Wanda Forbes
(b. 1925)

Papers, 1969-2008

Volume: 1.75 linear feet
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Biographical Note:

“Bipartisanship. That’s the way you ought to look at politics,” remarked Wanda Forbes, a longtime activist for the Republican Party and staunch supporter of a two-party political process. She believes that with a two-party system “you have more than one person watching the store and you get better government all the way around.” In 1964 she moved to her husband’s native York County, S.C., which had long been dominated by the Democratic Party. Forbes worked hard to bring a two-party political system to South Carolina. She served as the state committeeman for York and, later, Richland counties and as the first vice-chair of the state party, among other positions with the Republican Party.

A native of Keyser, W.V., Forbes attended Potomac State College of West Virginia University and graduated from Queens College of Charlotte, NC in 1947. She married Brown Coleman Forbes, an officer in the U.S. Air Force, shortly after graduation and they lived in various places, as assigned by the Air Force. She earned her Master of Arts in Teaching degree from Winthrop College in 1969. Upon her husband’s retirement from the Air Force, they lived in Clover, S.C., her husband’s hometown.

Wanda Forbes became energized about politics during the 1960 U.S. Senate campaign waged by Republican William D. Workman. She later volunteered for several local and national campaigns including serving as York County Primary Chairman for George [H.W.] Bush for President, Western York County Coordinator for Ronald Reagan for President, and as a fulltime volunteer at the Workman for Governor Headquarters in Columbia.

In 1964 she helped to set up the first GOP headquarters in York County and ran for the S.C. House of Representatives as a write-in candidate to satisfy the “full slate” requirement which required voters to vote for the exact number of positions open or their votes wouldn’t be counted. In 1975, Governor James B. Edwards appointed her to the S.C. Commission on Higher Education on which she served until 1978. She ran unsuccessfully two more times as a Republican for the state House of Representatives District #47 (Clover) seat, challenging incumbent Democrat Herbert Kirsh in 1984 and 1986. President Reagan appointed Forbes to the National Commission on Libraries and Information Science, where she served from 1984 to 1993. In 1985, Forbes ignited a controversy when she criticized the new history of South Carolina authored by Lewis P. Jones for omitting any mention Republican Governor Jim Edwards. In 1987, she moved to Columbia, where she continued her work with the Party.
Forbes helped set up and participated in numerous local Republican groups such as the Clover/Lake Wylie Republican Woman’s Club, Richland County Republican Women’s Club, First Tuesday Republican Club, and the S.C. Federation of Republican Women. Additionally, Forbes served as a delegate to numerous state and national Republican conventions.

**Scope and Content Note:**

The Wanda Forbes papers consist of 1.75 linear feet of materials mainly documenting her involvement in the Republican Party. The collection is arranged in the following series: *General, Topical, Photographs and Clippings*.

The *General* file contains a variety of materials including that on the Lewis Jones history.

*Topical* includes Campaigns, the National Commission on Library and Information Science, Republican Party, South Carolina Commission on Higher Education, and Writings. Campaigns consists of correspondence and financial information on her S.C. House races in 1984 and 1986. Considerable documentation exists regarding Forbes’ service with the National Commission on Library and Information Services (NCLIS). General files include records of the NCLIS’ White House Conference on Library and Information Services (WHCLIS), including information on the legal hurdles in creating the WHCLIS and the recommendations coming from the conference. Also included under NCLIS are several publications from the committee. Republican Party files comprise a third of the collection. Included are documents and some correspondence regarding the national, state and local Republican Party organizations, including records regarding the 1984 and 2000 Republican National Conventions and the 1992 party platform. Documentation for the state party includes convention programs, party directories, and party platforms.

*Photographs* consist of pictures of Forbes at events, including the 1984 Republican National Convention, with various politicians, and her family.

*Clippings* closely mirror topics found in other series. The general file includes clippings relating to the Jones history. There is substantial documentation of her race against Herbert Kirsh in 1984 and 1986 and of events related to the Republican Party, both at the state and national level.


**Box List:**

**General**

**Topical:**

- **Campaigns:**
  - Correspondence:
    - General
    - Ethics and Guidelines
- **Finances:**
  - Bank Records:
    - 1984
    - 1986
  - Contributions
  - Disclosure Forms (including those of Herbert Kirsh from 1986)
- **Expenses:**
  - 1984
  - 1986
- **Literature**
  - Press Releases/Letters to the Editor, 1986
- **National Commission on Libraries and Information Science (NCLIS):**
  - General:
    - 1984-1990
    - 1991
  - Ad Hoc Committee Celebrating the Bicentennial of the U.S. Constitution
  - Alliance for Curriculum Reform
- **Publications:**
  - 1987-1990
  - 1991-1992
- **Republican Party:**
  - **National:**
    - Convention:
      - General
    - **Transcripts:**
      - 1984 (annotated)
      - 2000
    - Visitors’ Program, 1984
    - Party Platform, 1992
    - Presidential Campaigns
  - **First Tuesday Republican Club**
  - **Richland County Party:**
    - General
    - 2002 Presidential Election Voter Information
  - **State:**
    - General (2)
    - Committee on History and Archives
County Chairman Manual, 1999

Directories, 1984/85, 1991/92 and 2001
Party Platforms, 1988, 1989 and c. late 1990s
Spartanburg County Republican Women’s Club “GOP Cookbook”
Support for Races
Women’s Clubs (Clover/Lake Wylie Republican Women’s Club, Richland County Republican Women’s Club, and S.C. Federation of Republican Women)
State Commission on Higher Education
Writings
Photographs:
  Autographed (Reagan & Thurmond)
  Family
  Group
  Portraits
  Republican National Convention, 1984
Clippings:
  General
  Articles by Forbes
  Bicentennial Celebration of the Constitution
Campaigns:
  1984
  1986
Education
National Commission on Library and Information Science
Politics (mainly Republican Party)