

Adams, John H. (1927-2018)

Bishop John Hurst Adams was a Bishop in the African Methodist Episcopal Church from 1972 until his retirement in 2004. In 1978, Adams co-founded the Congress of National Black Churches, Inc., which brought together African American clergy of all denominations to assist the black community. He was also involved in other programs devoted to the education, civil and voting rights, health, and family life of African American communities. Adams was chairman of the National Black United Fund, worked with Marian Edelman and the Children's Defense Fund on the Black Community Crusade for Children, collaborated with the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies, and was a vocal opponent of apartheid in South Africa.

The bulk of the collection documents Adams' time as Senior Bishop of the AME Church and Chairman of the CNBC, from the founding of CNBC in 1978 to Adams' retirement from the AME Church in 2004. The collection contains minutes from the many committee meetings of his various organizations, as well as the many bureaucratic, legal, financial concerns of both the AME Church and the CNBC. This collection also includes the papers of Adams' wife, Dr. Dolly Desselle Adams, who served for five years as the president of the Black Women's Agenda and was the eighth president and now serves on the Executive Board of The Links, Incorporated.

Collection Overview

The John Hurst Adams collection consists of 23 linear feet of material, ranging from 1940-2011. The bulk of the collection documents 1978-2004, when Adams was both a bishop in the AME Church and Chairman and Founder of CNBC. The Collection is organized into the following series: AME Church, CNBC, Other Projects, Personal, and Dolly Adams' material. The subseries run topically, and chronologically within those topics.

AME Church (10.3 linear ft.) details Adams' service in the AME Church, from 1962 to 2004 (bulk 1987-1998). In addition to the financial, legal, and personnel concerns of the AME Church, it also details the founding of the Service and Development Agency, as well as the planning and celebration of the AME Church's bicentennial in 1987. Also details Adams' participation with the education committee, as he helped found the Interdenominational Theological Center in Atlanta, Georgia.

CNBC (9 linear ft.) details the founding of the CNBC, initially titled Interdenominational Dialogue Among Black Churches, in 1978. In addition to meeting minutes, this collection contains programs, correspondence, and notes concerning CNBC's many programs such as the Church Insurance Program, Anti-Drug Program, National Fellowship for Black Pastors, and Project SPIRIT, within the CNBC's Black Family Program.

Other Projects (2.5 linear ft.) contains the programs, plans, media, and minutes surrounding Adams' other organizations that did not directly relate to the AME Church or CNBC. Some of note include: anti-apartheid in Africa, the Black Community Crusade for Children, the Lily Foundation's Black Religion Advisory Committee, the Industrial Areas Foundation, and the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies.

Personal (1 linear ft.) contains family photos, correspondence, awards and honors, and the retirement ceremony of Bishop Adams.

Dolly Adams (53 folders) contains both personal correspondence and photos belonging to Dr. Adams, as well as material relating to leadership in the Black Women's Agenda and The Links, Inc. This includes her trip to Nairobi as a Links representative during the UN International Women's Year.

Biographical Sketch

A Columbia, South Carolina native, Bishop John Hurst Adams was born in 1927 to Charity Nash Adams and Reverend Eugene A. Adams, an African Methodist Episcopal Church (AME) minister, social activist, and educator whose papers are also held in the South Caroliniana Library. Adams grew up in the Waverly District and attended Booker T. Washington High School before leaving to pursue higher education. He received a B.A. from Johnson C. Smith University in 1947, a S.T.B from the Boston School of Theology in 1950, and an S.T.M. in the Boston

University School of Theology in 1956, focusing in social ethics. During and after his education, he taught at Payne Theological Seminary in Wilberforce, Ohio from 1952 to 1956, and then became President of Paul Quinn College in Waco, Texas from 1956-1962. In August 1956, Adams married Dolly Desselle (1931—) of New Orleans, Louisiana.

In 1962, Bishop Adams became the pastor of First AME Church in Seattle, where he chaired the Central Area Civil Rights Committee alongside members of the NAACP and Seattle Urban League. In 1965, the National Urban League awarded him Man of the Year. After his work in Civil Rights in Seattle he was assigned to pastor Grant A.M.E. Church in Los Angeles, California, from 1968 to 1972. Due to his work in these two churches, he became the 87th Bishop of the AME Church in 1972 and was assigned to the Tenth Episcopal District, or the Texas District. In 1978, Adams helped found the Congress of National Black Churches (CNBC), an organization dedicated to assisting the African American community through the Christian faith. During his time as Chairman of the CNBC, Adams was also heavily involved in CNBC programs addressing drug addiction, theological education and pastor training, and black community enhancement.

In 1980 Adams was reassigned to the Second Episcopal District, which spanned the Mid-Atlantic, including Baltimore and Washington D.C. In 1984, he was honored by *Ebony* Magazine as one of the Great Black Preachers of America. Dr. Dolly Adams received a similar accolade from the magazine: from 1982-1986 she was listed as one of *Ebony's* "100 Most Influential Black Americans." *Dollars & Sense Magazine* listed Dolly in the "Top 100 Black Business and Professional Women" in 1986 and 1987. In addition to assisting her husband in ministry, while residing in D.C. Dolly Adams became president of The Links, Inc., from 1982-1986. Bishop Adams planned and oversaw the events for the AME Church's bicentennial celebration, a year-long event in 1987.

In 1988, Bishop Adams became a Senior Bishop of the AME Church and moved to Atlanta, Georgia to oversee the church's 6th District. That same year, Dolly Adams became president of the Black Women's Agenda, Inc. Her term lasted five years. In 1992, the Adams' moved to South Carolina to oversee the 7th District. During his eight-year tenure in South Carolina, Bishop Adams was a vocal advocate for removing the Confederate flag from the state capitol building in Columbia. The flag was successfully moved from the dome to the front lawn in 2000. "He had zero tolerance for injustice," said J.T. McLawhorn, director of the Columbia Urban League. "He was not just a rabble-rouser just to cause disruption. He was concerned about the betterment of society as a whole." University of South Carolina history professor Bobby Donaldson also made note of Adams' fiery personality, remarking that ""He was respectful, but if he thought you were on the wrong side of an issue, on the wrong side of history, he would tell you" (*The State*, Jan. 11 2018).

Both John and Dolly were awarded the Order of the Palmetto, the highest honor in the state of South Carolina, in 1996. Adams spent his final four years as Bishop overseeing the 11th Episcopal District, which included Florida and the Bahamas, before retiring in 2004 at the age of 77. He and Dolly retired to Atlanta, Georgia. In 2017, Columbia Mayor Steve Benjamin awarded Adams with the key to the city. Adams died January 10, 2018 at the age of 90. He is survived by Dolly Adams and their three daughters: Gaye D. Adams-Massey, Jan Hurst Adams, and Madelyn Rose Adams Cobb. Adams had eight grandchildren: Amina Desselle Massey, Amilcar Kamau Massey, Nyah Estelle Adams Massey, Mitchell Gino Brogdon, Jr., John Hurst Adams Brogdon, Malcolm Moses Adams Brogdon, Harrison Avery Adams Cobb, and Timothy Fitzgerald Cobb, Jr.

AME

Box 1: Board of Trustees

Memos

Minutes

Reorganizing Committee

Council of Bishops

1970s

1980s

1990s

2000s

Administration and Concerns

Africa

Legal

General

Lawyers Consulted/Hired

AME Zion v "From the Heart"

Airlines Reporting Corporation v Allen Travel

Bishop Cousin Complaints

Brooks v Brookins

Complaints to the Council of Bishops

EEOC Complaints to Lewis

Elder Dr. R. J. Hampton

Legette and Crawford v Mcneil, Graves and Adams

Legion Insurance

McFadden-Weaver v AME Inc

Paulette Coleman

Payne-Turner Development

Preston Williams

Property Ownership Opinion

Box 2: St. Luke AME Complaints

Tippens v AMEC

Judicial Council

General

Allen 1992

Baker v Board of Incorporators

Buckhalter v Chappelle

Chapman v Ming

Chappelle—2001

Davis v Ming

Dunn v Board of Incorporators

Dunn v Mayo

Grant AMEC

Parks v Thomas

Shaw v Ming

State of Texas v Pruitt

West v Belin

Women's Missionary Society v John's Chapel AMEC

Districts Served

Wilberforce University, Professor, 1952-1956

President, Paul Quinn College, TX, 1956-1962

Pastor, Seattle, First AME Church, 1962-1968

Pastor, Grant AME Church, L.A.

Bishop, 10th District, 1972-1980 (Texas)

CONJUNCT program

Bishop, 2nd District, 1980-1988 (Washington DC, Baltimore)

Correspondence and Issues

Programs, Retreats, Reports

No Date, Misc.

Bishop, 6th District, 1988-1992 (Georgia)

General

Conferences

Directories

1990 6th District Directory

Misc 6th District Contact Info

Finance (**box 3**)

Notes/Misc

Presiding Elders Reports

Projects

- Reverend Reassignments
- Atlanta North
 - Conferences
 - Pastor Reports
 - Finance
 - Legal Issues
 - Misc
 - Pastor Appointments/Concerns **(box 4)**
- Augusta
 - Annual Conference
 - Pastors Reports
 - Presiding Elders Reports
 - Finance
 - Misc. Issues/Legal
 - Letters from Congregation
- Macon
 - Annual Conference
 - Pastor Reports
 - Presiding Elder Reports
 - Finance
 - Letters from Congregation
 - Misc
 - Pastor Requests/Assignment
- Old Georgia
 - Annual Conference
 - Pastor Reports
 - Presiding Elder Reports
 - Correspondence **(box 5)**
 - Finance
 - Legal
 - Reverend Ward and St. Paul
- South
 - Annual Conference
 - Pastor Reports
 - Finance
 - Letters from church members
 - Pastor Certificates/Misc
- Southwest
 - Conferences
 - Pastor Reports
 - Presiding Elder's Reports
 - Finance
 - Legal
 - Property Sales
 - (box 6)** Rambeau v. Williams Live Oak
 - Retreat
 - Letters from Congregation
 - Pastor Certificates/Misc
- Bishop, 7th District, 1992-2000 (South Carolina)
- Bishop, 11th District, 2000-2004 (Florida and Bahamas)
 - General
 - Legal
 - Baker v. Cousin
 - Bethel AME v Domingo, et. al.
 - Board of County Commissioners of Brevard Co. v Shiloh AME
 - Doe v Eleventh Episcopal & Doe v. Evans, Church of Holy Redeemer
 - Fennell cases, Mt. Pisgah AME
 - Grier v. Thompson

Jackson v. Greater Mt. Zion
Legette & Crawford v. McNeil, Graves, Adams
Malicki, St. David Catholic Church, Arch Diocese of Miami v. Jane Doe
National Collectors v. Bethel AMEC
Rapha Associates v. Payne AME
Senate, Harold B.
St. Luke AME v. Rev Bethel
Suntrust Bank v. Greater Mt. Zion

Finance

AME Financial Services, LLC
Finance Dept General
Audit
Budget
Departments' Finance
Financial Crisis
Lily Endowment Grants

General Board (**box 7**)

Development Office
Committees
Education
Alternative Education Project
Morris Brown
Paul Quinn College
Payne
Theological Scholarship Awards
Turner Theological Seminary/Interdenominational Theological Center
Missions
Restructuring/Redistricting

Meetings

Bicentennial Celebration and Planning (**box 8**)
Consultations on Issues and Legislation
Doctrines and Discipline of the AME Church, 1992
Organizational meetings
Programs
44th Quadrennial
Retreats

Miscellany

Alicia D. Byrd's Dissertation (**box 9**)
Certificates
Correspondence
Notes & Readings

Personnel

Employee Security
Pension Department
Reinsurance

Position Papers

AME Working Papers

Programs

AMECure
Anti-Drug
VISN/NICC
Voting and Census Work

Projects

Proposals (**box 10**)
Bishop's Warehouse
Hurricane Relief
Miscellaneous

Publication

Ebony Excellence by J.H. Adams
SADA (Service and Development Agency)
Women's Missionary Society

CNBC

- Board of Directors (by Date)
- Church Management Services
 - CIPA
 - Proposals/Research
- Conferences
 - Annual Meetings
 - Directory
 - Notes **(box 12)**
- Correspondence
- Economic Development Committee
- Executive Committee
- Finance **(Box 13)**
- General
 - Affiliate Agreement
 - Articles of Incorporation and By Laws
 - Historical Interpretive Statement,
 - Leasing Information
 - Misc
 - Tax Exemptions/IRS
- Grants
 - American Red Cross
 - Carnegie
 - Ford **(box 14)**
 - Johnson
 - Misc. & other Funding Requests
- Legal
- Lilly Endowment
 - IDBAC
- Mary Sawyer Book and Interview
- Personnel Committee **(box 15)**
- Projects
 - Anti-Drug Campaign**
 - Automating the CNBC
 - Black Church Executive Training Program
 - Black Family Program (box 16)**
 - Project SPIRIT
 - Census and Voting
 - Ecumenism
 - Evangelism
 - Health
 - Media/PR
 - Brochures and Pamphlets
 - CAN Cable Programs
 - Congress Press
 - Correspondence
 - Dream Network
 - Forum
 - Horizons
 - Invoices
 - PR/ Mentions of CNBC
 - Project Proposals
 - Visions
 - VIZN
 - National Fellowship for Black Pastors (box 17)**

- Advisory/Planning
- Applications and Reports
- Finance
- Reports to CNBC/Special Institutes
- Project Home Safe
- Project Proposals (**box 18**)
- Read and Rise
- Teen Pregnancy Research

Other Projects

- Africa
 - Africare
 - All Africa Conference
 - Misc
 - TransAfrica
 - Democracy NOW
 - 21st Century Africa
- Civil Rights
 - Leadership Conference on Civil Rights
 - Voting
 - National Coalition on Black Voter Participation
- Community/Family
 - Black Community Crusade for Children**
 - Bellagio Conference
 - No Date/Readings
 - National & Washington Urban Leagues
 - Criminal Justice
- Confederate Flag
- Education (**box 19**)
- Employment
- Gulf War
- Health
- Industrial Areas Fund
- Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies
- Leadership
- Media
- National Black United Fund
 - CFC Federation
- Prayer Pilgrimage for Freedom
- Religion
 - "Black Churches" (**box 20**)
 - Black Religion Advisory Committee
 - Black Theology Project (**box 21**)
 - Press
- Smithsonian Exhibit
- Speeches
- Travel
 - Cuba Trip
 - Leadership Retreat
 - Ocean Reef Retreat

Personal

- Anniversary Celebration
- Correspondence
- Education
 - Johnson C. Smith University, '47
 - Boston University School of Theology, '50, '56
 - Wilberforce University Speech
- Family

- Finances
- Health
- Honors and Mentions
- Misc
- Retirement Celebration (**box 22**)

Dolly Adams

- AME Women's Missionary Society
- Black Women's Agenda
 - Luncheon 10/3/86
 - Finance
 - Membership
- Honors
- The Links, Inc.
 - Congratulations
 - Newsletter
 - UN 1985 Conference, Nairobi

Items (23)

- Awards
- Business Cards
- Photo Albums
- Misc.