

South Carolina Political Collections

University of South Carolina

Wanda Forbes

(b. 1925)

Papers, 1969-2008

Volume: 1.75 linear feet

Processed: 2013, by Cody Willis

Provenance: Donated by Wanda Forbes

Citation Form: Wanda Forbes Papers, South Carolina Political Collections, The University of South Carolina

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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

Box 1

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

 Convention Programs, 1984, 1991, 1996, 2000, 2002 and 2008

County Chairman Manual, 1999

Directories, 1984/85, 1991/92 and 2001

Box 2

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)