

Roanoke Public Libraries
Gainsboro Library

Omnia Bona Club Collection

Collection Description

Repository: Gainsboro Branch of Roanoke Public Libraries

Title: Omnia Bona Club Collection

Physical Characteristics: One (1) small record storage box, and one (1) oversized emblem sign.

Donated by: Violet Robinson

Arrangement: Materials are arranged by subject with close attention paid to original order upon donation.

Creator: Omnia Bona Club

Reproduction Restrictions: No known restrictions on publication. Gainsboro Library copy fees apply.

Processor: Caylin Wigger, March 2025

Biographical Note

Omnia Bona, Incorporated originated in Roanoke, Virginia. In 1948 a group of girls who were in their senior year at Lucy Addison High School met to form a club. The main purpose of the club at that time was to provide wholesome activities for the members and their friends. They sometimes met in a nearby park where the sweet smell of orange blossoms inspired them to call themselves the “Orange Blossom Sorors.”

The original members of this groups were: Mary Penn Brunner, Delois Clements Broady, Youtha Reynolds Carter, June Colston, Juanita Page Cooke, Sarah Dillon Gardner, Nora Hackley, Evelyn Hale, Elois Hamlin, Doris Hunter Jordan, Dorothy Brown Lash, Violet Jones Robertson, Ellen Sears, Maxine Sears, Christine Petty Spurlock, Reva Harper Tyree, Gladys Shepperson Watson, and Arnisha Keeling.

The club continued successfully for a year and was disbanded after graduation as most of the members began college careers.

After four years of separation, the club reorganized in November of 1952 with purposes not only promoting the social aspects of life, but the civic, religious, and political aspects as well. A new name was then taken... “Omnia Bona Club,” meaning “For All Good.”

During the existence of Omnia Bona Club, many members left Roanoke and moved to other localities. Because of the desire to continue the relationships established among its members and the desire to continue carrying out the ideals as set forth in its constitution, the club felt the need for incorporation. It was felt that, through incorporation, the development of finer womanhood could be extended to many other localities.

The first charter chapter was formed in the summer of 1957 in Washington, D.C. This was

the beginning of the incorporation.

In August of that year, both chapters met at the Orange Avenue YMCA in Roanoke to formulate committees, introduce trustees, and set up a constitution for the incorporation. The officers elected for the incorporation were Arnisha Keeling, president; Dorothy Brown Lash, vice-president; Delois Clements Broady, secretary-treasurer. This first joint meeting set a trend for years to come.

The first convention was held in Salem, Virginia, June 22-28, 1958. During this convention there was a dedication service, a formal was given in the evening, and a business session and cocktail party was held on Saturday.

One of the founders, Arnisha Keeling, moved to Philadelphia. In her quest to continue fostering the principles of Omnia Bona, she established a chapter in that city in December of 1958. Several more chapters continued to open in Eastern States; their purpose was to support the social, civic, religious, and political aspects of life.

In addition to providing scholarships and giving donations to local charities, the Roanoke chapter made financial contributions to the Omnia Bona Endowment Scholarship Fund at Hampton University and sponsored the Adopt-A-Teen project.

The club disbanded in 2025.

Scope and Contents

- The Omnia Bona Club Collection consists of one (1) small record storage box and one (1) oversized emblem sign.
- This collection consists of a reunion photograph, a history of the club, and scholarship recipients from Roanoke.
- The original order of materials is maintained in the order of the folders. The materials within the folders (particularly "Scholarships and Recipients") have been organized by date.
- There are no series as the collection is rather small.
- Dates range from the organization's inception in 1952 to 2015.

Container List

Box 1 of 1

Folder 1 - "58 Years of Sisterhood"

Folder 2 - History

Folder 3 - Scholarships and Recipients

One Oversized Emblem Sign

OBC01