

# **Detroit Institute of Commerce**

## **MSS109**

**Finding aid prepared by Jaleel Bradley & Michelle McKinney**

---

This finding aid was produced using the Archivists' Toolkit

April 21, 2010

Describing Archives: A Content Standard

Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History

2/20/2008

315 East Warren Avenue

Detroit, Michigan, 48201

313-494-5800

## Table of Contents

---

<u>Summary Information</u> .....	3
<u>Biographical/Historical note</u> .....	4
<u>Related Materials</u> .....	5
<u>Controlled Access Headings</u> .....	5
<u>Collection Inventory</u> .....	7

## Summary Information

---

<b>Repository</b>	Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History
<b>Title</b>	Detroit Institute of Commerce
<b>Date [inclusive]</b>	1970-1995
<b>Extent</b>	0.2 Cubic feet 1 Halfsize Archives Box
<b>Language</b>	English
<b>Abstract</b>	<p>R. Louise Groom was the founder and president of the Detroit Institute of Commerce. The goal of the institute was to prepare minority students for a successful career in business--which often included training in office etiquette, telephone technique, and dress. The institute opened in 1941 and closed in 1991, seven years after Ms. Grooms death in 1984. The collection includes materials on both the Institute of Commerce and R. Louise Grooms. Files include: correspondence, pamphlets, activities booklets, and newspaper articles. The collection does not include correspondence from Ms. Grooms or founding documents for the organization.</p>

## Biographical/Historical note

---

The history of Detroit Institute of Commerce is within the biography of its founder, R. Louise Grooms.

R. Louise Grooms, formerly Henderson, was born in 1902. She graduated from Southern Illinois University and the Detroit Conservatory of Music and did further study at the University of Detroit and Wayne State University. She was also a teacher for six years and an accountant for fifteen years. By 1941, Mrs. R. Louise Grooms was employed as the chief accountant and office manager of Great Lakes Mutual Insurance Company. She noted, "I have had opportunities for several years to observe young people either applying for their first job or seeking a better one. There always seemed to be something lacking in their training." She realized the need for better trained young men and women if the Negro businesses of Detroit were to grow, and if prepared people were to realize the dream of equal opportunity for all, regardless of race, creed, or national origin. At that time not many doors were open to minorities seeking business training. Mrs. Grooms was disturbed by the fact that business places had to do too much training on the job – not [only] in the routine of work, but also in the proper way to dress, office etiquette, telephone techniques, etc. . . . She decided to concentrate on preparing minorities for the demands of a career in business. The dream of many years came true for R. Louise Henderson with the opening of Detroit Institute of Commerce on September 8, 1941. She became the bride of Mr. Claud E. Grooms of Chicago a short time thereafter. The school began with only two classrooms, an office and a library, all located on the sixth floor of the Tobin Building on Broadway and Gratiot. Enrollment at that time was 52 students. The enrollment continued to increase until it was necessary to occupy two entire floors of the Tobin Building. In June 1970, the Detroit Institute of Commerce moved to larger and completely renovated quarters at 4829 Woodward Avenue in the Cultural Center area. The Institute received its accreditation from the Accrediting Commission of the Association of Independent Colleges and Schools. By 1982, the DIC was licensed by the State of Michigan and had a diverse student body.

"Mrs. Grooms and the Detroit Institute of Commerce impacted positively on the lives of thousands of people – young and old – at both the local and national levels. Former graduates have distinguished themselves throughout the world, and their accomplishments would read like a listing of "Who's Who in America." . . . .

Mrs. Grooms died June 6, 1984." [From souvenir book of the Top Ladies of Distinction, Inc., Renaissance Chapter . . . Scholarship Legacy Luncheon; Westin Hotel of Detroit, MI – 10/22/1994]

---

"R. Louise Grooms is the founder and President of the Detroit Institute of Commerce. The school, from inception, has sought to provide quality business training, and to attract students who want to succeed in the business world regardless of their race or creed.

Mrs. Grooms has been a member of the Advisory Committee for Small Business Administration; member, Metropolitan Board of the YWCA; secretary and board member, Michigan Business Education Association; Board member, Detroit Council for Youth Services, Inc.

She is a member of the Guidance Association of Detroit; Business Teachers Club of Metropolitan Detroit; Higher Education Opportunities Committee, Wayne State University; Michigan Association of Private Schools; and the Association of Independent Colleges and Schools.

In 1970, Mrs. Grooms was named as one of the "Ten Top Working Women" in Detroit by the Greater Detroit Board of Commerce. She has received the Michigan Business Education Award, Educator of the Year Award from WCHB Radio, and the Cotillion Club Award for Outstanding Leadership in Human Relations." [From program brochure "The Greater Detroit Chamber of Commerce presents The Summit Awards Honorees" 6/22/1977]

--Compiled by Michelle McKinney, Assistant Archivist--

---

## Administrative Information

---

### Publication Information

Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History 2/20/2008

### Revision Description

2/20/2009

---

## Related Materials

---

### Related Archival Materials note

Detroit Public Library's Burton Historical Collection holdings include: 2 scrapbooks and a 35th anniversary retrospective. Call number: 74D4 650.7 D42t

---

## Controlled Access Headings

---

Corporate Name(s)

- Top Ladies of Distinction. -- Correspondence

**Personal Name(s)**

- Grooms, R. Louise, 1902-1984, Founder, Director of DIC -- History

## Collection Inventory

Detroit Institute of Commerce (Activities) 1946

	<b>Box</b>	<b>Folder</b>
Text	1	1

### Controlled Access Headings

#### Personal Name(s)

- Grooms, R. Louise, 1902-1984, Founder, Director of DIC -- History

Anniversaries and Award Banquets 1970-1995

	<b>Box</b>	<b>Folder</b>
Text	1	2
	<b>Box</b>	<b>Folder</b>
Text	1	1

Correspondence 1995

	<b>Box</b>	<b>Folder</b>
--	------------	---------------

Text

1

3

Newspaper Articles 1976-1981

Text

**Box**

**Folder**

1

4

R. Louise Grooms, Founder (Memoriam Flyer) 1984

Text

**Box**

**Folder**

1

5