



*Special Collections/Archives Department
John B. Coleman Library
Prairie View A&M University*

UA00182

The A. I. Thomas Presidential Papers Collection

Created by Anna Gaffey, May 2013

Revised by Evelyn Davis, April 2024

The Alvin I. Thomas Presidential Papers Collection Finding aid

Collection Overview

Creator: Thomas, Alvin I. (Alvin Ignace), 1925-

Title: Presidents and Principals Papers: A. I. Thomas, 1966-1982

Dates: 1974-2003

Quantity: 0.25 Linear Feet (5 folders)

Abstract: The A. I. Thomas Papers include correspondence, news clippings, printed materials, and a scrapbook of materials relating to the tenure of Alvin I. Thomas, third president of Prairie View A & M University.

Identification: UA00182

Use Restrictions: Written permission must be obtained from the Special Collections/ Archives Department and all relevant rights holders before publishing quotations, excerpts, or images from any materials in this collection.

Language: The materials are in English.

Repository: Prairie View A&M University

Biographical Note: Dr. Alvin Ignace Thomas was elected as the third president of Prairie View Agricultural and Mechanical College in November 1966.

In the summer of 1967, the Office of the Secretary of the Navy formulated plans and initiated correspondence for the establishment of a Naval Reserve Officers Training Corps unit at a Historically Black College or University (HBCU). Dr. Thomas applied for the NROTC at Prairie View. On December 15, 1967, the Secretary of Defense announced that the Navy had selected Prairie View A&M College on OPNAV Notice 5450 (dated March 12, 1968), which was the official document that established the NROTC program at Prairie View A&M College, making it the first HBCU to host a Naval ROTC Unit. Captain Francis X. Brady, of the United States Navy, reported on April 14, 1968, as the first Commanding Officer and Professor of Naval Science. The first group of 13 Navy and Marine Corps Officers was commissioned on May 17, 1970.

One of the major events of Thomas' tenure was his introduction of the residential college concept. As Prairie View A&M's centennial approached, the Board of Regents of the newly titled Texas A&M University System, at the request of President Thomas, appointed 79 persons to a Centennial Planning Council and charged them with formulating a new master

plan for Prairie View A&M for the 1970's. After 16 months of serious study, the council's recommendations were published in a document entitled A Developmental Plan, 1970-80, Prairie View A&M College of Texas. As an outgrowth of this plan and recommendations to the state legislature, the name of the institution was again changed to Prairie View A&M University, and its status as an independent unit of the Texas A&M University System was reconfirmed. In the fall of 1970, the System Board of Regents sold over \$13 million in bonds for the construction of two new residence halls and a dining facility. The residence halls, accommodating 1,500 students, were opened for occupancy in August of 1972. The dining facility, now known as Alumni Hall, was opened in the second semester of the 1972-73 academic year. Other major construction completed during the following decade included the fire and security building, Farrell Hall Laundry, Burleson-Ware ROTC Building, Hobart Taylor Hall, the engineering building, and the Owens-Franklin Health Center. In 1980-81, the state of Texas purchased and renovated a building in the Texas Medical Center complex to be used as clinical nursing center for the College of Nursing. In 1981-82, broadcasting began from newly constructed facilities of FCC-approved KPVU-FM at Prairie View, an instructional laboratory of the Department of Communications.

In 1981, the Texas legislature officially recognized Prairie View as not only a general-purpose university but also as a "special purpose institution" providing services to students of "diverse ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds." The physical plant, valued at about \$12 million in 1966, was valued at over \$50 million. Curricula offerings, research, and Cooperative Extension activities had been greatly enhanced.

Sources: None.

Scope and Contents Note: The A. I. Thomas Papers consist of correspondence, news clippings, printed materials, and a scrapbook relating to Thomas and his tenure as President of Prairie View A & M University. **Correspondence** consists of two memos, incoming and outgoing. **News Clippings** are made up of photocopied articles about Dr. Thomas and his tenure at Prairie View A & M University. **Printed materials** include certificates, flyers, photocopies, and handouts. **Scrapbooks** consist of one scrapbook of collected various ephemera from the tenure of Dr. Thomas.

Arrangement: The collection is arranged in by series of Correspondence, news clippings, and printed materials are all arranged chronologically. The scrapbook has been unbound and remains in original page order.

Administrative Information

Preferred Citation

The A. I. Thomas Presidential Papers Collection, UA00182, Special Collections/Archives Department, John B. Coleman Library, Prairie View A&M University

Related Material: The PVAMU Principals and Presidents Collection.

Related material may be found in the Special Collections/Archives Department Vertical Files, or in other unprocessed University Archives collections from specific university departments. Ask a member of the SCAD staff for assistance.

Index Terms

African American educators.

A. I. Thomas, 1925-.

Educators – United States.

Employees – Administrators.

Prairie View Normal and Industrial College (Prairie View, TX)

Prairie View (TX).

Inventory

Box #	Folder #	Title/Description	Date	Location
Series 1: Correspondence, 1979-1982				
1	1	Miscellaneous Correspondence	1979-1982	R2/C2/R5
Series Two: News Clippings, 1976-2003				
1	2	Blacks must learn to live in two worlds: Thomas says (essay or speech?)	Undated	R2/C2/R5
1	2	Hey kid, shape up by John Bloom	Undated	R2/C2/R5
1	2	Prairie view news	07/1976	R2/C2/R5
1	2	Houston Post	02/1977	R2/C2/R5
1	2	King's Messenger	03/1978	R2/C2/R5
1	2	Houston Post	06/1978	R2/C2/R5
1	2	Houston Post	12/1978	R2/C2/R5
1	2	Houston Post	08/1982	R2/C2/R5
1	2	News release	Undated	R2/C2/R5
1	2	The panther	11/1989	R2/C2/R5
1	2	A. I. Thomas building dedication, PVAMU Alumni Relations	03/2003	R2/C2/R5
1	2	[Waller County?]	04/1983	R2/C2/R5
Series Three: Printed Materials, 1974-1985				
1	3	Meet the president	Undated	R2/C2/R5
1	3	A. I. Thomas resume	Undated	R2/C2/R5
1	3	Prairie view produces productive people flyer		R2/C2/R5
1	3	Resolution	1982	R2/C2/R5

1	3	Founder's Day convocation and Percy Anthony Pierre Inauguration program	1985	R2/C2/R5
Series Four: Personal Materials, undated				
1	4	Loose Scrapbook Pages	Undated	R2/C2/R5
1	5	Loose Scrapbook Pages	Undated	R2/C2/R5