

*South Carolina Political Collections
The University of South Carolina*

Marion H. Smoak

(b. circa 1916)

Papers, 1964-1968

Volume: 0.5 linear feet

Processed: 2011, by Nataly Garzon

Provenance: Donated by Marion H. Smoak

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Biographical Note

Marion H. "Joe" Smoak helped form a viable Republican Party in South Carolina in the early 1960s through grassroots efforts and made history in 1966 when he became one of the first Republicans to serve in the South Carolina State Senate in more than seventy-five years. Smoak served one term as State Senator and then left local politics to work with the State Department in Washington, D.C.

Born to prominent Aiken attorney and magistrate William M. and Marion Hartog Smoak, Smoak graduated from Aiken High School and then The Citadel, earning degrees in English and History in 1938. After obtaining his law degree from the University of South Carolina in 1941, Smoak served overseas in New Caledonia, Japan, and Berlin and held the title of Judge Advocate with the 11th and 82nd Airborne Divisions. He qualified for the prestigious Master Parachutist Badge due to his high number of jumps with the two divisions. After completing his tour, Smoak taught in the Law Department of the U.S. Military Academy at West Point. Soon thereafter, he served as a legislative liaison officer in D.C. where he assisted in drafting legislation and performed liaison duties with Congress, the Department of Defense, the Department of Justice and the Department of State. While in D.C., Smoak rose to the position of Chief of the Legislative Drafting Division for the Judge Advocate General until retiring from military service in 1961 with the rank of Lieutenant Colonel.

Smoak returned to Aiken County with his wife, the former Mary Frances Meister, and three children, Pat, Fred and Mary Frances. He became a practicing attorney until seeking office for the State Senate in 1964. In this first bid, Smoak was the sole Republican candidate running for local office. His platform encompassed economic and industrial development, as well as the need for a two-party system in South Carolina. Barry Goldwater, the Republican Presidential nominee and a close friend of the Smoaks, actively endorsed the campaign. Ultimately, Smoak lost the 1964 election by a margin of 700 votes to incumbent Edward C. Cushman.

In early 1966, Smoak declared his intention to run once again for State Senate. On November 8, Smoak won the election by a substantial margin, 10,162 to 7,713, over G. H. (Buck) Grant. Upon winning, he stated, "and now we have in effect a two-party system in Aiken County." Smoak was elected to the Senate along with five other Republicans. They were the first Republicans to serve in the Senate since Reconstruction. Once in office, Smoak was named to six committees: Agriculture, Atomic and Nuclear Energy, Commerce and Manufactures, Military, Natural Resources, and Veteran Affairs. While in office, he fought for the Compulsory School Bill, compulsory auto inspections, and the realigning of voting precincts. He served on the State Constitutional Revision Commission in 1967-1968. In 1968, Smoak was elected alternate to represent the 3rd Congressional District at the Republican National Convention in Miami. His son, Freddie, went to the convention as a Teenage Republican (TAR) representative.

After his term in the Senate, Smoak went to work for the State Department as the Deputy Chief of Protocol and Chief of Protocol for the President and the Secretary of State between 1969 and 1974. He served on the Presidential Delegation to the inaugural of President Prastana of Colombia in 1970, the inaugural of President Echeverria of Mexico in 1970, the funeral of King Frederick IX of Denmark in 1972, and other significant events. He retired from the Department of State in 1974 with the title of Ambassador. Several years later, Smoak became Co-Chairman on the Committee of Finance for candidate Ronald Reagan, and then worked on the President's

Transitional Team for the Department of State in 1980. Smoak retired from the law firm of Shipley, Smoak, and Henry of Washington, D.C., where he practiced International Law. He was also involved with real estate development for much of his life.

Scope and Content

Originating from a scrapbook, the .5 linear feet of Marion Smoak Papers provide insight into both his 1964 and 1966 campaigns, as well as his time in the State Senate, 1967 to 1968. The papers contain a general folder, campaign material, clippings, and photographs. Included in the general folder are papers and photographs documenting the Smoaks' friendship with the Goldwaters and biographical information. The 1964 campaign folder contains a campaign sign, campaign ads and an endorsement from Barry Goldwater. The 1966 and 1968 campaign folder holds various campaign ads from 1966 and one from 1968. Clippings from 1964 to 1966 mainly focus on Smoak's campaigns for State Senate. Clippings from 1967 and 1968 cover Smoak's term in the State Senate, with an emphasis on his involvement with education, the compulsory auto inspection bill, the realignment of voting precincts, and the bonds controversies with the school and courthouse.

Box List

General	Box 1
Campaigns for Aiken County State Senator:	
1964	
1966 and 1968	
Clippings	
1964, Oct.-Nov.	
1965	
1966:	
Jan.-Sept.	
Oct.	
Nov.-Dec.	
1967-68	
Photographs	