her scholarly affiliations were the African Studies Association (ASA) and the Association of Concerned African Scholars (ACAS). Throughout her studies and career, Sindab traveled extensively around Europe and to several countries in Africa, including Ghana, Nigeria, Namibia, Togo, and Zambia.

In 1980, Sindab was appointed executive director of the Washington Office on Africa and the Washington Office on Africa Education Fund. From 1986 to 1991, she was executive secretary of the Programme to Combat Racism of the World Council of Churches (WCC), in Geneva, Switzerland. In the United States, her roles at the National Council of Churches (NCC), where she worked from 1992 to 1996, included program director of the Economic and Environmental Prophetic Justice Unit, the Justice/Hunger Concerns Unit, and the Eco-Justice Working Group. She served on the boards of several organizations, including the Peace Development Fund, the New World Foundation, and the Third World Women's Project for the Institute for Policy Studies.

Jean Sindab died of cancer in 1996 in New York City.

Scope and Content Note

The Jean Sindab papers date from 1970 to 1995 and primarily consist of professional files created by Sindab throughout the course of her career. Travel diaries, appointment books, and files concerning Sindab's education at Hunter College and Yale University are also present.

The professional files document subjects of interest to Sindab; organizations for which she worked, served as a board member, or that she was otherwise involved with; conferences that she organized or attended; and local, grassroots, and governmental initiatives that furthered her efforts in environmental and racial justice in the United States, Latin America, and Eastern and Southern Africa. Subjects documented include race relations; environmental justice strategy; economic and social reform; environmental education; global and environmental racism; church statements on racism; South Africa; and African American youth. Sindab's involvement with a variety of organizations is well documented, including the National Council of Churches (NCC), the World Council of Churches (WCC), the Washington Office on Africa (WOA), the New World Foundation, the Peace Development Fund, and the National Political Congress of Black Women. Conferences, symposia, summits, and other events that are represented through the files include the Progressive National Baptist Convention; the 1985 Non-Governmental World Meeting for Women in Nairobi, Kenya; and the 1994 Environmental Grant Makers Association Fall Retreat. Education files document Sindab's studies at Hunter College and Yale University and contain essays, examinations, syllabi, and research files. Also present is an annotated draft of her dissertation, *The Impact of Expatriates on Zambian Development* (1984).

The professional files vary in terms of volume and content, and may include reports, action agendas,

calls for participation, conference materials, articles, brochures, correspondence, speeches, and other writings created by Sindab. Subject files may contain documents relating to conferences or other related projects. For example, the file for Economic and Social Reform contains a proposal for The Black Church Summit on Environmental Justice, a pamphlet for The Harvest Institute, and a report on the Voices of the Garden Project in the San Francisco area. Likewise, conference files may contain articles or reports on related subjects. Files for Jesse Jackson contain materials relating to the 1988 presidential campaign, the Rainbow Coalition, and speeches, addresses, and conference proposals.

Researchers should consult correspondence, speeches, writings, and notes files in addition to the professional files, as information on a given topic may be represented in both places. For example, while correspondence files hold incoming and outgoing letters pertaining to the WCC and other personal and professional projects, the WCC files themselves also contain correspondence. Furthermore, essays contained in a writings file may overlap with topics addressed in other places in the collection.

Appointment books and travel diaries date from 1970 to 1993 and further document Sindab's personal and professional activities, such as business travels or meetings not otherwise represented in the collection. One travel diary summarizes her experiences in Geneva, Switzerland in 1987, a period when she was particularly active in the Programme to Combat Racism for the WCC.

Arrangement: The collection is arranged by file type, with Professional Files further arranged alphabetically by subject.

Key Terms

Occupations

African American scholars
Women environmentalists

Genre/Physical Characteristic

Articles
Essays
Proceedings
Reports
Research (document genres)
Speeches (documents)
Writings (document genre)

Subjects

Church and minorities
Environmental degradation -- Religious aspects
Environmental justice -- Religious aspects

Geographic Names

South Africa -- Race relations
United States -- Race relations

Names

Jackson, Jesse, 1941-
Association of Concerned African Scholars

National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America
Washington Office on Africa
World Council of Churches. Programme to Combat Racism

Container List

- b. 1 f. 1-4 Correspondence 1973-1994
- b. 1 f. 6-11 Speeches and Writings 1974-1994
- b. 2 f. 1-7 Notes 1970s-1980s
- b. 3 f. 1-3 Notes 1991-1995
- Professional Files
- b. 3 f. 4 Affirmative Action 1994-1995
- Africa
- b. 3 f. 5 Political Economy 1973-1994
- b. 3 f. 6 Somalia 1992-1993
- b. 3 f. 7 U.S. Policy 1977-1993
- b. 3 f. 8 *Africa Recovery* 1993
- b. 3 f. 9-10 African Americans 1983-1993
- b. 4 f. 1 Africare 1992-1994
- b. 4 f. 2 Afro-Americans in the 1960s 1980-1981
- b. 4 f. 3 The American Jewish Committee Skirball Seminary Conference 1994
- b. 4 f. 4 Angelou, Maya and Morrison, Toni 1993
- b. 4 f. 5 *Apartheid in India* 1983
- b. 4 f. 6 Arabs and America 1988
- b. 4 f. 7-10 Association of Concerned African Scholars (ACAS) 1986-1993
- b. 5 f. 1 Association of Concerned African Scholars (ACAS) 1992
- b. 5 f. 2 Bell Curve 1995
- b. 5 f. 3 Benavides, Marta 1991-1993
- b. 5 f. 4 Black Church Capacity Building Program 1995
- b. 5 f. 5 Black Church Environmental and Economic Justice Network 1995
- b. 5 f. 6-7 Black Churches 1990-1995
- b. 5 f. 8 Black Meetings on Africa 1981
- b. 5 f. 9 *Black Political Agenda* 1995
- b. 5 f. 10 The Black Sash 1983
- b. 5 f. 11 Brazil 1992-1993
- b. 6 f. 1 Canaan Baptist Church 1992-1994
- b. 6 f. 2 Caribbean-African American Dialogue (CAAD) 1990-1992
- b. 6 f. 3 The Carter Center 1994
- b. 6 f. 4 Children 1993-1994
- b. 6 f. 5 Christopher, Gail 1993, 1995
- b. 6 f. 6 Church Activism 1992-1995
- b. 6 f. 7 Church Statements on Racism 1988-1992
- b. 6 f. 8 The Coalition on the Environment and Jewish Life 1996
- b. 6 f. 9 Columbus, Christopher--500 Years 1990-1991
- b. 7 f. 1 Commission on Higher Education 1991-1992

Professional Files (cont.)

- b. 7 f. 2 Community Development Institute 1989
- b. 7 f. 3 Community Organizing 1985-1991
- b. 7 f. 4 Congressional Black Caucus 1994
- b. 7 f. 5 Crime and Violence 1985-1995
- b. 7 f. 6 Daniels, Ron--A Campaign for a New Tomorrow 1992-1995
- b. 7 f. 7 December 12th Movement 1992-1993
- b. 7 f. 8-9 Economic Justice 1990-1993
- b. 8 f. 1 Economic and Social Reform 1992-1995
- b. 8 f. 2 Economic Theory 1970s-1980s
- b. 8 f. 3-6 Economics 1993-1995
- b. 8 f. 7 Employment Opportunities 1979-1994
- b. 9 f. 1 Environment and Population 1973-1993
- b. 9 f. 2-4 Environmental and Economic Justice Issues Linked 1978-1995
- b. 9 f. 5-6 Environmental Justice Rio Summit 1992
- b. 9 f. 7 Environmental Grantmakers Association 1994
- b. 9 f. 8 Environmental Issues 1987-1991
- b. 10 f. 1 Environmental Issues and Church 1990-1994
- b. 10 f. 2 Environmental--Pew Standard Initiative 1993
- b. 10 f. 3 Environmental Racism Black Church Summit 1993-1995
- b. 10 f. 4 European Trip 1983
- b. 10 f. 5 Evangelical Environmental Network 1995
- b. 10 f. 6 Fellowships 1980-1994
- b. 10 f. 7 Ford Foundation 1985-1986
- b. 10 f. 8 Forum '85: The 1985 Non-Governmental World Meeting for Women, Nairobi, Kenya 1985
- b. 11 f. 1-2 Funding Proposals and Budgets 1985-1993
- b. 11 f. 3 Fundraising Foundations 1990-1995
- b. 11 f. 4-7 Global Racism 1988-1995
- b. 11 f. 8 God's Earth Our Home 1994
- b. 11 f. 9 Gramsci and Marx 1979
- b. 12 f. 1 Greenberg, Stanley B. and South Africa 1978
- b. 12 f. 2 Greenpoint/Williamsburg Environmental Benefits Program 1995
- b. 12 f. 3 Hill, Anita and Guinier, Lani 1991
- b. 12 f. 4 Human Rights Hearings 1994-1995
- b. 12 f. 5 International Organizations 1970s-1980s
- b. 12 f. 6 International Relations 1970s
- Jackson, Jesse
- b. 12 f. 7-8 1983-1989
- b. 13 f. 1-5 1984-1994
- b. 14 f. 1-2 1988-1990
- b. 14 f. 3 Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies 1992-1993

Professional Files (cont.)

- b. 14 f. 4-5 Kerry Committee 1988-1990
- b. 14 f. 6 Latin America--Caribbean 1991-1993
- b. 14 f. 7 Levine, David 1994
- b. 14 f. 8 Mann, Eric--Labor and Community Strategy Center 1990, 1993
- b. 14 f. 9 Multinational Corporations 1974-1980
- b. 15 f. 1-2 Namibia 1990, 1993
- b. 15 f. 3-9 National Council of Churches (NCC) 1974-1994
- b. 16 f. 1-6 National Council of Churches (NCC) 1993-1995
- b. 16 f. 7-8 National Political Congress of Black Women 1985-1986, 1994
- b. 16 f. 9 New World Foundation 1990-1995
- b. 17 f. 1-4 New World Foundation 1993-1995
- b. 17 f. 5 North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) 1993
- b. 17 f. 6 NGO Anti-Apartheid Campaigns 1979-1981
- b. 17 f. 7 Organization of Black Graduate and Professional Students (OBGPS) 1976
- b. 17 f. 8 Orthodox Summit on the Environment 1995
- b. 18 f. 1 The Pan-African Movement 1991
- b. 18 f. 2 Papers, Proposals, and Articles by Acquaintances 1980-1995
- b. 18 f. 3 Peace 1990-1994
- b. 18 f. 4-8 Peace Development Fund 1993-1994
- b. 19 f. 1-8 Peace Development Fund 1994-1995
- b. 19 f. 9 The Politics of Meaning 1990s
- b. 20 f. 1-2 Progressive National Baptist Convention 1991-1993
- b. 20 f. 3-4 Racism 1986-1993
- b. 20 f. 5 Rainbow Coalition 1993-1995
- b. 20 f. 6 Research and Readings 1991-1995
- b. 20 f. 7 Resume 1993-1994
- b. 20 f. 8 Seminary Consortium for Urban Pastoral Education (SCUPE) 1992-1994
- b. 21 f. 1-5 South Africa 1974-1995
- b. 21 f. 6 South Africa--African National Congress Conference 1992
- b. 21 f. 7-8 Speaking Engagements and Honorariums 1986-1994
- b. 21 f. 9 Sustainable Environmental Education and Development Forum of North Carolina 1992-1993
- b. 21 f. 10 Ten Point Coalition 1995
- b. 22 f. 1 TransAfrica 1980-1995
- b. 22 f. 2 Travel Finances 1991-1995
- b. 22 f. 3 Upcoming Meetings 1995
- b. 22 f. 4-5 Urban Strategy 1990-1993
- b. 22 f. 6 Vallecitos Mountain Refuge 1994-1995
- b. 22 f. 7 Vienna--Human Rights 1993
- b. 23 f. 1 Visions and Leadership 1992-1993
- b. 23 f. 2-6 Washington Office on Africa (WOA) 1979-1994

Professional Files (cont.)

- b. 24 f. 1 What are the Alternatives? Black Politics and Theory in Crisis: An International Symposium 1994
- b. 24 f. 2 White House Retreat 1994
- b. 24 f. 3 Women 1979-1994
- b. 24 f. 4-9 World Council of Churches (WCC) 1986-1995
- b. 25 f. 1-5 World Council of Churches (WCC) 1988-1993
- b. 25 f. 6 World Economy 1993

Education Files

- b. 25 f. 7-8 1971-1973
- b. 26 f. 1-8 1971-1977
- b. 27 f. 1-6 1974-1985
- b. 28 f. 1-13 1975-1977
- b. 29 f. 1-3 1977
- b. 29 f. 4-7 Dissertation 1978-1980s
- b. 29 f. 8 Yale Memorabilia 1974-1995
- b. 30 f. 1-7 Appointment Books 1970-1987
- b. 31 f. 1-4 Appointment Books 1988-1993
- b. 31 f. 5 Contacts and Business Cards 1970s-1990s
- b. 31 f. 6-7 Travel Diaries and Notebooks 1987-1992
- b. 31 f. 8 Memorabilia 1975-1994