

## Marie Greenwood Papers

### Blair-Caldwell African American Research Library Denver Public Library 2001

**Provenance:** The collection was donated to the Blair-Caldwell African American Research Library / Denver Public Library by Marie Greenwood.

**Ownership:** Literary and copyrights have been assigned to the Denver Public Library.

**Call Number:** MS-ARL56

**Size:** 1 box

**Processed By:** Tammi E. Haddad

**Date:** September 2002

### **Biographical Information**

Marie Louise Greenwood exhibited great determination and resiliency in becoming one of Denver's first black schoolteachers. She prevailed and overcame severe opposition in the 1930s, when segregation had a strong grip on the city. Even after retiring in 1974, Greenwood's passion and dedication motivated her to volunteer in several programs for children in northeast Denver for several more years.

She was born Marie Louise Anderson on 24 November 1912 in Los Angeles to a railroad chef and a domestic worker. Her family moved to Denver when she was thirteen.

During adolescence, Anderson realized her love for children and decided she wanted to teach. Every step of the way, however, she was blatantly discouraged. Her high school dean told her that all she could do was "work in somebody's kitchen or clean somebody's house."

"It hurt, it hurt deeply," Anderson said in the book, *Growing By Black*. "I left home office and went to the girls' room. I cried, I pounded on the walls; I said, 'I'm going to show her.'" She defied other myths, too, such as one about black parents not wanting black teachers for their children.

Anderson not only graduated from West High School but also attained a scholarship as one of the state's top students. She enrolled in Colorado Teacher's College in Greeley, but racism prevented her from living on campus or joining clubs. She shared a house with eleven other young black women and walked to school every day. Getting ready to graduate in the spring of 1935, Anderson was encouraged by a Denver minister to take the teacher's exam. Greenwood passed the exam and interview session and received her letter of assignment on the twentieth of June 1935 to teach at Whittier Elementary School for the 1935-1936 school year.

Anderson married Bill Greenwood in 1943. Two years later, she left teaching to concentrate on raising a family. The Greenwoods built a home in West Denver and their four children became the first black students at Newlon Elementary School. She returned to the classroom in 1953 as a substitute teacher at Newlon before being reinstated full-time two years later. Again she broke barriers since all black teachers at that time were being assigned strictly to schools in northeast Denver. Her quality of teaching helped white parents at Newlon overcome their prejudices of a black teacher instructing their children.

Greenwood still exhibits the spirit today for teaching that she displayed back in 1935 when she refused to be turned away from the profession.

-taken from a draft for the *Colorado Black Leadership Profiles* found in the collection

## **Scope and Content**

The Marie Greenwood Papers (1930s-1940s and 1980s-2001) include materials (papers, certificates, publications and correspondence) she obtained during her years of service in Denver as a dedicated teacher and also as a volunteer to the community.

## **Series**

### **Personal Papers**

*Material from: 1930s-1940s and 1980s-2001*

*Box 1*

The Marie Greenwood Papers consists of publications, articles on Marie Greenwood's accomplishments, and personal papers. The collection includes information on the various programs with which Greenwood was involved (such as the Read Aloud Program), and material on all of the awards for which Greenwood received nominations - including the 9 Who Cares and 7 Everyday Heroes awards. The collection is arranged alphabetically.

## Container Listing

### Personal Papers

#### Box 1

Box 1	FF1	A Class Act (Rocky Mountain News)	2/21/1999
Box 1	FF2	Alpha Kappa Alpha	1993
Box 1	FF3	Biographical Material	undated
Box 1	FF4	Certificate: Shorter A.M.E. Church	1/30/1994
Box 1	FF5	Channel 7 - Everyday Hero	2000
Box 1	FF6	Channel 9 - Who Cares	1994
Box 1	FF7	Correspondence	1990s
Box 1	FF8	Crestmoor Chronicle	Fall 1996
Box 1	FF9	Chelsea Cusack	2000
Box 1	FF10	Dedication Program for Marie L. Greenwood Elementary School	10/11/2001
Box 1	FF11	Denver Public Library: Volunteer of the Year	1994
Box 1	FF12	Denver Public Schools: Pay Increase	1930s-1940s
Box 1	FF13	Far Northeast Neighbors, Inc.	3/11/1999
Box 1	FF14	William Rivers Greenwood, Sr.	1980s
Box 1	FF15	Ira C. Meadows: Annual Roast Toast	2000
Box 1	FF16	Newspaper Articles	1990s
Box 1	FF17	Poems	undated
Box 1	FF18	Read Aloud Program	1996
Box 1	FF19	Scribes: A 10 cents Miracle	Spring 1977

Box 1	FF20	Summer Bulletin	8/1984
Box 1	FF21	20 <sup>th</sup> Century Colorado: The Thirties	1993
Box 1	FF22	University of Northern Colorado	1997
Box 1	FF23	Marilyn S. Wells	3/2000