

# **Willard M. Hillegeist Collection of the Maryland Commission on Scholarships for Negroes Records**

**Dates Created:** 1937-1939 and undated

**Extent:** .42 linear feet or 1 clamshell box

**Creators:** Hillegeist, Willard M.; Maryland. Commission on Higher Education of Negroes

## **Subjects:**

Hillegeist, Willard M.; Wilson, Edward N., 1896-; Maryland. Commission on Higher Education of Negroes; Murphy, Carl J.; McDougle, Ivan E.; Morgan College (Baltimore, Md.); University of Maryland, Baltimore.; University of Maryland, College Park.; Maryland. State Commission on Higher Education of Negroes; African Americans—Education (Higher); African Americans—Education (Higher)—Maryland.; Wood, Francis M.; Whyte, Violet H.; Walker, James F.; Hodges, Charles E.; University of Maryland. Eastern Shore Branch; African Americans—Scholarships, fellowships, etc.; African Americans—Segregation.; African Americans—Segregation—Maryland—History.; Segregation in higher education; Segregation in higher education—Maryland.

## **Abstract:**

The Maryland Commission on Scholarships for Negroes was created by the Maryland State General Assembly of 1937, Chapter 506. The Commission was set up to continue the practice of segregation in the state's University of Maryland. The commission administered scholarships for African American students to attend schools outside of Maryland and considered whether or not Morgan College should become a state institution. This collection of materials was created by Willard M. Hillegeist, a member of the commission and University of Maryland Director of Admissions. The collection contains materials that describe the business of the commission and provides insight into the higher education of African Americans in Maryland prior to desegregation.

## **Biographical and Administrative Histories:**

### **Williard M. Hillegeist**

Willard McConkey Hillegeist was born in Maryland in 1888. He attended the Maryland Agricultural College (M.A.C.), now the University of Maryland, College Park, graduating in 1912. In 1913, Hillegeist accepted a position as executive secretary to then president H.J. Patterson at M.A.C. In 1918, he became registrar of M.A.C.; when M.A.C. and the University of Maryland professional schools in Baltimore (University of Maryland, Baltimore) merged in 1920, Hillegeist became registrar at the Baltimore campus. In 1935, University of Maryland president Henry C. "Curley" Byrd, named Hillegeist Director of Admissions. In this role, Hillegeist oversaw the admission of students to both University of Maryland campuses.

Hillegeist was also appointed to the Maryland Commission on Scholarships for Negroes in 1937. On the Commission, he was responsible for reviewing the scholastic records of student applying for a scholarship; he was also a member of the subcommittee formed to develop the rules and regulations

governing the award of the scholarships. The majority of the correspondence in this collection is addressed to or from Hillegeist. Additionally, some materials contain marginalia, presumably in Hillegeist's hand.

Hillegeist organized the Maryland Association of Collegiate Registrars, which became the foundation of the Middle States Association. He held his title of Director of Admissions for the University of Maryland until his death in June 1940. Hillegeist was married to Lillian Heath Hillegeist and died suddenly at age 51.

### **Maryland Commission on Scholarships for Negroes:**

In 1896, Plessy v. Ferguson legalized racial segregation in the United States. The Supreme Court case ruled facilities for whites and African Americans could be separate but they had to be equal. In other words, an educational facility could maintain an all-white policy if there was an equal educational facility available for African Americans in the state. Maryland was one of many southern states to practice segregation in higher education.

In an effort to keep the University of Maryland segregated and offer equal higher educational opportunities for African Americans Governor Harry W. Nice and the state legislature passed an act (1935, Chapter 577) to create a Commission on Higher Education of Negroes. This commission, known as the Soper Commission after chair, Judge Morris A. Soper, had the first priority of studying the needs of higher education for African Americans. The commission was given \$10,000 to grant scholarships (in \$200 increments) to African American students to attend schools outside the state of Maryland. This began the practice of sending African American students outside of the state through scholarship awards if equal programs were not available in African American Colleges and Universities. The Soper commission lasted until 1937, when a new act (1937, Chapter 506) was passed creating the Maryland Commission on Scholarships for Negroes.

The Maryland Commission on Scholarships for Negroes under the chairmanship of Dr. Ivan E. McDougle, professor of sociology at Goucher College, was established April 26, 1937. The commission was given the task to administer \$30,000 in scholarships and determine the feasibility of Morgan College becoming a Maryland State institution. During its two year administration, the commission created rules and regulations for awarding student's scholarships, drafted scholarship application and renewal forms, voted on scholarship candidates, and met with Morgan College Trustees to devise a plan for the transfer of the school to the state.

In 1939, the commission submitted a report to the legislature and governor, which encouraged the transfer of Morgan College to the state as an equal institution of higher education to the University of Maryland. A second supplementary report encouraged an audit of the scholarships as the cost of offering out of state educational opportunities was rising dramatically. Additionally, lawsuits around the United States, including a Missouri State Court Case of 1938 set precedents that out of state scholarships were not meeting the separate but equal standard required for segregation. As a result of the rising costs of scholarships and the new lawsuits, the Commission suggested in their reports that in order to continue the segregation of the University of Maryland additional facilities within the state of Maryland needed to be created to support higher education of African Americans.

Following the disbandment of the Commission, scholarship monies were overseen by Morgan College Trustees. Despite the recommendation of the Commission, scholarships continued to be awarded for

out of state study for African Americans for over a decade. During this time additional state commissions (Marbury Commission, 1947; Weglein Commission, 1950; and Pullen Commission, 1954) were formed to answer the "African American Higher Education question." The practice of segregation at the University of Maryland continued until the 1954 when the University of Maryland regents, weakened by numerous lawsuits, allowed African American students to attend both College Park and Baltimore campuses. That same year, *Brown v. Board of Education*, ruled that segregation was unconstitutional.

This collection, includes papers instrumental in the business of the 1937 Maryland Commission on Scholarships for Negroes as well as correspondence from one of its members. It provides a glimpse into segregation practices in the University of Maryland from 1937 to 1939 and some of the decisions involved in making Morgan College a state institution. It provides information on the costs of segregation policies and the schools attended by African American students who could not attend the University of Maryland. Some of the collection is restricted due to FERPA regulations.

**Maryland Commission on Scholarships for Negroes Members:**

Dr. Ivan E. McDougale (Chair, Professor of Sociology at Goucher College)  
Dr. John C. Spencer (Until his retirement in August 1937, President of Morgan College)  
Dr. Dwight O.W. Holmes (President of Morgan College after Dr. Spencer)  
Dr. Francis M. Wood (Director of Negro Schools for Baltimore City Public Schools)  
Williard M. Hillegeist (Director of Admissions, University of Maryland)  
Violet H. Whyte (Police Officer)  
James F. Walker  
Rev. Charles E. Hodges (Ashbury Church)  
Carl J. Murphy (Publisher of the *Afro-American* Newspaper)  
Edward N. Wilson (executive secretary, registrar of Morgan College)  
Margaret L. Jones (stenographer, clerk)

**Scope and Content:**

1 box, 28 folders

The collection is divided into two (2) series: 1) Commission Business, 1937-1939 and undated and 2) Willard M. Hillegeist Correspondence, 1937-1939. Series 1) Commission Business, 1937-1939 and undated is divided into (5) five sub-series: 1) Agendas and Minutes, 1937-1939 and undated; 2) Rules and Regulations Sub-Committee, 1937 and undated; 3) Budget Sub-Committee, 1937-1939; 4) Scholarships, 1937-1939; and 5) Reports, 1937-1939.

**Series 1 – Commission Business, 1937-1939 and undated**

20 folders

Series 1, Commission Business is dated 1937 to 1939 and also includes undated materials. As the series name suggests, the materials in this series deal with the business operations and functions of the committee. The series is further divided into five (5) sub-series.

Sub-series 1, Meeting Agendas and Minutes, 1937 to 1939 and undated, includes minutes and agendas for Commission meetings. This sub-series is restricted due to Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) regulations as it contains the names of students applying for scholarships. Materials can be used if names are redacted.

Sub-series 2, Rules and Regulations Sub-Committee, 1937 and undated, includes drafts of the rules and regulations for scholarship applicants as well as blank application forms. The Sub-Committee was comprised of Willard M. Hillegeist and Edward N. Wilson. Folder 10 is restricted due to the condition of the materials, copies have been made for use and are housed in Folder 11.

Sub-series 3, Budget Sub-Committee, 1937 to 1939, includes lists and amounts of scholarship awards and operating expenses for the commission. The Budget Sub-Committee was comprised of Dr. Francis M. Wood, Violet H. Whyte, Rev. Charles E. Hodges, and Edward N. Wilson. Folder 12 contains a report of the Budget Committee, pages two (2) through five (5) are restricted due to scholarship applicant names; they can be used if names are redacted. Additionally, the entire report is fragile; a copy of the report is in Folder 13 and should be used instead of the originals.

Sub-series 4, Scholarships, 1937 to 1939, includes scholarship awards lists and a report on the special committee on awards. These materials are also restricted due to student scholarship applicants; they can be used if the names are redacted.

Sub-series 5, Reports, 1937 to 1939, includes three (3) reports of the Commission. These include a report of the data submitted to the Morgan College Trustees for a joint meeting with the Commission in 1938; a January 1939 report to the Governor and Legislature of Maryland; and a February 1939 special report to the Governor and Legislature of Maryland. The reports in folders 19 and 20 are restricted due to FERPA regulations; they contain applicants names. Parts of these reports can be used and the remaining parts can be used if the student names are redacted.

### **Series Inventory**

#### **Sub-Series 1: Agendas and Minutes, 1937-1939 and undated**

(Restricted due to FERPA Concerns; Student Names)

8 folders

Folder 1 Commission Members

Folder 2 Minutes May – June 1937

Folder 3 Minutes August 1937

Folder 4 Minutes August – November 1937

Folder 5 Agendas January & August 1938

Folder 6 Minutes & Agendas August – December 1938

Folder 7 Agendas January & August 1939

Folder 8 Minutes August & November 1939

#### **Sub-Series 2: Rules and Regulations Sub-Committee, 1937 and undated**

3 folders

Folder 9 Report of Committee, June 1937

Folder 10 Rules Governing Scholarships & Applications, undated (restricted, fragile, use copies in Folder 11)

Folder 11 Use copies of Rules Governing Scholarships & Applications, undated

#### **Sub-Series 3: Budget Sub-Committee & Reports, 1937-1939**

4 folders

Folder 12 Report of Committee, May 1937 (restricted pages 2-5, fragile and student names)  
Folder 13 Use copies of Report of Committee, May 1937 (restricted pages 2-5, student names)  
Folder 14 Operating Expenses, 1938  
Folder 15 Operating Expenses, 1939

**Sub-Series 4: Scholarships, 1937-1939**

2 folders

Folder 16 Scholarships Award Lists, 1937-1938 (restricted pages 1-6 & 8-11, student names)  
Folder 17 Report on Special Committee on Awards, 1938-1939 (restricted Part 1 pages 1-3, Part 3, Part 5)

**Sub-Series 5: Reports, 1937-1939**

3 folders

Folder 18 Data Submitted to Trustees of Morgan College, 1938  
Folder 19 Report of the Commission on Scholarships for Negroes to the Governor and Legislature of Maryland, January 1939 (restricted, pgs. 1-6, 8-11)  
Folder 20 Special Report of the Commission on Scholarships for Negroes to the Governor and Legislature of Maryland, February 1939  
    Part 1: Supplementary awards (restricted, pgs. 1-3)  
    Part 2: Report on Scholastic Standing 1938-1939 (restrict)  
    Part 3: Scholarship Awards 1938-1939 (restrict)  
    Part 4: Institutions Attended and Fields of Study 1938-1939  
    Part 5: Second Semester Grants (restricted)  
    Part 6: Facts about scholarships

**Series 2 – Willard M. Hillegeist Correspondence, 1937-1939**

8 folders

The series contains correspondence of Willard M. Hillegeist, director of admissions at the University of Maryland and member of the McDougle Commission. Most of the letters are between Hillegeist and Edward N. Wilson, commission executive secretary; they discuss commission business and include announcements for upcoming meetings and decisions about scholarship awards.

**Series Inventory**

Folder 21 Correspondence 1937

Willard M. Hillegeist to Edward N. Wilson 06/19/1937

    Attached: Wilson to Hillegeist 06/17/1937

Hillegeist to Wilson 07/12/1937

    Attached: Wilson to Hillegeist 07/09/1937

[Wilson] to Commissioners 08/04/1937

    Attached: Wilson to Hillegeist 07/27/1937

Folder 22 Correspondence January – March 1938

Hillegeist to James H. Carter (assistant to president of Morgan College) 01/25/1938

Attached:

Carter to Hillegeist 01/24/1938

Hillegeist to Wilson 01/25/1938

Wilson to Hillegeist 01/24/1938

Attached: 01/12/1938 Meeting Minutes

Hillegeist to Wilson 03/29/1938

Attached:

Wilson to Hillegeist 03/26/1938 and tables on costs of state colleges, private colleges, and Methodist Episcopal colleges for black students

Study: Pertinent Facts for Consideration with Reference to the Possible Transfer of Morgan College to the State of Maryland 03/22/1938

Folder 23 Correspondence April – May 1938

Hillegeist to Wilson 04/08/1938

Attached:

Wilson to Hillegeist 04/05/1938

March 1938 Business Expense Report

The Maryland Commission on Scholarships for Negroes General Information concerning awards of Scholarships

Wilson to Hillegeist 05/27/1938

Attached table showing high school population for 1937-1938, dated 04/25/1938

Folder 24 Correspondence August 1938

Wilson to Hillegeist 08/02/1938

Attached:

Institutions Attended and Fields of Study Table (1937-1938)

Summary of Scholarship Awards 1937-1938

Scholarship Awards 1937-1938

Financial Statement for July 1938

Folder 25 Correspondence September – December 1938

Hillegeist to S. Allen Early, Jr. 09/03/1938 (applied for scholarship)

Attached:

Early Jr. to Hillegeist 08/26/1938

Hillegeist to Early Jr. 08/25/1938

Hillegeist to W.L. Smith (Registrar, Dunbar High School)

Hillegeist to Wilson 11/03/1938

Attached:

Wilson to Hillegeist 11/01/1938

Financial Statement for October 1938

Wilson to Hillegeist 12/08/1938

Hillegeist to Wilson 12/10/1938

Wilson to Hillegeist 12/19/1938

Folder 26 Correspondence January – July 1939

Hillegeist to Wilson 01/06/1939

Attached: Wilson to Hillegeist 01/04/1939

Hillegeist to Wilson 05/12/1939

Attached:

Wilson to Hillegeist 05/08/1939

April 1939 Operating Expenses

Wilson to Hillegeist 07/26/1939

Attached: Wm. L. Henderson (Deputy Attorney General) to John E. Semmes (Chairman of Commission on State College for Negroes)

Hillegeist to Wilson 07/29/1939

Attached: Wilson to Hillegeist 07/24/1939

Folder 27 August – September 1939

Hillegeist to Wilson 08/09/1939

Attached: Wilson to Hillegeist 08/07/1939

Wilson to Hillegeist 09/08/1939

Hillegeist to Wilson 09/09/1939

Attached:

Wilson to Hillegeist 08/31/1939

Wilson to Hillegeist 08/30/1939

George Melcher (superintendent Kansas City, MO public schools) to Wilson 08/24/1939

Hillegeist to Wilson 09/16/1939

Attached: Wilson to Hillegeist 09/14/1939

Folder 28 Correspondence October – November 1939

Hillegeist to Wilson 10/03/1939 (thanks Wilson for his hard work on the commission)

Attached:

Wilson to Hillegeist 09/29/1939

August 16-18, 1939 Minutes of Commission

List of Scholarship Students 1939-1940 (restricted – student names)

Carl Murphy to Hillegeist 11/06/1939

Attached: Carl Murphy to Ivan McDougale 11/06/1939

Wilson to Hillegeist 11/09/1939

Attached: Wilson to Hillegeist 11/07/1939

**Arrangement:** Materials are arranged thematically and then chronologically.

**Access Restrictions:** Some materials, especially those in the Agenda and Minutes series, are restricted due to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Some items identify students by names and list the amount of their scholarship money and grades. These items are identified as restricted; they can be used if the student names are redacted.

**Language:** Materials entirely in English.

**Custodial History:** Materials are held in the Historical Collections of the Health Sciences and Human Services Library at the University of Maryland, Baltimore. It appears the materials were the property of Williard M. Hillegeist, while he served on the Maryland Commission on Scholarships for Negroes.

**Acquisition:** It is unknown how this collection came into the Historical Collections at the Health Sciences and Human Services Library at the University of Maryland, Baltimore. It appears the materials were owned by Williard M. Hillegeist and may have been donated by his wife, Lillian Heath Hillegeist.

**Sources Used:**

Maryland State Legislature Acts of 1935, Chapter 577. Retrieved from:

<https://msa.maryland.gov/megafile/msa/speccol/sc2900/sc2908/000001/000579/html/am579--1203.html>.

Maryland State Legislature Acts of 1937, Chapter 506. Retrieved from:

<https://msa.maryland.gov/megafile/msa/speccol/sc2900/sc2908/000001/000412/html/am412--1071.html>.

*The Mirror*. (1937). University of Maryland Dental School: Baltimore, p. 16. Retrieved from:

<https://archive.org/details/mirror1937univ/page/16/>.

*Report of the Commission on Scholarships for Negroes to the Governor and Legislature of Maryland*. (Jan. 1939). Baltimore, Maryland.

**Related Collections and Materials:** Related collections and materials are available at the University of Maryland, College Park, Special Collections and Archives; Morgan State University, Beulah Davis Special Collections; and the Maryland State Archives.

**Processing Information:** Some rearrangement of materials occurred. The materials were processed and the finding aid written from June to July 2020 by Tara Wink, Historical Librarian and Archivist.