

William James Ryan Collection (AC143)

Introduction:

The William James Ryan Collection explores local African American broadcasters in Kansas City from 1922 to 1982.

Descriptive Summary:

Creator: William James Ryan

Title: William James Ryan Collection

Date Range: 1992

Size: 0.209 Linear Feet (1 Box)

Collection Number: AC143

Donor Information:

William James Ryan, May 2025

Citation Note:

William James Ryan Collection (AC143), Black Archives of Mid-America, Kansas City, Missouri

Subjects:

African American Broadcasters

Afro-American Life and History (ASALH)

Administrative Information:

Reproduction Restrictions: Unrestricted.

Access Restrictions: Unrestricted.

Biographical Sketch:

William James Ryan was born on November 13th, 1940, in Wichita, Kansas, to John Norton Junior and Margaret Louise Ryan. Ryan married Linda Suzanne Elston in July 1966. Together,

they had one child, Mary Suzanne. They divorced in 1975. Ryan remarried Beverly Ann Sewell on August 14, 1976.

Ryan is an Associate Professor of Communication who was granted emeritus status in 2003. He earned his Bachelor of Arts from Kansas State University in 1963 and a Master of Divinity from Dubuque Theological Seminary in 1967. He earned his Master of Arts degree from the University of Missouri-Kansas City in 1971. Ryan joined Rockhurst University in Kansas City, Missouri, in 1976 and taught there until his retirement in 2003. He was also the Chairman of the Department of Communications from 1983 to 1986 and became the Chairman of the Division of Humanities from 1992 to 1995.

He served as the intern pastor for Fairmount Presbyterian Church in Jacksontown, Ohio, from 1966 to 1967. He then became the pastor of First Presbyterian Church in Slater, Missouri, from 1967 to 1970. Following this, he was the associate pastor at Linwood Presbyterian Church in Kansas City from 1970 to 1975 and at Colonial United Church of Christ in Prairie Village, Kansas, from 1975 to 1978. Additionally, he worked as an adjunct staff member at Heartland Presbytery in Kansas City from 1971 to 1974. He also provided counseling in outpatient psychiatry at the University of Kansas Medical Center from 1971 to 1975.

Scope and Content Note:

Series 1: Correspondence

In 1992, William J. Ryan wrote to Dr. Edward Beasley, the Program Chair for Penn Valley Community College, to submit a proposal for a paper he intended to present at the 77th Annual Convention of the Association for the Study of African American Life and History (ASALH). The title of his proposed paper was “African Americans in Local Broadcasting: Kansas City, 1922-1982.”

Series 2: Paper

On October 9, 1992, William J. Ryan presented a paper titled “African Americans in Local Broadcasting: Kansas City, 1922-1982” at the 77th annual convention of the Association for the

Study of African American Life and History in Kansas City, Missouri. This paper examines the first 60 years of African American involvement in local broadcasting in Kansas City, which was one of the first major U.S. cities to establish a strong commercial broadcasting industry. The study provides a brief history of the roles played by African Americans in Kansas City broadcasting from the inception of the city's commercial radio in 1922 through 1982.

Series 3: Program

Between October 7-11, 1992, the 77th Annual Meeting of the Association for the Study of Afro-American Life & History (ASALH) was held at the Westin Crown Center in Kansas City, Missouri. The program provided daily conference activity information, board member messages, essays, and membership details.

Collection Inventory:

Series 1: Correspondence

- f. 1 Correspondence. Dr. Edward Beasley, Program Chair, ASAALH, Penn Valley Community College, from William J. Ryan, February 11th, 1992.
- f. 2 Correspondence. ASALH Program Participants, from Ed Beasley, Chairperson, Penn Valley Community College, July 15th, 1992.

Series 2: Paper

- f. 3 Paper. African Americans in Local Broadcasting; Kansas City, Kansas City, 1922-1982. By William James Ryan, Rockhurst College, Kansas City, Missouri, 1992.

Series 3: Program

- f. 4 Program. "Program of the 77th Annual Meeting of the Association for the Study of Afro-American Life & History," October 7-11, 1992.

Processed by: Kat Miller, Assistant Archivist, June 2025

Sources:

“Emeritus Faculty and Staff | Rockhurst University.” 2023. Rockhurst University. 2023.
<https://www.rockhurst.edu/directory/faculty-emeritus>.

“William James Ryan.” 2021. Prabook.com. 2021.
https://prabook.com/web/william_james.ryan/574696.