

**The Burke Library at Union Theological Seminary,
Columbia University in the City of New York**

Union Theological Seminary Archives 1

Finding Aid for

David Langston Papers, 1968-1971



David Langston circa 1969. UTS: David Langston Papers, 1968-1971, Series 2, Box 2, folder 30. The Burke Library at Union Theological Seminary, Columbia University in the City of New York.

Finding Aid prepared by: Rebecca Nieto, January 2017

With financial support from the Henry Luce Foundation and the E. Rhodes and Leona B. Carpenter Foundation

Summary Information

Creator: David J. Langston, 1944-
Title: David Langston Papers, 1968-1971
Inclusive dates: 1968-1971
Bulk dates: 1968-1971
Abstract: M.Div, UTS 1971; Ph.D. English/American Literature, Stanford 1977; student member of Union's Core Experimental Program 1968-1970. Collection includes primary drafts, proposals, memoranda, ephemera, photographs, and published matter concerning Core programming at Union during the late 1960s-early 1970s as well as student activities in and around Union on issues such as anti-war activism, racial justice, and anti-apartheid organizing.
Size: 3 boxes, 1.5 linear feet
Storage: **Offsite storage**
Repository: The Burke Library
Union Theological Seminary
3041 Broadway
New York, NY 10027
Email: burkespecial@library.columbia.edu

Administrative Information

- Provenance:** The David Langston Papers were donated to the Burke Archives by Dr. Langston in August 2012. These materials were among a large amount of unprocessed material that was organized in 2016/2017 with funds provided by the Henry Luce Foundation and E. Rhodes and Leona B. Carpenter Foundation.
- Access:** Archival papers are available to registered readers for consultation by appointment only. Please contact archives staff by email to burkespecial@library.columbia.edu, or by postal mail to The Burke Library address on page 1, as far in advance as possible. Burke Library staff is available for inquiries or to request a consultation on archival or special collections research.
- Access Restrictions:** The collection is unrestricted to readers. Certain materials, however, are in a fragile condition, and this may necessitate restriction in handling and copying. Please note that boxes are held in Offsite storage and will require 48 hours' notice in response to a weekday request for retrieval.
- Preferred Citation:** UTS1: David Langston Papers 1968-1971, series #, box #, and folder #, The Burke Library at Union Theological Seminary, Columbia University in the City of New York.

Biography

Dr. David Langston is a scholar of American literature and theology whose time as a graduate student at Union was impacted by the surge in campus activism and social justice-oriented direct actions in the Vietnam era. He was born in Albany, Oregon on October 3, 1944. He earned his B.A. from Oklahoma Baptist University in 1967 with a major in History, and double-minor in English and philosophy. Langston decided to pursue his academic interest in the philosophy of religion at Union Theological Seminary beginning in September of 1967, earning his Master of Divinity in May, 1971. Langston entered UTS as a Rockefeller Fellow, a fellowship intended to support students who were not committed to careers in ministry through their seminary educations. During his studies at Union, Langston was involved with the initial year of Union's Core experimental program, an initiative composed of approximately a dozen students who held regularly meetings and discussion groups around themes concerning faith, politics, philosophy, and exegetical praxis, and wrote collaboratively on topics issued for the National Council of Churches' Faith and Order Colloquium. The Core program was intended to provide a space for Union students committed to exercising activist practices through their work in theology and religion.

Langston fastidiously kept documentation on student demonstrations, publications, working groups and initiatives as a result of his consistent involvement with student activism at Union during this period. As Langston himself states, the materials collected in his papers give evidence to various on-campus efforts surrounding social justice organizing during this time. Langston's collection of primary documents recounting Union during these years were used as source material for his and McKeown's book as well as David Cline's dissertation, *Revolution and Reconciliation*, which focuses specifically on the Student Interracial Ministry's impact on student and community activism at Union.

After graduation, Dr. Langston earned his Ph.D. in English and American Literature from Stanford University in 1977, and has been teaching and writing in various academic capacities since, most recently as Professor of English and Communications at Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts in the Berkshires.

Collection Scope and Content Note

This collection comprises academic writing and reading materials compiled as part of Langston's participation in Union's Core experimental religious education program, as well as administrative and personal textual materials, photographs, ephemera, planning documents and student publications documenting campus and community activism at Union Theological Seminary between 1968 and 1971.

The collection is organized in 2 series:

- **Series 1: Core Experimental Program, 1968-1970 (1 box, 0.5 lin. ft.)**

This series includes handwritten notes, meeting agendas and planning guides, annotated drafts and proposals for curriculum structure, seminary memoranda addressed to Langston and other relevant group leaders, writings by CORE student members, program evaluations, and group readings by theme. Materials include photographs from the Core retreat from 1970, including a card written by Langston identifying subjects in the images.

- **Series 2: Union Theological Seminary Coursework and Student Activism, 1968-1971 (2 boxes, 1.0 lin. ft.)**

This series includes textual materials relating to student activism, specifically at Union and Columbia surrounding Vietnam, student responses to the *Black Manifesto*, bail funds for incarcerated members of the Black Panther Party, President John C. Bennett's involvement with campus activism, as well as non-Columbia related materials on political mobilization on a global scale. Other UTS-related materials include runs of the student publication, *Plastic Bag* and *Mini Bag* (including issues from 1970, heretofore not included in the Burke's archive), Union Commission materials, memoranda and administrative press releases to the campus community in light of direct actions on campus. This series includes included are Langston's personal and academic writings, readings, and writings by peers and mentors, all collected part of Langston's coursework at Union. Finally, this series also includes photographs taken during Langston's time at Union, including a rally to free the Panther 21, and street shots of the Morningside Heights neighborhood.

Processing

Metal clips and staples were removed from materials and folded items were flattened. Materials were placed in new acid-free folders and boxes. Acidic items were separated from one another by interleaving with acid-free paper as needed. Any items in an advanced state of deterioration were placed in Mylar envelopes. Issues of *Plastic Bag* were maintained in their original plastic cases, but encapsulated in acid-free folders to prevent further deterioration.

Further Sources

The materials included in Dr. Langston's papers complement the Burke's holdings from the Vietnam years, specifically the [John Coleman Bennett Papers](#), [the Student Interracial Ministry Records](#), and UTS2: Union Theological Seminary Records (Union's administrative archives – please consult the archivist for further information). For additional reading, please consider the following resources:

David P. Cline. (2016). *From Reconciliation to Revolution: The Student Interracial Ministry, Liberal Christianity and the Civil Rights Movement*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press.

David Langston and William McKeown. (1971). "The Student Movement at Union Theological Seminary, 1963-1969. New York: Department of Ministry, National Council of Churches.

Contents list

Series 1: CORE Student Group, 1968-1970

Series	Box	Folder	Contents
1	1	1	CORE Education Proposal, 1968
1	1	2	Experimental Program, 1968-1969
1	1	3-4	CORE Group Historical Evaluative Sketch, 1969-1970
1	1	5	CORE Experimental Program – Reports and Proposal, 1970
1	1	6	CORE Group Recommendation [Draft], 196?
1	1	7	CORE Group Planning – Appendix A Staffing and Finance, 196?
1	1	8	CORE Group Correspondence, 1969
1	1	9	CORE Journal, 1965
1	1	10	CORE Group Meeting Agendas, 1969-1970
1	1	11	Transcript of CORE Discussion of Christ and Culture, 1969
1	1	12	CORE Group Exercise on Spiritual Challenge and Brokenness, 1970
1	1	13	Wedding Script for Group Discussion [1970]
1	1	14	Group on Myth, 1970
1	1	15	Note to CORE Group [196?]
1	1	16	CORE Writings, 196?
1	1	17	Kirkridge Retreat, 1969
1	1	18	Group Retreat Photographs, 1970
1	1	19	CORE Student Theses [1970]
1	1	20	CORE Proposals – Christian Visions of Society, Undated
1	1	21	UTS Faculty Discussion on First-Year Core Groups, Undated

Series 2: Union Theological Seminary – Coursework and Student Action, 1968-1971

2	1	1	May 1968 Protest and Strike Planning, 1968
2	1	2	A Message to Alumni, Parents and Other Friends of Columbia, 1968
2	1	3	Draft Statement on Black Panthers, 1968
2	1	4	UTS and the Matter of Bail Fund or Panther Party Members, 1968
2	1	5	Service of Gratitude and Repentance in Memory of MLK, Jr., 1968
2	1	6	Generation Gap – Issue or Illusion, 1968
2	1	7	Vietnam Moratorium (Note), 1969
2	1	8	Press Statement on Cambodia and Southeast Asia by Four Prominent Churchmen [1969]
2	1	9	Franz Schurmann March on Washington Notes – Imperialism in the Pacific, 1969
2	1	10	Correspondence, 1969
2	1	11	UTS Goals for Seminary Working Group, 1968
2	1	12	UTS Correspondence – Model Cities Program, 1968
2	1	13	Student Statements Re: Black Manifesto, 1969
2	1	14	New Seminary Movement, 1969
2	1	15	Union Commission Meetings and Notes, 1968-1970
2	1	16	Union Commission – Plenary and Standing Committee Meetings, 1968 1969

Series 2: Union Theological Seminary – Coursework and Student Action, 1968-1971

Series	Box	Folder	Contents
2	1	17-18	Union Commission Meetings and Working Documents, 21966-1969
2	1	19	[Christianity] and Tragedy [handwritten course notes], 1968
2	1	20	White Racism Project, 1969
2	1	21	John C. Bennett – Law, Order and Change, 1969
2	1	22	Plenary – National Faith and Order Colloquium, 1968
2	1	23	Cobb – Working Paper and Rap (F&O Colloquium), 1969
2	1	24	The Politics of Revolution [Research], 1969
2	1	25	Black Manifesto to the White Christian Churches and Jewish Synagogues in the USA and All Other Racist Institutions, 1969
2	1	26	Reading – Apocalypse (Walter Wink), 1969
2	1	27	UTS Orientation, 1969
2	1	28	David Banks – The Seminary's Role in Vietnam, 1969
2	1	29	Plastic Bag (student publication), 1968-1969
2	1	30	Plastic Bag (student publication – includes note circa 2000s), 1969-1970
2	1	31	Blood of the Lamb (Garrett TS newsletter), 1969-1970
2	2	1	Mini Bag (student publication), [1969-1976]
2	2	2	Political Mobilization Materials [non-UTS, 1969-1970]
2	2	3	Moratorium Policy re Radical Discipleship Manifesto [196?]
2	2	4	[Personal Writing] On Institutions 2 [196?]
2	2	5	[Personal Writing] Here I Stand, or Revisiting the Institute [196?]
2	2	6	Murph the Surf Script [196?]
2	2	7	UTS Coursework on Myth and Others, 196?
2	2	8	A Day, a Class in the Park (John Moulton), 196?
2	2	9	Student Publications [Untitled, 196?]
2	2	10	Discussion on Theological Education / Theses on T.E. and Social Responsibility (C. Richardson), 1970
2	2	11	Langston/Slade – Theology and Education in an Educational Locus, 1970
2	2	12	An Appeal to the People of NY Not to Bank at First National and Chase Manhattan re South African Apartheid [1970]
2	2	13	The Bread is Rising! Share the Bread! – A Consultation on Celebration of Religious Radicals [Quaker Retreat Center, 1970]
2	2	14	Theological Issues Raised by President Bennett's Letter to the Seminary Community of March 16, 1970
2	2	15	[Notes on Empire, 1970]
2	2	16	UTS Lectures and Reflections on 'Doing Theology', 1970
2	2	17	Dulles Paper – Authority and Diversity in the Christian Community, 1970
2	2	18	Discussion Document – Up to Our Steeple in Politics, 1970
2	2	19	Script for Worship Service, 1970
2	2	20	Philosophy of Religion Final Examination, 1970
2	2	21	Original Copy – The Student Movement at Union Theological Seminary, 1971
2	2	22	Notes on Tillich (re Anthropology/Theology), Undated
2	2	23	Writing Excerpt, Undated

Series 2: Union Theological Seminary – Coursework and Student Action, 1968-1970

Series	Box	Folder	Contents
2	2	24	Undated Academic Writing and B.D. Thesis Draft, Undated
2	2	25	The Anthropology of Marxist Thought, Undated
2	2	26	Seek the Welfare of the City – A Word to Fellow Christian ‘Rebels’ in South Africa and to their Opponents, Undated
2	2	27	Notes on Empire, [196?]
2	2	28	Commentary on Moltmann’s Theology of Hope, Undated
2	2	29	On Political Editing, Undated
2	2	30	Photographs – Core Group Members and Panther 21 Actions, 196?-197?
2	2	31	Postcard – Paulie [Hoor, sic], Undated
2	2	32	[Personal Writing – The Church in the World excerpt, Undated]
2	2	33	B.D. Thesis Proposal [Draft, 1970]