

∞ The Ward M. Canaday Center ∞
for Special Collections
The University of Toledo

Finding Aid

John P. Kelly Papers, 1937 - 1983

MSS-055

Size: 2 linear ft.

Provenance: John P. Kelly donated this material to the Ward M. Canaday Center, University of Toledo Libraries, on July 17, 1985.

Access: open

Collection Summary: Collection consists of presidential election memorabilia, including 110 8" x 10" news photographs of presidential candidates; films (*The Pursuit of Happiness* [1955?], narrated by Senator John F. Kennedy, and *The Greatest Heritage* [1952?] on Ohio election procedures); and tape recordings of Kelly's retirement dinner.

Subjects: [Politics and Government](#)

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Completed by: Paul M. Gifford, May 1987

Reformatted: Arjun Sabharwal, September 2009; last updated: June 2014

Introduction

This collection consists of material generated by the activity of John P. Kelly, Democratic Party leader of Toledo, Ohio. Most of it relates to presidential elections during the years covered by the collection. In addition to correspondence, the collection contains photographs, programs, campaign buttons, tapes, films, certificates, and clippings. The value of the collection for research is limited, but it does contain many items worthy of display.

Biographical Sketch

| | |
|---------------|---|
| 1896, Dec. 28 | Born in Toledo. Attended the former St. Patrick's Elementary School and St. John's High School. |
| 1916 | Bridge Inspector, Lucas County Surveyor's Office. Enrolled in law school, St. John's College; attended Campion College. |
| 1917-1919 | Student Army Training Corps. |
| 1919-1920 | Deputy Sheriff, Lucas County. |
| 1920 | Married Grace Harpen. |
| 1920-1933 | Clerk and salesman for building supply companies. |
| 1932-1984 | Democratic Ward Chairman. |
| 1933-1936 | Deputy County Engineer. |
| 1936 | Appointed, then elected, County Commissioner. |
| 1939-1941 | Member, Toledo City Council. |
| 1942 | Defeated for election; returned to construction material business. |
| 1944 | Appointed Clerk, Lucas County Board of Elections. |
| 1945-1976 | Served as member of Lucas County Board of Elections. |
| 1945-1966 | Chairman, Executive Committee, Lucas County Democratic organization. |
| 1948 and 1964 | Presidential Elector. Member of Advisory Committee on Political Organization, Democratic National Committee. |
| 1949-1966 | For twenty years, Vice-chairman of Ohio Democratic organization. |
| 1989, June 16 | Died. |

Scope and Content

Although this collection does contain some correspondence and items of interest to researchers interested in the history of postwar Toledo politics, most of the materials in the collection are memorabilia with primary value as objects for display. These include about 110 photographs; invitations and programs to Presidential inaugurations; programs for national Democratic Party conventions; miscellaneous certificates and campaign paraphernalia; and films.

Correspondence is largely incoming. Major correspondents include Congressman Michael J. Kirwan, Adlai Stevenson, Harry Truman, John F. Kennedy, Robert F. Kennedy, and Hubert Humphrey. Letters from these individuals are brief; they convey thanks after campaign visits or offer acknowledgments for letters received. Other correspondents are national and state Democratic Party -officials and Toledo politicians; they generally offer congratulations to Kelly. Letters are arranged chronologically.

Photographs, nearly all of them 8" x 10", are news photos of Presidential candidates, portraits of Kelly's political confreres, informal scenes of fund-raising dinners, and the like. There are a number of good photographs of Truman's 1948 visit to Toledo and of John F. Kennedy's visits in 1959 and 1960. Notable too is a color photograph of Kelly with Robert F. Kennedy taken only weeks before the latter's assassination. Many of the photographs, unfortunately, have not been identified.

The films, all of them 16 mm, include "The Pursuit of Happiness" (1955?), a history of the Democratic Party narrated by Sen. John F. Kennedy, "The Greatest Heritage" (1952?), on Ohio election procedures, narrated by Ohio Secretary of State Ted Brown; and a negative reel, with cuttings, identified only by the inscription "Democratic Campaign Committee" on the canister.

The two tape recordings deserve notice. One recording, consisting of two reels, is of Kelly's retirement dinner on Oct. 30, 1966, at which speeches were made by Frazier Reams, Jr., then a gubernatorial candidate, former governor and Toledo mayor Michael DiSalle, Congressman Thomas Ludlow Ashley, Senator Edward M. Kennedy, and John F. Kelly's brother Msgr. Ignatius Kelly. The other recording was made in 1959 from broadcasts over WSPD of the annual meeting of the City Manager League in Toledo, a broadcast paid for by the League, and a local-affairs call-in show, "People's Opinion."

Folder List

| <u>Box</u> | <u>Folder</u> | <u>Description</u> |
|------------|---------------|--|
| 1 | | Correspondence |
| | 1 | Outgoing, 1945- 1966 |
| | 2 | Incoming, 1941-1976 |
| | | Topical |
| | 3 | Democratic Party national conventions, 1944, 1952, 1972 |
| | 4 | Electoral College, 1948-1964 |
| | 5 | Kennedy, John F., 1961-1963 |
| | 6 | Kennedy, Robert F., 1968 |
| | | Presidential inaugurations |
| | 7 | 1937, 1949 |
| | 8 | 1961 |
| | 9 | 1965 |
| | 10 | Truman, Harry S, 1948-1949 |
| *11 | | Miscellaneous, 1945-1976 |
| | | Photographs |
| | 12 | Presidential and senatorial campaigns |
| | 13 | John P. Kelly |
| | 14 | Democratic Party functions |
| | 14 | Of others |
| | 16 | Clippings, 1945-1983 |
| | | Plaques (2) |
| | | Tape recordings |
| | | Democratic dinner (retirement dinner), Oct. 30, 1966 (2 reels) |
| | | City Manager League meeting, WSPD, 1959 |
| | | Films |
| | | Democratic Campaign Committee (negative) |
| | | Cuttings (unidentified) |
| | | "The Greatest Heritage" (ca.1952) |
| | | "The Pursuit of Happiness" (ca. 1955) |
| 2 | | Campaign buttons, convention badges, miscellaneous campaign paraphernalia |

Legend

* = oversize cabinet, **drawer 1**

^ = oversize area

** = locked area

R-4= range four