

C The Guardians, Inc., Columbia, Missouri, Records, 1971-1985
3878 .4 linear feet

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INTRODUCTION

By-laws, corporation records, correspondence, financial records, meeting minutes and notices, photographs and miscellaneous records of a black men's social and service organization founded in Columbia, Missouri, in 1971.

DONOR INFORMATION

The Guardians, Inc., Records were donated to the University of Missouri by club member Arvarh E. Strickland on 17 October 1990 (Accession No. 4996).

ORGANIZATIONAL SKETCH

In 1971 several prominent black citizens of Columbia, Missouri, established The Guardians, Inc., a men's club founded to "provide social activities and personal uplift" for its members and to serve as a leadership force within the black community. The high initiation fee and dues which allowed the club to function as a service organization also tended to make it exclusive. From the beginning the organization consisted of two groups whose ideas for the direction of the club differed substantially. One group considered the club to be primarily a social organization for the middle class black community of Columbia, while the other faction wanted the organization to be more civic and service oriented. The second group was especially concerned with black youth: tutoring high school students, giving achievement awards to students and teachers, providing financial aid for a nursing student and a disabled student, and supporting projects such as Lincoln University's Educational Talent Search and a summer activities program for children of the city's public housing area. In addition the Guardians discussed political issues affecting Columbia blacks, such as appointing an executive director for the Columbia Housing Authority, having a black principal in Columbia, and encouraging blacks to run for political office. By 1978 the club was having "organizational problems" and membership difficulties, and effectively ceased to function at this time. Although there was some correspondence and they met a few times until 1985, the internal conflicts and the generally improving social situation for blacks in Columbia in the 1980s combined to remove the original impetus for the organization.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The Guardians, Inc., Records, arranged alphabetically by type of record, consist of by-laws, corporation records, correspondence, financial records, meeting notices and minutes, project records, and miscellaneous material documenting a black men's club in Columbia, Missouri, from December 1971 to 1985. The financial records from 1972 to 1978 and the minutes of meetings from December 1971 to 1974 are fairly complete, but the remainder of the records are very sketchy. The meeting minutes do provide some insight into issues of importance to black Columbians in the 1970s. The project records contain several photographs of the city of Ibadan, Nigeria, as background for a possible club project that apparently never materialized.

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- f. 3 Correspondence, 1973-1975
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