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Frank Thompson Papers, 1955-1980 (bulk 1955-1970): Inventory

Summary Information

Call number:	MC132
Location:	Princeton University Library. Department of Rare Books and Special Collections. Seeley G. Mudd Manuscript Library. Public Policy Papers. 65 Olden Street Princeton, New Jersey 08540 USA
Size:	635 cubic feet (635 boxes)
Language(s) of material:	English.
Abstract:	In 1955, Frank Thompson was elected congressman from the Fourth Congressional District of New Jersey and was assigned to the Education, Labor, and Administration committees. The papers in this collection reflect his special interests in federal aid to education and the arts, the creation of cultural centers, such as the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, and the protection of historic buildings.

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Biography of Frank Thompson

Born in Trenton, New Jersey to Frank Thompson and the former Beatrice Jamieson on July 26, 1918, Frank Thompson, Jr. was the son of a newspaperman as well as the nephew of Frank Jamieson, an advisor to New York's Governor Nelson A. Rockefeller. He was educated in both public and private schools in the Trenton area and entered Wake Forest College and Law School in North Carolina, receiving his LL.B. in 1941. His maternal uncle was Crawford Jamieson, state senator and Mercer County Democratic leader.

After leaving Wake Forest Thompson served in the Navy for seven years which included service in World War II. In November 1949 he was elected to the New Jersey House of Assembly where he remained until war broke out in Korea. There was then a 17-month time he served on active duty as commanding officer of Naval Reserve Battalion 4-22.

He won the November 1954 election to the United States House of Representatives on the Democratic ticket. In January 1955 Thompson was assigned to the Education, Labor and Administration committees. He quickly introduced a bill whereby a college education would be made available to a much wider range of students through federal aid. He oversaw passage of major education and labor bills in Congress and was the sponsor of bills which helped the performing arts. Throughout his congressional career Thompson placed an emphasis on education, music and the arts, international relations, and matters of concern to New Jersey. Thompson worked to obtain passage of an award known as the "Medal for Distinguished Civilian Service" in twelve different fields, one of them the arts. Other bills that he introduced include protection for historic buildings, a \$3.4 billion appropriation for the Mutual Security program in 1956, and easing the tariff laws on art. He also defended the right of a campus society to invite Alger Hiss for a speaking engagement at Princeton University in 1956. A close political ally of the Kennedy family, he ran John F. Kennedy's voter registration drive in 1960.

Congressman Thompson also favored a three-year reciprocal trade renewal bill, the Eisenhower Middle East Doctrine, and increasing of United States subscriptions to the International Monetary Fund and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development. On military matters he supported the Dept. of Defense Reorganization Act and an extension of the draft. He voted for the civil rights bills of 1956 and 1957. He voted against the Powell amendment to the school construction bill which prohibited federal funds to any state that does not comply with Supreme Court decisions. He was also opposed to killing the school construction bill of July 1957. Other domestic issues which he supported include policies to increase Congressional salaries to \$25,000, restore rigid farm price supports, liberalize the Social Security Act, raise the minimum wage to \$1 an hour, build 45,000 public housing units, construct the Colorado River storage project, grant statehood to Alaska and Hawaii, and authorize the Tennessee Valley Authority to issue \$750 billion of revenue bonds to finance new power facilities.

During his tenure as congressman he sat on several committees which included the Committee on Education and Labor. He chaired the House Administration Committee, the Subcommittee on Labor and Management Relations, the Joint Committee on Printing, as well as the National Voters Registration Committee.

Thompson's political career came to an end following his 1980 Abscam indictment and conviction. He served two years in prison near Lexington, Kentucky and moved to his home in Alexandria, VA where he did consulting work. He died in Johns Hopkins Hospital after an operation for throat cancer on July 23, 1989 at the age of 71. He was survived by his wife Evelina; two daughters; and a brother.

Description

The Thompson papers are set apart from the usual run of congressional papers by his activities in the fields of general education, library support, exchange scholarships, and various cultural activities. This collection does contain fewer government publications that were printed but a higher percentage of correspondence than most similar files, thus there is more material suited for research in public affairs. While the collections does cover a broad spectrum of subject matter, there is an emphasis on areas like education, music and the arts, international relations, New Jersey as well as various Congressional committees he sat on.

The Papers consists of the files maintained by Thompson throughout his political career, beginning with his election in 1955. There are also materials on international relations, civil rights, social security and medicare, public utilities, and other New Jersey state matters. Included are speeches, statements, correspondence, copies of replies to constituents, records relating to congressional committees, agencies, and cases, government publications, photographs, and other printed materials.

Arrangement

This is an unprocessed collection. The papers are in their original arrangement as they were maintained by Thompson's offices.

Access and Use

Access

Collection is open for research use.

Remote Storage

Please consult with Mudd Manuscript Library about having the collection recalled to Mudd Library for your use. This process normally requires 48-72 hours notice.

Restrictions on Use and Copyright Information

Single photocopies may be made for research purposes. Permission to publish materials from the collection must be requested from the Curator of the Public Policy Papers. Researchers are responsible for determining any copyright questions.

Acquisition and Appraisal

Appraisal

Box numbers that do not appear on this checklist have, after being evaluated by the archivists, been discarded.

Processing and Other Information

Preferred Citation

Identification of specific item; Date (if known); Frank Thompson Papers, Box and Folder Number; Public Policy Papers, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library.

Works Cited

Sources for this biography include the July 1959 issue of *Current Biography*, *Who's Who*, *The Trenton Times*, and a March 19, 1970 Princeton University Press Release.

Processing Information

This is an unprocessed collection. The contents list provided is a preliminary inventory.

Encoding

Machine-readable finding aid encoded in EAD 2002 by Techbooks and Cristela García-Spitz on December 23, 2006.

Descriptive Rules Used

Finding aid content adheres to that prescribed by *Describing Archives: A Content Standard*.

Subject Headings

These materials have been indexed in the [Princeton University Library online catalog](#) using the following terms. Those seeking related materials should search under these terms.

- United States. Congress -- Committees -- 20th century.
- Arts -- United States -- Finance -- 20th century.
- Bills, Legislative -- United States -- 20th century.
- Civic centers -- Washington (D.C.) -- 20th century.
- Civil rights -- United States -- 20th century.
- Education -- United States -- Finance -- 20th century.
- Federal aid to education -- United States -- 20th century.
- Federal aid to higher education -- United States -- 20th century.
- Federal aid to historic sites -- United States -- 20th century.
- Federal aid to the arts -- United States -- 20th century.
- Historic sites -- United States -- Conservation and restoration -- 20th century.
- New Jersey -- Politics and government -- 20th century.
- Correspondence.
- Files.
- Photographs.

- Speeches.
- Legislators -- New Jersey -- 20th century.
- American history/20th century
- American politics and government
- New Jerseyana