



Smithsonian

National Museum of American History Kenneth E. Behring Center

Guide to the Kenneth R. Harding Collection

NMAH.AC.0885

Kevin DeVries

2019

Archives Center, National Museum of American History
P.O. Box 37012
Suite 1100, MRC 601
Washington, D.C. 20013-7012
archivescenter@si.edu
<http://americanhistory.si.edu/archives>

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Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives Center, National Museum of American History
Title:	Kenneth R. Harding Collection
Identifier:	NMAH.AC.0885
Date:	circa 1924-1981.
Creator:	Harding, Kenneth R.
Source:	National Museum of American History (U.S.). Division of Politics and Reform
Extent:	2 Cubic feet (6 boxes)
Language:	English .

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

Collection donated by Harding to the Daytona Beach Community College in 1980. In 1998 the College returned the collection to the donor because of space reasons. Harding then donated the collection to the Division of Political History, National Museum of American History. The Division transferred the archival portion of the collection to the Archives Center in 2005.

Processing Information

Collection was processed by Kevin DeVries, intern, 2019; supervised by Vanessa Broussard-Simmons, archivist, 2019.

Preferred Citation

Kenneth R. Harding Collection, circa 1924-1981, Archives Center, National Museum of American History.

Restrictions on Access

Collection open for research on site by appointment. Unprotected photographs must be handled with gloves.

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Biographical Note

Kenneth R. Harding was born in Medina, New York, to Victor Hunt Harding and Edith Falk Harding on March 28, 1914. Having foregone an undergraduate degree, Harding moved straight into law school, receiving his J.D. in 1937 from The George Washington University Law School. Shortly after finishing law school, in 1938, he married his first wife, Jane Wedderburn Harding.

In 1938, Harding took a position as a bank examiner in San Francisco, California. In the years before World War II, however, he was drawn away from that work to serve with the United States Navy. After this period and a 10-year stretch in the Air Force Reserve, he retired with the rank of colonel.

After retiring from military service, Harding transitioned into political work. Following in the footsteps of his father, a political science professor at Stanford University and former regional campaign manager for President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, Harding took a position at the Democratic National Congressional Committee, of which his father was Chief Executive. In the aftermath of his father's death, he was, having worked with the Committee for eight years, promoted to Chief Executive. In this position, which he held from 1954-1972, he distinguished himself as a leader in the Democratic campaign effort. With a reputation for knowing the situation of almost any race, he was responsible for distributing funds to candidates to support their election efforts. He served during the tenure of four House Speakers. During this time, he also took up work as the Assistant Sergeant at Arms for the House of Representatives, his father having held a similar post for two brief periods.

Upon election to the position of House Sergeant at Arms (on October 1, 1972), Harding stepped away from his role at the Democratic National Congressional Committee. In his new position, he served as the chief officer responsible for the maintenance and security of the House side of the Capitol Building and all House office buildings, serving, ex officio, as co-chief of the Capitol Police. In this role, he worked to ban self-guided tours of the Capitol Building and to prohibit vendors from setting up near the Capitol Reflecting Pool. Concurrent with these duties, he was also responsible for maintaining the decorum of the House of Representatives, greeting officials upon arrival and escorting them to the appropriate chambers. In this role, he met and worked with a large number of national and international politicians and heads of state, including the presidents in office during his tenure.

Upon retirement in February of 1980, he moved to Ormund Beach, Florida. He passed away in 2007.

Scope and Contents

This collection primarily documents Kenneth R. Harding's work as an executive at the Democratic National Congressional Committee and in the position of Sergeant at Arms of the United States House of Representatives. The collection includes photographs of politicians and foreign dignitaries, programs, printed materials, scrapbooks, correspondence, and campaign memorabilia. Materials are arranged in four series.

Series 1: Professional, 1924-1981, undated, contains pamphlets, records, correspondence, and photographs documenting Harding's work with the Democratic National Congressional Committee and as the Sergeant at Arms of the House of Representatives. Materials are arranged alphabetically by subject.

Series 2: Elections, 1937-1978, undated, contains printed documents and statistical analyses for various locations and election cycles. Much of this was probably collected during Harding's work with the Democratic National Congressional Committee. Materials are arranged chronologically.

Series 3: Photographs, 1949-1980s, contains photographs of various figures, including United States presidents and foreign and domestic dignitaries. Most date from the period in which Harding worked as Sergeant at Arms of the House of Representatives. Materials are arranged alphabetically by subject.

Series 4: Clippings, 1956-1981, contains newspaper clippings. Although some mention Harding directly, many do not. Materials are arranged chronologically.

Arrangement

The collection is arranged into four series.

Series 1: Professional Materials, 1924-1981, undated

Series 2: Elections, 1937-1978, undated

Series 3: Photographs, 1949-1980s

Series 4: Newspaper Clippings, 1956-1981

Names and Subject Terms

This collection is indexed in the online catalog of the Smithsonian Institution under the following terms:

Subjects:

- Elections
- Political campaigns
- Politicians
- Presidents -- United States

Types of Materials:

- Photographs -- 1950-2000
- Programs
- Scrapbooks -- 20th century

Names:

- Democratic National Committee.
- Democratic National Congressional Committee.
- Democratic National Convention (1932 : Chicago, Ill.).
- National Museum of American History (U.S.). Division of Politics and Reform
- United States. Congress. House

Container Listing

Series 1: Professional Papers, 1924-1981, undated

Box 1, Folder 1	Bicentennial Year, 1976, 1975-1976
Box 1, Folder 2	Bicentennial Year, 1976, 1975-1976
Box 1, Folder 3	Bicentennial Year, 1976, merchandise, 1975-1976
Box 1, Folder 4	Building for the Great Society, speech cards, 1965
Box 1, Folder 5	United States Capitol Building, maps, undated
Box 1, Folder 6	Congressional Award Committee, 1971-1972
Box 1, Folder 7	Congressional Committees, 1972-1979
Box 1, Folder 8	Correspondence, 1963-1977
Box 1, Folder 9	Election Laws, pamphlets, 1958
Box 1, Folder 10	Flag, Estes Case, 1955-1973
Box 1, Folder 11	Government, United States, 1937-1974
Box 1, Folder 12	Historical Documents, published, 1945-1955
Box 1, Folder 13	House work schedule, 1978
Box 1, Folder 14	"How Our Laws Are Made," by Charles Zinn, 1956
Box 1, Folder 15	Impeachment, Richard Nixon, background information, 1974
Box 2, Folder 1	Inaugurations, part 1 of 2, 1949-1977
Box 2, Folder 2	Inaugurations, part 2 of 2, 1949-1977
Box 2, Folder 3	"The Mace of the House of Representatives of the United States", undated
Box 2, Folder 4	Magna Carta, Capitol Visit, part 1 of 2, 1976
Box 2, Folder 5	Magna Carta, Capitol Visit, part 2 of 2, 1976
Box 2, Folder 6	"Mass on the Mall," Pope John Paul II Visit, 1979-10-07

Box 2, Folder 7	Oral History Interview: Kenneth Harding, "Helen Gahagan Douglas and the Democratic Campaign Committee", 1981
Box 2, Folder 8	Pamphlets, federal regulations, 1942-1978
Box 2, Folder 9	Pamphlets, Political, Democratic, 1924-1944
Box 2, Folder 10	Pamphlets, Political, Democratic, 1960-1976
Box 2, Folder 11	Pamphlets, Political, Republican, 1926-1952
Box 2, Folder 12	Political Platforms, Democratic, 1926-1956
Box 2, Folder 13	Publications, personal, 1961
Box 2, Folder 14	"The Legal Status of American Political Parties," by Joseph R. Starr, 1940
Box 2, Folder 15	Security, Incident Photographs, undated
Box 2, Folder 16	Security, Incident Reports and Actions, 1973-1975
Box 3, Folder 1	Security, Incident Reports and Actions, 1974-07-23-1974-08-05
Box 3, Folder 2	Social events, 1950-1954
Box 3, Folder 3	Social events, 1960-1969
Box 3, Folder 4	Social events, 1970-1979

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Series 2: Elections, 1937-1978

Box 4, Folder 9	Campaigns, 1937-1972
Box 4, Folder 10	Contested, 1944
Box 3, Folder 5	Analysis and Statistics, 1946
Box 3, Folder 6	Analysis and Statistics, 1951
Box 3, Folder 7	Analysis and Statistics, 1952
Box 4, Folder 1	Analysis and Statistics, 1954
Box 6, Folder 1	Analysis and Statistics, 1956
Box 4, Folder 2	Analysis and Statistics, 1957
Box 4, Folder 3	Analysis and Statistics, 1959
Box 4, Folder 4	Analysis and Statistics, 1963
Box 4, Folder 5	Analysis and Statistics, 1966
Box 4, Folder 6	Analysis and Statistics, 1969
Box 6, Folder 2	Analysis and Statistics, 1971
Box 6, Folder 3	Analysis and Statistics, part 1 of 2, 1972
Box 4, Folder 7	Analysis and Statistics, part 2 of 2, 1972
Box 4, Folder 8	Analysis and Statistics, 1978
Box 6, Folder 4	Analysis and Statistics, undated

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Series 3: Photographs, 1949-1980s

Box 5, Folder 1	Menachem Begin, 1977-1978
Box 5, Folder 2	Jimmy Carter, 1976-1979
Box 5, Folder 3	Dignitaries, United States, 1952-1976
Box 5, Folder 4	Dignitaries, United States, 1952-1976
Box 5, Folder 5	Dwight D. Eisenhower, undated
Box 5, Folder 6	Gerald R. (Jerry) Ford, 1970s-1980s
Box 5, Folder 7	Lyndon Baines Johnson, 1960s-1973
Box 5, Folder 8	John Fitzgerald Kennedy, 1961
Box 5, Folder 9	Richard M. Nixon, 1969-1973
Box 5, Folder 10	Anwar Sadat, 1975-1978
Box 6, Folder 5	General, 1949-1975
Box 5, Folder 11	Visits, Foreign Dignitaries, 1974-1979
Box 5, Folder 12	Visits, Foreign Dignitaries, 1974-1979
Box 5, Folder 13	Visits, Foreign Dignitaries, 1976-1978

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Series 4: Newspaper Clippings, 1956-1981

Box 5, Folder 14	Clippings, 1956
Box 5, Folder 15	Clippings, 1960-1969
Box 5, Folder 16	Clippings, 1970-1979
Box 5, Folder 17	Clippings, 1980-1981

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