

South Carolina Political Collections
University of South Carolina

Edward Patterson “Ted” Riley

(1900-1994)

Papers, 1923-1994

Volume: 3 linear feet

Processed: 1993, by Herbert J. Hartsook; additions, 2016, by Chauna Carr

Provenance: Donated by Edward Patterson “Ted” Riley

Citation Form: Edward Patterson “Ted” Riley Papers, South Carolina Political Collections, The University of South Carolina

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Biographical Note:

Edward Patterson "Ted" Riley [1900-1994] spent a lifetime in service to his community, state, and nation.

A native of Barnwell, Riley graduated from Barnwell High School in 1922. During a three-year hiatus during his high school education, Riley worked as a soda jerk, logger and semi-professional baseball player. After high school, Riley attended Furman University, where he was awarded an athletic scholarship and played both football and baseball, pledged Sigma Alpha Epsilon, and studied law. In 1926 he graduated as a member of the centennial class with Bachelor of Law and Doctor of Jurisprudence degrees.

Riley practiced law from 1926 until 1930 with the firm of Blythe and Bonham in Greenville. He married Martha Dixon of Williston in 1927 and they had two sons, Edward P. Riley, Jr., and Richard W. Riley. In 1930 he was appointed Judge of the Family Court in Greenville, and held this position until 1933 when he began work in the United States Attorney's office for the Western District of South Carolina as an Assistant United States Attorney. He held that position until 1942 when, with the country's entry into the Second World War, he joined the United States Navy. At war's end, Riley risen to the rank of Lieutenant Commander.

Riley resumed his position in the United States Attorney's office in 1945 and in 1952, his final year with that office, was acting United States Attorney. In the early 1950s Riley opened his own law firm in Greenville, and in 1952 was elected Greenville County Attorney, a position he held until his retirement in 1976. From 1958 until 1978, Riley served as Greenville County School Board Attorney, which involved him in the divisive school integration battles of the 1960s. Riley resigned in 1978 to assist his son Richard W. Riley in a successful run for the governor's office.

An impressive record of community leadership includes terms as President of the Greenville Kiwanis Club, 1948, Commander of the American Legion Post 3 in Greenville, 1950, President of the Greenville County Bar Association, 1951, and President of the South Carolina Bar Association, 1960 to 1964.

Always active in Democratic Party politics, Riley chaired the Greenville County Democratic Party Executive Committee from 1954 to 1955 and the South Carolina Democratic Party for two terms, from 1960 to 1964. Riley played an important role in John F. Kennedy's 1960 Presidential election. Considered a safe state for Richard Nixon, Kennedy narrowly carried the state in a surprise victory.

Scope and Content Note:

The collection consists of 3 linear feet of material, dating chiefly from 1952 to 1966, documenting Riley's long involvement with and leadership of the Democratic Parties of Greenville County and South Carolina, the South Carolina Bar Association, and American Legion Post 3 of Greenville. Due to mold damage the majority of the collection has been photocopied onto archival bond paper.

Collection Inventory

The collection is arranged in the following series:

Democratic Party of Greenville County
Democratic Party of South Carolina
Bar Association
American Legion
Personal Papers
Miscellaneous
Clippings

Box List:

Democratic Party of Greenville County:

Box 1

1952-1953
1954, 1956
1959
1966
n.d.

Democratic Party of South Carolina:

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1953
1955
1956
1957
1958:
 Gen.
 Riley for Permanent President
1959:
 Gen.
 National Committee Meeting [Riley as Edgar Brown's Proxy]
1960:
 Gen.:
 Jan.-Feb.
 March
 April
 May
 June
 July
 Aug.
 Sept.
 Oct.
 Nov.
 Dec.
 Bamberg Co. Sheriff's Protest
 Congratulations on Election as Democratic Chairman
 Conventions:
 Democratic National Convention, Los Angeles (2)

South Carolina Recall Convention
Federal Appointments, 1960-1962 (2)
Inauguration:
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 Oct.-Nov.
 Dec.
 1961, Jan.
Platform
Reports from Grace Whaley [Whaley was Assistant Org. Chairman?]
Unanswered Correspondence
1961:
 Gen.
 Jan.-April
 May-Aug.
 Sept.-Nov.
 Dec.
 Federal Appointments:
 Gen., 1961-1962
 Federal National Mortgage Agency
 Fund Raising Banquet

 Reports from Grace Whaley
 Young Democrats
1962:
 Gen.
 Jan.-Feb
 Mar.
 April-May
 June-Sept.
 Oct.-Dec.
 General Election
 Committee to Study Election Laws, 1962-1963
 Loyalty Oath
 WIS-TV
1963:
 Gen.
 Jan.-April
 May-Aug.
 Sept.-Dec.
1964:
 Gen.
 Jan.-Feb.
 Mar.-Oct.
 Conventions
1966, Gen.

Bar Association:
 Greenville County, c.1947-1955
 South Carolina:
 1952
 1953

Box 2

1958
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 General
 Form Book
1960:
 General
 Congratulations on Election as President of S.C. Bar
1961:
 General (2)
 Executive Committee
1962
1966

American Legion:

1947, 1950
1951
1952
1956-1957
1959-1960
n.d.

Personal Papers:

General, 1923-1979
Dixon, Ethel [Riley's Mother-in-Law]
Lewis-Weatherbea [WW I]

Miscellaneous:

General
Boy Scouts
Biographical Information
Certificates
Congratulatory messages re: Gov. Dick Riley
Greenville Kiwanis and Elks
Greenville School Board
Law Practice/ U.S. District Attorney
Military Service
Oral History [conducted by John J. Duffy and George D. Terry, USC, 1986-1991]:
 Transcript
 Original Recordings [8 cassettes]
Photographs

Clippings:

General
Assistant U.S. Attorney
Community Leadership
Democratic Party Chairman (3)
Family:
 Johns, Jasper (nephew)
 Riley, E.P. Jr. (Pat)
 Riley, Martha Dixon
 Riley, Richard W. (Dick)

Greenville County Attorney
Judge of Juvenile Court, Greenville
Kennedy, John F.
World War II