

**Record Series #: 1121-114****Name: Geneva Law, Dorothy Law, and Tessie Law Sanders Family Papers****Dates: 1915, 1927, 1943-1994, 2000-2004, 2007, no date****Extent/Size: 2 records cartons (2.0 cubic feet)****Language: English****Name of Creator(s):**

Geneva Elizabeth Wallace Law

Dorothy Louise Law

Tessie (Tessye) Law Sanders

**Biographical History:**

Geneva Wallace Law was born on December 14, 1900 to Frank (1870-1904) and Lillie Belle Wallace (circa 1874-1934), the first of their children to survive childhood. She was born and raised in Savannah, Georgia with her two younger siblings, Frankie Mae Wallace Smith and Charlie Wallace. Her father, Frank Wallace, passed away when the youngest child was three years old and left Lillie Belle to raise three children alone. Geneva attended Maple Street, West Broad Street and Cuyler schools until she was one of the first classes to graduate from the Cuyler school in 1914. She married Westley Law, Sr. (1900-1933), a mechanic, in 1922 and they lived with her mother. Geneva and Westley had three children, Westley Wallace "W. W." Law (1923-2002), Dorothy Louise Law (1924-1975), and Tessie (Tessye) Law Sanders (1929-2007).

Westley Law, Sr. passed away in 1933, and Lillie Belle Wallace passed away the following year. Geneva Law was then left to raise her three children during the latter part of the Great Depression alone. The children attended Florence Street and Cuyler schools and often worked after school to supplement their mother's income. Dorothy Louise Law graduated Beaumont School of Practical Nursing in 1951 and finished the Adult Academic Evening High School at the Savannah Vocational School in 1954. Dorothy attended First Bryan Baptist Church and was a member of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) Savannah branch. Dorothy suffered from a long-term illness and was in nursing care from 1970 until her death in 1975 at the age of fifty-one. Tessie graduated from a cosmetology course at the Savannah Vocational School in 1952. Tessie moved to New York City in the 1960's and owned her own housekeeping business in Harlem. Tessie married David E. Sanders in New York City on January 27, 1963, they had two sons, Michael and David Jr., and five grandchildren. Tessie passed away from a short illness in New York on September 9, 2007 and requested to be cremated. W. W. Law was a postal worker and heavily involved in Savannah's Civil Rights Movement and the preservation of African American historical sites. He passed away in Savannah on July 29, 2002 in the home he shared with his mother.

Geneva Law was heavily involved in the Savannah community; she was a long-time member of the First Bryan Baptist Church, sang in the choir, taught in Sunday school, and served as Deaconess. She was a member of the Elite Temple No. 71, Moriah Chapter of the Eastern Star, NAACP Life member, charter member of the Savannah Yamacraw branch of the Association for the Study of Afro-American Life and History (ASALH) and founding member of King-Tisdell Cottage Foundation, and Golden Age Senior Citizens. Geneva continued to live with her son, W. W. Law until her death on January 3, 1994. Geneva Law, Westley Law, Dorothy Law, and W. W. Law are buried in historic Laurel Grove South Cemetery in Savannah.

**Record Series 1121-114, Geneva Law, Dorothy Law, and Tessie Law Sanders Family Papers***Scope & Content:*

The Geneva Law, Dorothy Law, and Tessie Law Sanders Family papers (1915, 1927, 1943-1994, 2000-2002, no date) document the family's interactions, accomplishments, and community involvement in Savannah. The papers include correspondence between family members and others, financial records, graduation programs, event programs, funeral records, school notes, and a scrapbook. These papers reflect the organizations, schools, and institutions that the Law family was a part of in the community. Items of note in this collection include several letters Tessie Sanders and Geneva Law exchanged over the years, and Dorothy Law's school binder that includes correspondence, school notes, and educational materials.

*System of Arrangement & Ordering:*

The Geneva Law, Dorothy Law, and Tessie Law Sanders Family papers (1915, 1927, 1943-1994, 2000-2002, no date) are arranged alphabetically by format and subject.

*Conditions Governing Access:*

Collection is stored offsite and researchers must request desired records at least one (1) full business day before research appointment for access. Certain papers have been restricted due to legal restrictions on releasing personal medical information, Social Security numbers, and confidential tax information [O.C.G.A. 50-18-72(a)(20)(A); 50-18-72(a)(43)]. Please see the individual restriction notes in the finding aid to determine public access restrictions in place.

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*Related Collections:*

Record Series 1121-100, W. W. Law Photograph Collection. City of Savannah Municipal Archives, Savannah, Georgia.

Record Series 1121-103, W. W. Law Moving Image and Sound Collection. City of Savannah Municipal Archives, Savannah, Georgia.

**Record Series 1121-114, Geneva Law, Dorothy Law, and Tessie Law Sanders Family Papers**

Record Series 1121-104, W. W. Law Awards Collection. City of Savannah Municipal Archives, Savannah, Georgia.

Record Series 1121-112, W. W. Law Personal Papers. City of Savannah Municipal Archives, Savannah, Georgia.

*Access Points:*

First Bryan Baptist Church (Savannah, Ga.)

Johnson, Gertrude

Law, Dorothy, 1924-1975

Law, Geneva Wallace, 1900-1994

Law, W. W. (Westley Wallace), 1923-2002

Mack, Virginia

Sanders, Tessie (Tessye) Law, 1929-

Smith, Eloise

*Sponsors/Funding:*

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City of Savannah Municipal Archives, Savannah, Georgia.

*Processed by:*

M. Kerkhoff, December 2020.

**Record Series 1121-114, Geneva Law, Dorothy Law, and Tessie Law Sanders Family Papers**

*Inventory:*

*Box*

*Folder Folder Title*

**Box 1121-114-001**

Folder 1 Appointments, phone and address books, 1974, 1982, 1993, no date  
Folder 2 Book subscription services, no date  
Folder 3 Business cards and pocket holder, 1990, no date  
Folder 4 Church event programs, 1960, 1971, 1981, 1993, no date  
Folder 5 Correspondence, 1943-1957 [includes postcards from W. W. Law]  
Folder 6 Correspondence, 1969-1979  
Folder 7 Correspondence, 1980-1983  
Folder 8 Correspondence, 1984  
Folder 9 Correspondence, 1985-1986  
Folder 10 Correspondence, 1987-1988  
Folder 11 Correspondence, 1989  
Folder 12 Correspondence, 1990-1991  
Folder 13 Correspondence, 1992 March-October  
Folder 14 Correspondence, 1992 December  
Folder 15 Correspondence, 1993 January-May  
Folder 16 Correspondence, 1993 July-November  
Folder 17 Correspondence, 1993 December  
Folder 18 Correspondence, 2001-2002  
Folder 19 Correspondence, no date (1 of 4)  
Folder 20 Correspondence, no date (2 of 4)  
Folder 21 Correspondence, no date (3 of 4)

**Box 1121-114-002**

Folder 1 Correspondence, no date (4 of 4) [water and mold damage]  
Folder 2 Crocheting and sewing pattern instructions, 1949, 1974, 1987, no date  
Folder 3 Death certificates, certified copies, 2004  
Folder 4 Doll catalogue and cardboard dress, no date  
Folder 5 Dorothy Law school binder, correspondence, 1954-1956  
Folder 6 Dorothy Law school binder, correspondence, 1969, no date  
Folder 7 Dorothy Law school binder, education material and notes (1 of 2), 1952, no date  
Folder 8 Dorothy Law school binder, education material and notes (2 of 2), 1956, no date  
Binder 1 Dorothy Law school binder, zip up black binder, "Veterans Training" printed on the front, no date  
Folder 9 Dorothy Law graduation programs, 1951, 1954  
Folder 10 Elite Temple No. 71 event programs, 1965, 1975, 1986  
Folder 11 Fans, cardboard, no date  
Folder 12 Financials, 1915, 1951, 1954, 1971-1979, 1994, 2000, no date  
Folder 13 First Bryan Baptist Church, 1993, no date  
Folder 14 First Bryan Baptist Church, Sunday service programs, 1990, 1993

**Record Series 1121-114, Geneva Law, Dorothy Law, and Tessie Law Sanders Family Papers**

*Box*

*Folder*

*Folder Title*

**Box 1121-114-002 Continued**

- Folder 15 First Bryan Baptist Church, Women's Day programs, 1967, 1977
- Folder 16 Geneva Law's funeral, January 1994
- Folder 17 Geneva Law's funeral, guest book, January 1994
- Folder 18 Geneva Law's funeral, records on visitation, January 6-10, 1994
- Folder 19 Improved Benevolent and Protective Order (IBPO) Elks of the World, Georgia Association souvenir program, Savannah, Georgia, April 18-21, 1970
- Folder 20 Notes, no date
- Folder 21 Order of Eastern Star, Mount Moriah Chapter, No. 37, Fifth Anniversary souvenir program, August 4, 1952
- Folder 22 Organizations, 1927, 1975
- Folder 23 The Political Advisory Council (PAC) 27<sup>th</sup> Anniversary and 9<sup>th</sup> Annual Achievement Day Ceremonies, April 28, 1990
- Folder 24 Scrapbook, news clippings that feature Geneva Law, W. W. Law, and senior citizens, 1971-1986, no date
- Folder 25 Senior citizen organizations memberships, 1984, 1991, 1993
- Folder 26 Tessie Law and David Sanders wedding guestbook, January 27, 1963
- Folder 27 Tessie Law Sanders contact information obtained by the Law Foundation, no date
- Folder 28 Tessie Law Sanders interview notes, June 28, 2004 [unknown interviewer]
- Folder 29 Tessie Law Sanders obituary, 2007
- Folder 30 RESTRICTED, Dorothy Law medical and tax documents, 1949, 1970-1973 [RESTRICTED until 2048]
- Folder 31 RESTRICTED, Geneva Law medical and tax documents, 1966-1975, 1989-1991, 1997, no date [RESTRICTED until 2072]
- Folder 32 RESTRICTED, Geneva Law Medicare, 1980, 1982, 1991-1994, no date [RESTRICTED until 2069]
- Folder 33 RESTRICTED, Geneva Law State of Georgia Department of Medical Assistance, 1980, 1993-1994 [RESTRICTED until 2069]