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## Kellis E. Parker papers13398453

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## Summary Information

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|                                  |                                     |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <b>Repository:</b>               | Rare Book and Manuscript Library    |
| <b>Creator:</b>                  | Parker, Kellis E.                   |
| <b>Title:</b>                    | Kellis E. Parker papers             |
| <b>ID:</b>                       | 13398453                            |
| <b>ID:</b>                       | MS#1936                             |
| <b>Date [inclusive]:</b>         | 1962-1999, bulk 1985-1999           |
| <b>Physical Description:</b>     | 8.42 Linear Feet 8 RSC and 1 MS box |
| <b>Language of the Material:</b> | English .                           |

### Preferred Citation

Identification of specific item; Date (if known); Kellis Parker papers; Box and Folder; Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Columbia University Library.

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## Biographical / Historical

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Kellis E. Parker, a noted legal scholar and civil rights activist who embraced jazz as a framework for understanding the law and, in 1972, became the first full-time black law professor at Columbia University.

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## Biographical / Historical

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Professor Parker's classes in contract law and seminars on the music industry, remedies and the roots of African-American law educated and edified many generations of students," said

Law Dean David Leebron. "We will deeply miss the optimism, enthusiasm and generosity he brought to every endeavor.

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## Biographical / Historical

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Parker grew up in Kinston, NC, where his parents owned and operated the first black dry cleaning establishment in town. Their struggles were recorded in Professor Parker's book, *The East End Dry Cleaners Hello Blues*. Music was what the family used to keep their spirits high and to augment the family income. Professor Parker's instrument was the trombone, his brother Maceo's was the saxophone and his brother Melvin played the drums. Both Maceo and Melvin became professional musicians.

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## Biographical / Historical

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Parker was one of five black students who integrated the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in 1960, where he worked with Rep. Allard Lowenstein to challenge segregation. At Howard University Law School he graduated at the top of his class and was editor-in-chief of the *Howard Law Journal*. Upon graduation he clerked for Spottswood W. Robinson III in the U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit. Planning to return to North Carolina to practice law, Parker instead took Judge Robinson's suggestion to try teaching. He secured a position at the University of California at Davis Law School, earning tenure after three years, and moved to Columbia Law School in 1972. He earned tenure there in 1975. At the time of his death, he held Columbia's Isidor and Seville Sulzbacher Professorship of Law. For a number of years he also taught seminars at Howard Law School and served as faculty advisor to Howard's *Law Journal*.

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## Biographical / Historical

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Professor Parker's primary area of expertise was contract law, but his unique intellect moved it in many new directions. His 1975 case book, *Modern Judicial Remedies*, was the first to introduce civil rights remedies into the regular law school curriculum. His subsequent writings, including *Law and the Black Experience: A Minority Report*, have all centered on using the

law and a fresh and creative sense of justice to resolve the race issues in this country. He formulated legal strategies for cases at the Center on Constitutional Rights, the NAACP Legal and Education Defense Fund and for numerous other organizations and individuals.

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## Biographical / Historical

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An accomplished jazz trombonist, Professor Parker performed with the Don Shaw Group at the 1999 Naples, Italy, Jazz Festival. He was a familiar part of jazz bands around Columbia University as well as throughout New York and many European urban centers, but he joined most happily with Parker, the band of his son and daughter-in-law, Kellis Jr. and Darliene. These experiences, plus his course in music contract law, "Jazz Roots Revisited: The Law the Slaves Made," made him the first stop on the road to success for many young entertainers.

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## Content Description

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Course materials, notes, research materials, notebooks and writings of Professor Kellis Parker (1942-2000), first full-time African-American law professor at CU. Known for outspoken advocacy of ending racial discrimination in academia and for embracing jazz as a framework for understanding law.

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## Administrative Information

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### Publication Statement

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### **Restrictions on Access**

This collection is located off-site. You will need to request this material at least three business days in advance to use the collection in the Rare Book and Manuscript Library reading room.

### **Immediate Source of Acquisition**

Gift of Shilla Kim-Parker, 2018.

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### **Processing Information**

2025-01-28 Papers processed and box and folder list uploaded to ArchivesSpace. cml

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## **Controlled Access Headings**

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- Jazz
- African American law teachers
- Columbia University -- Faculty

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## **Collection Inventory**

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**Series I: Subject Files, 1962-1999**

**Arrangement**

This series is organized alphabetically by subject or title. The folders within each box are also arranged alphabetically.

| <b>Title/Description</b>   | <b>Instances</b> |
|--|------------------|
| Course packets   |                  |
| African-American Perspectives on American Law, undated   | box 8            |
| Corporations, undated  | box 8            |
| Jazz as Jurisprudence, undated   | box 8            |
| Taking Jazz Seriously L9082, 1999 fall   | box 8            |
| Judicial Remedies--Conflict Equity: Cases and Materials on the Use of Injunctions to Restrain Judicial Administrative Proceedings, 1994 spring | box 8            |
| Music Industry Contracts, 1991-1997, undated   | box 8            |
| <b>Scope and Contents</b>  |                  |
| (7 folders)  |                  |
| Jazz Roots Revisited: The Law the Slaves Made  |                  |
| Chapters   |                  |
| Introduction, 1991, undated  | box 6            |
| Chapter 1: Antebellum Bebop: Law Talk within Slave Communities, 1991, undated  | box 6            |
| Chapter 2: Women in Slavery Sang Law in their Blues, 1991-1992   | box 6            |
| Chapter 3: Law Roots of the Blues, undated   | box 6            |
| Chapter 5: Nobody Knows My Trials: Religion, the Spirituals and Adjudication within a Slave Community, undated                                 | box 6            |
| Chapter 8: Jam Session Justice: Law in the Folktales the Slaves Narrated, undated  | box 6            |
| Chapter 10: Steal – The Song about Law in the Great Dismal Swamp, undated  | box 6            |
| Chapter 12: What Law Could Slaves Make?, undated   | box 6            |
| Drafts, 1991-1993  | box 6            |
| <b>Scope and Contents</b>  |                  |
| (4 folders)  |                  |
| Law in the Culture and Consciousness of African Americans  |                  |

|   |       |
|---|-------|
| The Drums of Kuntu: Law in the Culture and Consciousness of African Americans, 1991-1993            | box 7 |
| <b>Scope and Contents</b>   |       |
| (6 folders)   |       |
| The Drums of Kuntu: Law in the Culture and Consciousness of African Americans--loose pages, undated | box 7 |
| Law in the Culture and Consciousness of African Americans, 1992, undated                            | box 7 |
| <b>Scope and Contents</b>   |       |
| (2 folders)   |       |
| Hines Alley, undated  | box 7 |
| Jam Sessions, 1991-1993   | box 7 |
| Jazz: The Cultural Property of Resistance, 1993   | box 7 |
| Law in the Slave Community, 1991  | box 7 |
| The Law Slaves Made--prelude, 1990-1991   | box 7 |
| The Laws My People Made--drafts, 1993   | box 7 |
| <b>Scope and Contents</b>   |       |
| (2 folders)   |       |
| Lords of Sound, 1991  | box 7 |
| Made in the Shade, 1990   | box 7 |
| Our Customs, undated  | box 7 |
| Tar Baby--story-essay, undated  | box 7 |
| <i>We Got Law in Our Mouths: The Rise and Fall of African American Customary Law</i> , 1991-1992    | box 7 |
| <b>Scope and Contents</b>   |       |
| (2 folders)   |       |
| Notebooks and Notes   |       |
| Notebooks--Legal issues and subjects, undated   | box 5 |
| <b>Scope and Contents</b>   |       |
| (13 folders)  |       |
| Notebooks--Legal issues and subjects, undated   | box 6 |



**Scope and Contents**

(3 folders)

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|   |       |
|---|-------|
| Notes--legal issues and subjects, undated | box 6 |
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**Scope and Contents**

(2 folders)

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|                   |  |
|-------------------|--|
| Project Materials |  |
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|                        |       |
|------------------------|-------|
| ABGCC--agenda, undated | box 1 |
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| African American--popular music, undated | box 1 |
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| African Burial Ground Memorial--New York City--<br>Statement before the Federal Steering Committee for the<br>African Burial Ground Memorial, 1993 July 26 | box 1 |
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|---|-------|
| Archeology of Rules--preface--drafts, 1991 March 28 | box 1 |
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| Articles--background readings--related materials, 1962,<br>1982, undated | box 1 |
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| Black Americans in Law and Literature--preface and<br>chapter outlines, undated | box 1 |
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| Contracts--music industry, 1994, undated | box 1 |
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|                           |       |
|---------------------------|-------|
| Correspondence, 1985-1998 | box 1 |
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|-----------------------------|-------|
| Course materials, 1983-1993 | box 1 |
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**Scope and Contents**

(2 folders)

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|                          |       |
|--------------------------|-------|
| Dry Cleaners Story, 1993 | box 1 |
|--------------------------|-------|

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|---------------------------|-------|
| Housing--federal, undated | box 1 |
|---------------------------|-------|

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|                                       |       |
|---------------------------------------|-------|
| Important legal cases--notes, undated | box 1 |
|---------------------------------------|-------|

**Jazz**


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|                            |       |
|----------------------------|-------|
| As deconstruction, undated | box 1 |
|----------------------------|-------|

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|   |       |
|---|-------|
| Course--Jazz: Introduction to the Contract Machines,<br>undated | box 1 |
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|                      |       |
|----------------------|-------|
| Duke Ellington, 1992 | box 1 |
|----------------------|-------|

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|---|-------|
| History--student notes [?]-re, law and theory, 1991 | box 1 |
|---|-------|

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|--|-------|
| Jazz: The Law the Slaves Made--book proposal,<br>1991-1992 | box 1 |
|--|-------|

**Scope and Contents**

(2 folders)

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 Jazz--loose pages and notes, undated box 9
**Scope and Contents**

(5 folders)

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 Jazz: Race and Resistance in America, 1991-1993 box 1
**Scope and Contents**

(4 folders)

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 Jazz as Jurisprudence, 1989-1993 box 2
**Scope and Contents**

(8 folders)

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 Jazz Rights, 1993 box 2

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 Land Use--United States--control in, 1990 box 2

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 Law School Admission Council (LSAC)--minority affairs committee, undated box 2

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 loose pages and notes--various topics, undated box 9
**Scope and Contents**

(10 folders)

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 Louis Armstrong, 1992 box 2

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 Minorities and the idea of progress, 1985 box 2

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 Municipal Services, undated box 2

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 The New Jazz City, 1997, undated box 2
**Scope and Contents**

(2 folders)

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 Nobody Knows My Trials, 1991-1992 box 2
**Scope and Contents**

(2 folders)

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 Nobody Knows the Remedies We Need, 1991 box 3

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 Notes

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 on Slavery, undated box 3

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 personal--creative writing, 1990-1999 box 3

**Scope and Contents**

(2 folders)

|                                   |       |
|-----------------------------------|-------|
| writings--Parker, Kellis, undated | box 3 |
| Outlines, undated                 | box 3 |
| Ralph Ellison, undated            | box 3 |
| Rainbow Coalition, undated        | box 3 |
| Receipts, 1998 February           | box 3 |
| Remedies, 1984-1995, undated      | box 3 |

**Scope and Contents**

(7 folders)

|   |       |
|---|-------|
| Remedies Project--drafts, 1992, 1997, undated | box 3 |
|---|-------|

**Scope and Contents**

(3 folders)

|   |       |
|---|-------|
| Slavery and laws, undated   | box 3 |
| Slavery remedy, 1991 March  | box 3 |
| Syllabi, 1990-1994, undated                                       | box 3 |
| Tar Baby and [some] Jazz as Jurisprudence--manuscripts, 1990-1994 | box 4 |

**Scope and Contents**

(4 folders)

|   |       |
|---|-------|
| Writings by others--colleagues, friends and students, undated | box 4 |
|---|-------|

**Scope and Contents**

(2 folders)

|   |       |
|---|-------|
| The Zero in the Zero-Sum Society--manuscript--drafts, undated | box 4 |
| Zora Neale Hurston--manuscripts--drafts, 1992, 1994, undated  | box 4 |

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