On Wednesday, October 30, 1996, the University South Caroliniana Society and the Thomas Cooper Society hosted a reception for Isadore E. Lourie to honor him for the gift of his personal papers to the library’s Modern Political Collections Division. The gala affair drew a standing-room-only crowd that included family, friends, board members of the Jewish Historical Society of South Carolina, and legislators and attorneys with whom Lourie has been associated.

A highlight of the event was a surprise visit by Lourie’s close friend, and current U.S. Secretary of Education, Dick Riley. In his opening remarks, Riley said: “Izzy and I have had a wonderful life together in public service...They called our crowd the ‘Young Turks.’ We didn’t have a big crowd, but we had a very active crowd, and I hope an honorable one. Because we were really trying to bring South Carolina into this century...Izzy Lourie did more to bring people together at a time that was extremely important for this country, and all of us should be forever grateful for that.”

Lourie went on to say: “The highlight of my legislative career was those years when I was active with the group called the ‘Young Turks’....Through the efforts of this group and many others, we were able to be responsible for progressive legislation in the fields of education, senior citizens, consumer protection, economic development, health care, and many other areas, all of which we believed and hoped would have a lasting impression on the social progress of South Carolina. Our commitment to the cause of social and economic justice for all of our citizens was the anchor of our entire legislative program.”

Modern Political Collections exists to document South Carolina society and government at the state and national levels. Lourie’s life and career span a remarkable period of change in South Carolina’s government in which he was an influential player. His papers will form an important resource for future generations of scholars who will find our recent history just as fascinating as we now find the colonial and Civil War eras.

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