

Special Collections

Archives – Housed in a locked room on the basement level, our special archives consists of everything LeMoyn-Owen College. Newspaper clippings about L-OC, magazines that feature L-OC, College catalogs (1940 – 2010), yearbooks (1941-2009), commencement programs (1933-2010), alumni directories, past college president’s speeches, The LeMoynite newspaper, The Beacon Magazine, The Magician Newspaper (1958-2009), The Crisis, pictures and so much more! We even have two lamps donated by A. Maceo Walker (1909-1994), Founder of Tri-State Bank and President of Universal Life Insurance Company. We also have the actual chair that Dr. Hollis F. Price sat in while serving as President – we think! Every day, we are discovering hidden treasures in this historical collection. This closed collection is only available by appointment only.

Dr. Lionel Atwell Arnold Collection – Dr. Arnold taught Philosophy and Religion at LeMoyn-Owen College from 1957 – 1971. He also served as the College Pastorate and as a Dean. He left Tennessee and moved to Stillwater, Oklahoma where he was a professor at Oklahoma State University for 15 years and then retiring as the Acting Head of the Humanities Department. When he died November 6, 2019, he bequeathed a trust to LeMoyn-Owen College Alumni office and his personal library to the Hollis F. Price Library. In August, 2020, his niece, Bertha J. Thomas sent four boxes of books from his last home in Raleigh, North Carolina to Memphis. These books consist of a wide variety of topics, most notably, languages, literature, gardening and art. Of the 59 books donated, select titles were previewed, cataloged and are now housed in our individual study carrels (4 – 6 books in a room) for individual enjoyment. Born on August 30, 1921 in Greenville, Pennsylvania, Dr. Arnold was 98 years old.

Lois Deberry Collection – A native Memphian and alumni of LeMoyn-Owen College, Lois Marie DeBerry was born on May 5, 1945, the second of five children of Samuel and Mary DeBerry. She graduated from Hamilton High School and in 1971 graduated from LeMoyn-Owen College with a Bachelor’s of Arts degree in Elementary Education. She was fully engaged in the civil rights movement by participating in sit-ins, marches and protest. Always an educator, she worked as a counselor with federal projects and served as president of the National Black Caucus of State Legislators. On May 10, 1997, LeMoyn-Owen College bestowed upon her the Doctor of Laws for her advocacy work with youth development, education and criminal justice reforms. She was an American politician who was a member of Tennessee House of Representatives and former Speaker Prop Tempore of the Tennessee House. A member of the Democratic Party, she was elected to represent the 91st district, part of Shelby County. She was first elected to the Tennessee General Assembly in 1972. She was the second African American woman to serve in the Tennessee General Assembly and the first woman to be speaker pro tempore of the House. At the time of her death in 2013, she was the longest serving member of the House. This collection consists of 109 titles from her personal library.

Juvenile Collection - This collection on the main floor near our Hollis F. Price Middle School books features children's books, but most notably winners of the Coretta Scott King, Caldecott and Newberry awards. *The Coretta Scott King* award is an annual award presented by the Ethnic & Multicultural Information Exchange Round Table for the most distinguished portrayal of African American experience in literature for children or teens. *The Caldecott* named for Randolph Caldecott annually recognizes the most distinguished American picture book for children. *The Newberry* named for John Newberry is a literary award given by the Association for Library Service to Children, a division of the American Library Association, to the author of the "the most distinguished contribution to American literature for children."

William P. McLemore – These books were donated from his personal library as a circulating supplement to the Sweeney Collection. The 60 books are shelved on the main floor near the reference section. There are books on Martin Luther King, Jr., Malcolm X, Frederick Douglass, African American Athletes, African American Cowboys, etc. Students and faculty may check out up to 20 books for 28 days.

Sweeney Collection – The Sweeney Collection began during the administration of President Frank Sweeney and under the librarianship of Mr. Charles Hamilton. President Sweeney served as President of the college from 1929-1940. In 1937, President Sweeney appointed a committee composed of faculty, student and alumni to study the feasibility of developing and organizing a special collection of books written by and about African Americans. President Sweeney donated many of his personal books to the collection and gifts were obtained from donors such as, Mr. T. L. McLemore, a prominent member of the community. The collection was originally housed in a closed case in Steele Hall. The collection moved when the library moved in 1962. A special room on the 3rd floor was designated in the new Hollis F. Price Library. Because many of the over 8,000 books are fragile, valuable and limited editions, students and faculty may only check out 3 books for 5 days from this closed special collection.