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## Historic NAACP papers donated to KSU

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In the yellowing pages packed into the Cobb NAACP's filing cabinets is the organization's history: minutes of its first meeting, photographs of members, newspaper clippings of its voter registration drives.

The organization has so many records that some of its important documents are stored at members' homes, said Deane Bonner, president of the Cobb branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.

Now, many of those papers will be donated to Kennesaw State University's Department of Archives and Records, a move that will consolidate the organization's papers and make them available to researchers.

"When you talk about black history [in Cobb], you are going to get a true picture of who we are through the papers," Bonner said.

Among the items the NAACP is donating is a 1970s-era photograph of NAACP leadership meeting at Dobbins Air Reserve Base to discuss hiring practices for its food service workers, Bonner said.

"At the time, there were a lot of workers in the cafeteria who felt they were being treated unfairly, and they asked us to talk about it," Bonner said. "These people were in dead-end jobs. There was no advancement."

Bonner said the discussions led to an agreement that opened up a management track. "So people could advance from being a cook or sweeping floors into management," Bonner said.

Other documents include the redistricting lawsuit filed against Marietta in the 1970s. The suit led to the election of Hugh Grogan, the first African-American city councilman in Marietta.

The NAACP and the school will have a signing ceremony Thursday at 2 p.m. at KSU.

Although histories of Cobb have been written, the African-American experience in the county needs to be filled in. "That story lies in the archives of the Cobb County NAACP because they were so influential in getting their political voice heard," said Tamara Livingston, KSU's archives director.

The organization got its start first as the Marietta branch and later became the Cobb branch of the NAACP about 1960. The first college branch in Cobb of the NAACP was established at KSU in 1986.

The documents will be housed at the university's Sturgis Library.

The collection is also a significant contribution to KSU's fledgling archives, which were created in 2004. The school's archives include photographs from the Bell Bomber Plant in Marietta, manuscripts and oral histories.

"The NAACP papers are the kind of collection that I hope will lead to other similar donations," said Tom Scott, a KSU history professor and author of a book about Cobb history.

He also hopes the donation will lead to oral histories of the people whose names appear in the NAACP's papers.

"Looking back at these records, we should be able to see just how a relatively small population asserts itself and presents itself to a wider audience," Scott said.

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