



## Clayvon A. Wesley Papers (S0572)

**Collection Number:** S0572

**Collection Title:** Clayvon A. Wesley Papers

**Dates:** 1969-1971

**Creator:** Wesley, Clayvon Ambrose, 1947-

**Abstract:** The Clayvon A. Wesley Papers contain photographs, newspaper clippings, and a letter of recommendation documenting Wesley's service in the United States Air Force during the Vietnam War.

**Collection Size:** 0.01 cubic feet  
(3 folders, 9 photographs)

**Language:** Collection materials are in English.

**Repository:** The State Historical Society of Missouri

**Restrictions on Access:** Collection is open for research. This collection is available at [The State Historical Society of Missouri Research Center-St. Louis](#). If you would like more information, please contact us at [stlouis@shsmo.org](mailto:stlouis@shsmo.org). Collections may be viewed at any research center.

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**Preferred Citation:** [Specific item; box number; folder number] *Clayvon A. Wesley Papers* (S0572); The State Historical Society of Missouri Research Center-St. Louis [after first mention may be abbreviated to SHSMO-St. Louis].

**Donor Information:** The papers were donated to the State Historical Society of Missouri by Clayvon A. Wesley on March 5, 2024 (Accession No. SA4693).

**Processed by:** Processed by Rachael Heriford, March 2024

### Biographical Note:

Clayvon Ambrose Wesley was born on August 30, 1947 in Newark, New Jersey to Floyd and Lenora Wesley. Later in his childhood, Wesley moved to St. Louis and grew up in Mill Creek

Valley. In September 1966, Wesley enlisted in the United States Airforce and received basic training at Lackland Air Force Base in San Antonio, Texas. After basic training, Wesley was dispatched to Sheppard Air Force Base in Texas to receive training as an Air Force Medic, with a concentration in minor surgery. Wesley's first Air Force assignment was at Griffiss Air Force Base in Rome, New York, where he assisted in Intensive Care Surgical Recovery, pediatric, and neonatal care. In September of 1969, Wesley received deployment orders to the 12th United States Air Force Hospital in Cam Ranh Bay, Vietnam.

After arriving in Cam Ranh Bay in October 1969, Wesley served in the 483rd Hospital Group and was the only African American in a unit of twelve nurses and twelve corpsmen. Wesley helped provide pediatric care, operation, and maintenance of the cardiac monitor and defibrillator, respirator, and electrocardiograph for injured soldiers. Wesley also learned Vietnamese during this time and became the main translator for the 483rd Hospital Group.

Wesley served in Vietnam until the United States Air Force discharged him in September 1970. Upon returning to the United States, Wesley returned to St. Louis, and he initially worked at Saint Louis University Hospital as an Intensive Care Surgical Recovery Technician, Neurological Surgical Recovery Technician, and finally as a Cardiac Vascular Technician.

During this time, Wesley enrolled at Saint Louis University. Initially, Wesley struggled to find a major where he could find success and the support of professors. Throughout his time at Saint Louis University, Wesley majored in mathematics, then as a physician, and later in English. Finally, after ranking near the top in art after a series of placement tests, Wesley entered the university's art program.

Wesley successfully obtained a degree in fine art and art history in 1973. He later studied at the Institute of the Arts for Restoration and Painting in Florence, Italy, in 1982. After returning to the United States, Wesley married social worker Mary LaRena Hite Wesley (1946-2013) in 1983. Wesley also has one daughter, Rega Wesley-Stewart. Throughout his career as an artist, Wesley has created several exhibits, including a ten-part series titled "Paper Bags" and "Journey." Wesley also worked with Catholic schools throughout St. Louis to create a juried art exhibit that drew about 4,500 entries. Additionally, Wesley assisted in constructing the St. Louis-Senegal art exhibit, which showcased art created by St. Louis and Senegalese artists.

Besides working as an artist, Wesley has worked as a community activist and a social worker. Wesley assisted in establishing the Prince Hall Family Support Center, which provides social services to North St. Louis County residents. In 2002, Wesley became a member of the Archway Phylaxis Chapter of St. Louis, which is part of the international organization of Prince Hall Freemasons, whose members are dedicated to studying the life of Prince Hall and Prince Hall Freemasonry. Throughout his time as a member, Wesley spearheaded programs that provided books, glasses, medicine, and basic supplies to the people of Senegal, Africa.

**Arrangement:**

The collection has been arranged alphabetically by subject.

**Scope and Content Note:**

This collection contains a newspaper clippings scrapbook, letters of recommendation, and photographs from Clayvon A. Wesley's time as an Air Force Medic during the Vietnam War from 1969 to 1971. The newspaper clippings scrapbook includes newspaper clippings from Air Force-issued newspapers, including *Surfside Sentinel* and *Seventh Air Force News*, detailing Wesley's participation in intramural basketball leagues at the Griffiss Air Force Base and the 12th United States Air Force Hospital. The letters of recommendation included in this collection commend Wesley for his work ethic and adaptability and recommend him for a position at Saint Louis University Hospital. Finally, the photographs depict Wesley providing medical care and monitoring of injured South Vietnamese and American soldiers.

### Container List:

- f. 1 Armed forces intermural sports leagues newspaper clippings scrapbook, 1969-1971
- f. 2 Letters of recommendation, 1970-1971
- f. 3 Photographs, 1969-1970

### Index:

Index Terms	Folder	Image
Morris, John R.	2	
Nash, Geral	2	
New York (State)--Griffiss Air Force Base	1	
Soldiers--Recreation	1	
St. Louis University. Hospitals	2	
United States. Air Force	1-3	Yes
United States. Air Force--African Americans	1-3	Yes
United States. Air Force--Medical care	2-3	Yes
United States. Air Force--History--Vietnam War, 1961-1975	1-3	Yes
United States Air Force Hospital	1-3	Yes
Vietnam War, 1961-1975	1-3	Yes
Vietnam War, 1961-1975--African Americans	1-3	Yes
Vietnam War, 1961-1975--Medical Care	2-3	Yes
Vietnam War, 1961-1975--Veterans--United States	1-3	Yes
Wesley, Clayvon Ambrose, 1947	1-3	Yes