

**Leroy Smith**

**Promoter / Businessman**

**Blair-Caldwell African American Research Library  
Denver Public Library**

**Leroy Smith Papers**  
**Blair-Caldwell**  
**African American Research Library**  
**Denver Public Library**  
**2004**

**Provenance:** The collection was donated to the Blair-Caldwell African American Research Library in 2001.

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

**Call Number:** MS-ARL69

**Size:** 2 boxes (1.75 linear feet)

**Processed By:** Brent Wagner and Daniel Edwardo Castillo

**Date:** May 2004

**Biographical Note**

Born 11 July 1911 in Eufala, Oklahoma.

Abandoned first job (picking cotton) in Poteau, Oklahoma, at age 14.

Moved to Fort Smith, Arkansas, where he graduated from high school and worked as a bus boy.

Worked as a Pullman car porter in Ogden, Utah.

Married Lulu Green on 16 October 1935.

Made permanent move to Denver on 01 June 1936.

Opened record shop in 1939 at East 22<sup>nd</sup> Avenue. Business grew rapidly, so he expanded the Rhythm Record Shop to the Five Points area. Eventually, it became the Rhythm Record & Sporting Goods Shop.

In 1943, gave up job with the railroad and started travelling with big name black entertainers of the era.

### **Biographical Note (continued)**

Became a disc jockey at radio stations KFEL and KIMN, in 1948. Hosted the “Rockin’ with Leroy Show,” which aired nightly at midnight.

Candidate for 1955 City Council (District Eight).

In 1956, received a certificate as Dance Promoter for Jazz, Rhythm and Blues within the Rocky Mountain region. Booked top entertainment at his Voters Club (2617 Welton Street) and the Rainbow Ballroom.

First black Deputy Game Warden for State of Colorado – 1958.

First black member of Denver Chamber of Commerce.

33<sup>rd</sup> degree Mason of the Shriners of Syrian Temple No.49

Died on 26 March 1989 at the age of 77.

### **Scope and Content**

The Leroy Smith Collection (bulk dates = 1940s–1960s) contains a scrapbook of activities with which Smith was involved during his lifetime as a promoter of sports, music, and entertainment. Evidence suggests that one of Smith’s family members assembled the scrapbook. In addition to newspaper clippings, researchers will discover correspondence, telegrams, contracts, and photographs. Famed photographer Burnis McCloud took many of the images. There exist many loose pages from the scrapbook that fell out. These stray pages reside in a separate acid-free folder (Box 2, Folder 1) – no attempt has been made to place them back in the scrapbook.

A significant amount of material that pertains to the Shriners, specifically, the Syrian Temple No.49, appears in the Smith Collection. Refer to Box 1, Folders 2-3 for coverage of Shriners activities. Smith was a high-ranking member.

Also of note are loose photographs (many of them signed) of beauty contests and acts he sponsored. Some of these pictures include, but are not limited to, Cassius Clay, The Delfonics, Count Basie, Muddy Waters, Nancy Wilson, and Fats Domino.

## **Container Listing**

### **Box 1**

Box 1	F1	Scrapbook (copy)	bulk = 1940s-1960s
Box 1	F2	Shriners – Publications and Awards	bulk = 1940s-1960s
Box 1	F3	Shriners – Photographs	bulk = 1940s-1960s
Box 1	F4	Photographs – Beauty Contests	bulk = 1940s-1960s
Box 1	F5	Photographs – Promotional (a)	bulk = 1950s-1960s
Box 1	F6	Photographs – Promotional (b)	bulk = 1950s-1960s

### **Box 2**

Box 2	F1	Scrapbook strays (original)	bulk = 1940s-1960s
Box 2		Scrapbook (original)	1919-2000, n.d.
Box 2		Shriners hat	