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Summary

Title: Queens College Clock Tower Bells Collection

Dates: 1989-2012

Extent: 1 box

Creator: Collected by Avonelle (Bunny) Walker

Language: English

Abstract: This collection contains photos and related papers documenting the creation and installation of the five bells in the Chaney-Goodman-Schwerner Clock Tower of Queens College’s Rosenthal Library.

Source: Donated by Avonelle (Bunny) Walker in 2012.

Access: Collection is open for research. Staff may restrict access at its discretion on the basis of physical condition.

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Preferred Citation: Item, date (if known), box, folder, Queens College Clock Tower Bells Collection, Department of Special Collections and Archives, Queens College, City University of New York.

Related Collections: Mark Levy Collection, Queens College

Controlled Access Terms

Subjects: Bells
Bell towers
Mississippi Freedom Project
People: Chaney, James Earl, 1943-1964  
Goodman, Andrew, 1943-1964  
Schwerner, Michael Henry, 1939-1964

Places: Queens College (New York, N.Y.)  
Queens County (N.Y.)
Historical Note

The Chaney-Goodman-Schwerner Clock Tower of Queens College’s Rosenthal Library was built in 1988 and dedicated in 1989. Its name honors three civil rights workers – James Chaney, Andrew Goodman, and Michael Schwerner – who were murdered in Mississippi in 1964, where they were volunteering for the Mississippi Freedom Project. Goodman was a Queens College student at the time of his death.

Shortly after the tower’s dedication, a campaign to furnish it with a real bell carillon, rather than electronic chimes, was spearheaded by music professor David S. Walker ('52). Using funds from the New York State Dormitory Authority, a five-bell peal was commissioned and cast at the Royal Eijsbouts Bell Foundry in the Netherlands.

The bells, ranging in weight from 209 to 3,377 pounds, are individually tuned to sound the Westminster Chime at 15-minute intervals, with the largest tenor bell tolling the hour. Each bell has a unique inscription and is dedicated to a different segment of the Queens College community.

Walker took a personal interest in the design of the bells and visited the foundry with his wife, Avonelle (Bunny) Walker, in January 1990, when they were being cast. He also gave an account of the bells' history at the dedication ceremony on November 7, 1990.

Most of the photographs and papers in this collection relate to the design, construction, and installation of the bells as documented by the Walkers.
Scope & Content Note

The majority of this collection consists of photos from an album depicting the creation and installation of the five bells in the clock tower of Rosenthal Library. A handwritten essay explaining the history of the project, as well as four pages of captions describing the photos, are included. Supporting materials include mementos from the Walkers’ trip to the bell foundry in the Netherlands as well as articles on similar sets of bells.

Arrangement Note

The Walker photo album has been disassembled for preservation purposes. A page-by-page photocopy preserves its layout, and the original photos and other items are housed in archival sleeves and folders.

Series Description & Container List

Series I: Photo Album

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Series II: Supporting Material

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