Donald H. Holland
(1928-2003)
Papers, 1923, 1942-2003

Volume: 17 linear feet

Processed: 2003, by Laura Koser; 2006, additions by Santi Thompson and Dorothy Hazelrigg; 2009, additions by Allison Hughes

Provenance: Donated by the Honorable Donald H. Holland

Citation Form: Donald H. Holland Papers, South Carolina Political Collections, the University of South Carolina

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Biographical Note:

Speaking after state Senator Donald Holland’s death in 2003, former governor and Kershaw County native John C. West described his friend and colleague to the Camden Chronicle-Independent: “I knew and was associated with Don for over 50 years. I have never seen a man as honest, with more integrity, with more dedication, than Donald Holland. He was dedicated to his constituency, often termed the ‘little people.’ He shunned the limelight. He seldom took credit for things that he did and never put his own interests ahead of his constituency. I think he will go down as one of the great leaders of Kershaw County…. he had that dedication to the people which characterized his life. He was just a model public servant.”

The Donald H. Holland papers document his career dedicated to public service for Kershaw County and the state of South Carolina. Serving in the South Carolina House of Representatives (1951-1954, 1957-1964), as a South Carolina District Highway Commissioner (1964-1968), and in the South Carolina Senate for over thirty years (1968-2003), Holland, at different times, represented constituents in Kershaw, Chesterfield, Darlington, Lancaster, Lee, Marlboro, and York counties.

Almost continuously in public office from 1950 until his death, Holland worked with many prominent political figures. Beginning in his early years as a representative from Kershaw County, Holland established political and personal relationships with such individuals as Solomon Blatt, Edgar Brown, Rembert Dennis, Marion Gressette, and every South Carolina governor from James Byrnes to Jim Hodges. As an active member of the Democratic Party, Holland campaigned locally and nationally, lending his support to campaigns ranging from local city council races to John West’s 1970 campaign for governor to John F. Kennedy’s 1960 presidential campaign. Holland’s efforts both in the State House and on the campaign trail illustrate his determination to provide strong and efficient representation for the people he served.

Born on August 19, 1928 to Eugene and Alberta (Branham) Holland in the small community of Cassatt, Donald Harry Holland grew up on a farm in Depression-era South Carolina. Holland’s rural background later inspired him to push for rural development and expansion of utility services (such as water, electricity, and telephone) in farming communities like Cassatt. Holland attended Midway School for his primary and secondary education, graduating in 1945. The following year, he joined the Army. He spent eighteen months in occupied Japan, working as a Criminal Investigation Division translator. Returning to South Carolina in 1948, Holland enrolled in the University of South Carolina Law School, earning an L.L.D. in 1951. In August of that year, Holland married Betty Bell, a home economics teacher from Kershaw County. The couple had one daughter, Elizabeth, known as Lisa.

In 1951, Holland established a legal practice in Camden. Maintaining and expanding his practice throughout his political career, Holland’s legal focus was criminal defense and personal injury, but extended to encompass civil and family law as well as pro
bono work in the Kershaw County courts. Outside of court, Holland was actively involved in community service through membership in the Lyttleton Street Methodist Church, as well as in groups such as the Shriners, Veterans of Foreign Wars, Optimist’s Club, Woodmen of the World, and the American Legion.

While still a student at the University of South Carolina, Holland became active in politics. In 1950, he was elected on the first ballot to the House of Representatives. Holland served six terms in the House, from 1951 until 1954, and then from 1957 until 1964. While in the House, he worked on legislation relating to issues such as education, child welfare, and problems in his native Kershaw County. Holland was assigned to the Military, Public and Municipal Affairs Committee (1951-1954), the Judiciary Committee (1957-1964), and the Committee to Study House Rules (1960), and was involved in the appointment process for the Public Service and Employment Security commissions.

In 1964, Holland resigned from the House of Representatives after being appointed to the South Carolina Highway Commission. Previously concerned with the improvement and expansion of roads in Kershaw County, Holland was now directly involved in the process of constructing, improving, and maintaining roads in Kershaw, Lee, and Richland counties. Holland took part in guiding the expansion of the interstate system through South Carolina by suggesting locations and improvements for I-20 and the I-77 extension. He also helped the Highway Commission navigate through controversial lawsuits contesting the path of I-95.

In 1968, Holland was elected to the Senate for District 18, comprised of Kershaw, Lancaster, and Lee counties. Serving continuously in the Senate until his death in 2003, Holland’s district boundaries changed several times as a result of redistricting. In 1972, he was elected to a new district consisting of Kershaw, Lancaster and York counties (District 6). His district changed again in 1982 to become District 27, including Kershaw, Chesterfield, Lancaster, and Marlboro counties. Holland served as chairman of a number of committees, including the Judiciary Committee, the Election Law Study Committee, the Forestry Committee, and the General Committee. Holland also served on the Corrections and Penology Committee, the Ethics Committee, the Natural Resources Committee, the Rules Committee, and the Rural Electrification Committee.

As Representative, Commissioner, and Senator, Holland was involved in policy decisions affecting all of South Carolina. By working to establish rural development programs, supporting the construction of a new, modern hospital, and preserving historical and natural spaces, Holland also endeavored to improve the quality of life in his own home district. He was noted for his constituent service, and in 1990 he responded to a student survey with some thoughts on serving his constituents: “Since childhood I have always enjoyed helping people. As my life progressed, my service came to the Senate…. One of my most enjoyable and self-fulfilling moments is to see
Partly as a result of his reputation for service, Holland enjoyed both Republican and Democratic support in his few contested elections. In 1996, Camden resident George F. West wrote a letter to the editor of the Chronicle-Independent urging his fellow Republicans to support Holland: “Regardless of party label, Donald Holland is the candidate who will afford his neighbors the best representation. Donald Holland knows what our views are on the pressing issues that affect our lives. Donald Holland is the man we have trusted over the years to be our collective voice at the State House.”

**Scope and Content Note:**

Consisting of 20 linear feet, the Donald H. Holland papers encompass Holland’s political career from 1942 until 2003, with some material dating 1923. Documents relate to Holland’s campaigns, legislative work, constituent service in Kershaw County, and work as District Highway Commissioner. The collection has been organized in four main series: Public Papers; Personal Papers; Clippings; and Audiovisual.

**Public Papers** consist of documents and correspondence generated as a result of Holland’s public duties. Organized chronologically into series for House of Representatives, 1950 to 1964, Highway Commission, 1964 to 1968, and Senate, 1968 to 2003, the papers are arranged topically thereunder. Some topics, such as roads, education, and local government, appear in more than one series and reflect Holland’s long-time interest in these issues. General files at the beginning of each subseries contain correspondence and other items of a general nature. The House of Representatives general files include letters from Speaker Solomon Blatt regarding House elections and committee appointments. A copy of a 1951 speech by Blatt is also present.

Topical files relating to statewide issues, such as insurance, the judiciary, law enforcement, and election law provide evidence of Holland’s efforts to improve the security and governance of all South Carolinians. Judicial files include documents relating to the creation and organization of appeals, family, and juvenile courts in South Carolina, to legal practices in the
state, and to uniform rules for court procedure. Holland was instrumental in establishing the appeals court system. In 1983, the clerk of the Senate, James P. Fields, Jr., wrote to the editor of the Greenville News to nominate Holland as the legislator of the year: “It was Senator Holland’s diligent and persistent work as Chairman of the Joint Judiciary Subcommittee on the Court of Appeals that finally led to a legislative solution to a problem that has been facing the General Assembly since 1979. Had it not been for his quiet and unassuming efforts in reaching a compromise, I do not believe the matter would have been settled during the 1983 session.”

Files on education, health care, rural development, local government, and road construction particularly reflect Holland’s efforts to improve the quality of life in his district. Files relating to natural resources encompass the use, conservation, and management of resources such as land, forests, and wildlife in South Carolina. Many of the documents included relate specifically to Chesterfield and Kershaw Counties, and provide information about the growth and change of the area. Also of interest are papers relating the recommendations of a Government Study Committee for changes in Kershaw County government and education.

Roads files are divided topically into construction files, maintenance files, and paving files. Numerous petitions and requests for the development and paving of roads are present in construction and paving files, reflecting the expansion of Chesterfield and Kershaw Counties. Documents relating to roads in Darlington, Lee, and Richland counties, and to the improvement and expansion of the highway and interstate systems through South Carolina, are also included. Papers related to the contested route selected for Interstate 95, and Holland’s comments about a proposed extension for Interstate 77, reflect the often contentious process of plotting the course of new roads. Also available are maps of roadway improvements and extensions in Kershaw County and South Carolina during Holland’s service on the Highway Commission.

Other topical files concern issues important to Holland’s constituents, such as abortion, the Confederate battle flag’s presence on the State House dome, gun control, and the Motorcycle Helmet Bill. Petitions, correspondence, and copies of bills included in the Gambling files shed light on the intense debate surrounding the issue, particularly video poker in the early 1990s.

**Personal Papers** include correspondence and documents created by or sent to Holland outside of his role as legislator. General files consist of personal correspondence and materials and reflect his involvement in community and service groups in the Camden area. Materials from Holland’s earliest campaigns document the beginning of his political career and the creation of a network of support for the future. Documents and correspondence from campaigns of the 1950s through 2000 are present, and the 1996 and 2000 elections are very well represented, including advertising materials, strategic planning information, polling and statistical information, and fundraising lists. Papers relating to the Democratic Party highlight Holland’s work with the Party and other Democratic campaign efforts. Correspondence with figures such as Ernest F. Hollings and John F. Kennedy is present.

Topical files reveal additional insights into Holland’s personal life. Included among the Camden materials is a copy of “The Terrible Cleveland Fire,” an account of the school fire that occurred near Camden in 1923. The fire affected almost everyone in Camden and the surrounding area and was a pivotal event in the town’s history. The Donald Holland Appreciation Night folder contains flyers, programs, and other material documenting the recurring event dedicated to Holland and his public service to Kershaw County residents. The Travel files document trips taken by Holland and his family, including one in 1973 when the Hollands accompanied several other families on a tour of India, a trip organized by former governor John West and his wife Lois.

**Clippings** are arranged topically. The **Audiovisual** series includes a number of photographs. A videocassette contains two thirty-second campaign spots. Four compact discs contain radio advertisements used in the 2000 election. An audiocassette features a speech delivered to the Midway School District in 1977.

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**Series List:**

*Public Papers:*
  - S.C. House of Representatives
  - S.C. Highway Commission
  - S.C. Senate

*Personal Papers*

*Clippings*

*Audiovisual*
COLLECTION INVENTORY

Public Papers:  Box 1

House of Representatives:
General:
1951-1955
1956-1957
Archives Department
Blue Laws
Boards of Examiners, Reorganization Plan #9
Children:
General
Adoption
Civil Defense
Education:
General
Accreditation
Adult
Buses
Educational Television
Enrollment
Higher:
General
Boards of Trustees
Home Demonstration Extension
Integration
Kershaw County:
General, 1952-1960
Budget
Construction
Study Committee
Lunch Program
Teachers:
Salaries
Retirement
Technical
Elections
Employment Security Commission
Events, 1950-1963
Health Care:
General
Emergency Services
Hospitals, Kershaw County:
General
Construction
Statistics
Mental Health
Nursing
Tuberculosis Association
Historic Preservation [including Civil War Centennial]
Industrial Development
Insurance
Judicial:
  General
  Kershaw County
  Supreme Court
Law Enforcement:
  General
  Prisons
Loans
Local Government, Kershaw County:
  General
  Camden City Council
  Chamber of Commerce
  Legislation
  Petitions
Libraries
Liquor
National Guard
Natural Resources:
  General
  Conservation:
    Soil
    Forestry
  Parks and Recreation Areas
  Pollution / Solid Waste Removal
  Wildlife
Public Service Commission
Public Welfare
Real Estate Brokers
Roads:
  General
  Construction:
    Funding
    Kershaw County:
      General
      Maps
      Right-of-Way
    South Carolina Highway System
    U.S. Highway #301
  Paving:
    Kershaw County:
      General
      Camden
    Lee County
  Traffic Control
Rural Development:
  General
  Cooperative Extension Service
  Electricity
  Telephone
Taxes:
  General
  Federal Income Tax Limit, 1951
  Gasoline
Tourism
Transportation
Workmen’s Compensation
Worthless Check Bill

**Highway Commission:**

General, 1964-1968

Events

Recommendations, 1964

Roads:

Construction:

Funding

Interstates:

I-20
I-77
I-95

Kershaw County:

General

Camden

Right-of-Way

Richland County

South Carolina Highway System

Maintenance:

Kershaw County:

General

Camden

Richland County

Maps:

General

Kershaw County

South Carolina

Paving:

Kershaw County:

General

Camden

Richland County

Petitions

Traffic Control:

Kershaw County:

General

Camden

Richland County

U.S. Highway #1

Sidewalks:

Kershaw County:

General

Camden

Richland County

**Senate:**

General:

1968-1970
1971-1984
1985-1989
1990-1996
1997-1999

Abortion

Aging, Council on:

General
“Death with Dignity”
Agriculture:
   General
   Hog and Poultry Operations (legislation against and letters from constituents)
Airports
Animals
Annexations
Armed Services
[Archives and History, Department of: See Historic Preservation]
Athletics
Attorney General

Banks
Budget and Control Board
Business:
   General
   Corporation Act of 1962, Committee to Study the:
   General
   South Carolina Business Corporation Act
Camden Florist (Misleading advertisements legislation)
Cemetery Bill
Children:
   General
   Adoption
   Kids Count, 1998 (Demographic Information)
Churches
Civil Defense
Committees:
   General
   Fish, Game, Forestry
   General Committee
   Operation and Management Committee
Confederate Flag
Consumer Affairs
Death Penalty
Disabilities [See also: Health Care, Mental]

Drugs, Illegal

Drunk Driving:
   General
   Illegal per Se, S. 544
Education:
   General:
      1969 – 1989
      1990 – 1997
   Adult
   Budget
   Chesterfield County
   Educational Television
   Governor’s School for the Arts
   Governor’s School for Science and Mathematics
   Higher:
      General
      Boards of Trustees
Commission on
LIFE Scholarship
Medical University of South Carolina (MUSC)
Tuition Grants
Winthrop College
Integration
Kershaw County:
General
Board of Trustees
Budget
Construction
Kindergarten
Lee County
Lunch Program
Performance and Accountability Standards for Schools (PASS)
State Board of

Teachers: Box 5
Salaries
Retirement
Technical/Vocational
Elections:
General
Election Law Study Committee
Precincts, Kershaw/Chesterfield Counties
Primaries
Registration and Election Officials
Employment
Energy:
General
Electricity, Deregulation of
Environment [See also: Natural Resources]
Equal Rights Amendment
Events:
General:
1967-1989
1990-1999
Inaugural Events, 1973-1999
Participant, 1970-2002
Fire Department:
General
Chesterfield County
Kershaw County
Freedom of Information Act

Gambling: Box 6
General
Lottery
Pari-mutuel Betting Law, 1969
Video Poker:
General:
1991:
Apr.:
21-24
25
1998
1999
n.d. (2)

Petitions:
1991:
Apr.
Oct.
Nov.
Dec.
n.d.

Gun Control

Health Care:
General:
1969-1989
1990-2003
Chiropractors’ Bill
Emergency Services
Hospitals, Kershaw County:
General
Construction
Medicare/Medicaid

Mental: [See also: Disabilities] Box 7
General
Kershaw County
Nursing
Nursing Homes
Optometric Bill
Prescription Medication

Historic Preservation

Home Rule Act

Housing
Hurricane Hugo

Industrial Development

Insurance:
General
Automobile:
1970-1981

Health
Police Pension

Judicial:
General
Chesterfield/Kershaw Counties
Court of Appeals

Family Court:
General
Guardian ad Litem Task Force
Judgeship Candidates (2)

Legal Practice Box 8
Magistrates:
  General
  Chesterfield County
  Kershaw County
  Lancaster County
  Salary Proposals
Prosecution and Coordination, Commission on
Senate Judiciary Committee
Solicitor’s Conference, 2000
South Carolina State Supreme Court
Uniform Rules
Law Enforcement:
  General
  Crime Study Committee
  Criminal Law Subcommittee
  Corrections and Penology Committee
  Pretrial Intervention Program
Prisons:
  General
  Chesterfield County (Federal prison)
Libraries
Liquor

Loans and Mortgages
Lobbyists
Local Government:
  General
  Chesterfield County
  Kershaw County:
    General
    Camden City Council
    Chamber of Commerce
    County Council
    Legislation
    Study Committee, Recommendations
Lee County
York County
Marital Property Distribution
Marshall Landscaping, Inc.
Motorcycle Helmet Bill
National Conference of State Legislatures
National Guard
Native Americans
Natural Resources:
  General
  Conservation:
    Beachfront
    Forestry
    Soil
    Tidelands
Dams
Parks and Recreation Areas:
  General
  Chesterfield County
  Kershaw County

Box 9
Pollution:
- General
- Solid Waste Removal [including Nuclear Waste]
- Superb Act [Petroleum Insurance]

Wildlife:

1992:
- Jan.-Mar.
- Apr.-1993

Trapping
Nipa Hardwicke Inc. /Hardwicke Chemical Co. (Closing by DHEC)

Persons:
- Carmichael, Eugene
- Carter, Allen R. (3)
- Elliott, Dick
- Ford, Robert
- Leppard, James E. Jr. (2)
- McAlister, Eunice
- Shealy, Ryan C. (2)
- West, John C.

Public Safety:
- General
- Coordinating Council
- Governor’s Task Force on Domestic Violence
- Rose Investigation (Boykin Rose)
- Victim’s Rights/Assistance Program

Public Service Commission:
- General
- Candidates for, 2002
- Telecommunications

Public Welfare

Real Estate
- Reapportionment/Redistricting (2)
- Recommendations (State agencies and commissions)
- Regional Planning Council

Retirement:
- General
- Committee to Study

Roads: [See also: Transportation]
- General
- Closing of Airline Drive, Camden Military Academy

Construction:
- Chesterfield County:
  - 1984-1989
  - 1990-1996

Funding

Interstates:
- I-20
- I-73
- I-95

Kershaw County:
- General:
Camden
Right-of-Way
U.S. Highway #1
Highway Beautification, 1971
Maintenance:
Chesterfield County
Kershaw County:
General

Camden
Maps:
Chesterfield County
Kershaw County:
General
Towns
Omnibus Highway Safety Bill
Paving:
Chesterfield County
Darlington County
Kershaw County:
General:
1969-1974
1975-1990
Camden
Lee County
Richland County
Petitions:
1970-1980
1981-1992
n.d.
Sign, Larry Doby Marker
Traffic Control:
Chesterfield County
Kershaw County:
General
Stop Lights
Rural Development:
General
Cooperative Extension Service
Electricity:
General
Co-op Bill
Telephone
Water:
General
Chesterfield County
Kershaw County
Lancaster County
Schedules [wall calendar; see Oversized]
Senate Staff
Sidewalks:
Chesterfield County
Kershaw County:
    General
    Camden
Social Services, Department of:
    General:
    1979-1986

1987
Legislation
South Carolina Legislative Council
Southern Legislative Conference
Speeches:
    Hodges, James H., State of the State, 1999
    Holland, Donald H.
State Development Board
State Ethics Commission, Statement of Economic Interests, 1976-1995
State House
State Reorganization Commission
Taxes:
    General
    Drink Tax
    Gasoline
    Spending Limit
Thank You Notes
Transportation: [See also: Roads]
    General
    Highway Commissioner
    Public Transportation
Travel Agents
Treasury
Veterans
Welfare
Workmen’s Compensation

Personal Papers:  
General:
    1951-1987
    1988-1998
    1999
    2000
    2001-2003
    No date
Biographical Information
Camden/Kershaw County:
    Country Club
    Kershaw County Historical Society
    “The Terrible Cleveland Fire,” May 17, 1923 [pamphlet]
Campaigns:
    1950-1962
    1956:
        General
        Letters of Support
    1968:
General
Advertising
Expenses
Letters of Support
Rally:
   General
   Correspondence
   Expenses
   Tickets
Results
1970
1972:
   General
   Expenses
   Fundraising
   Letters of Support
1976:
   General
   Disclosure Forms
1980:
   General
   Disclosure Forms
1984:
   General
   Advertising
   Disclosure Forms
   Expenses
   Fundraising
   Letters of Support
   Opposition, Cooper, Tom
   Statistics
1985-1986
1988:
   General
   Advertising
   Disclosure Forms (1988, 1992)
   Expenses
   Fundraising
1992:
   Letters of Support
1996:
   General
   Advertising
   Budget and Expenses
   Disclosure Forms:
      1992-1995
      1996
   Fundraising:
      Contribution Letters
      Donor Lists:
         General
         Call Lists
         Individuals
         Industries

Box 15
Notes
Issues:
  General
  Attendance, Senate
  Crime
  Education
  State House and Grounds
  Taxes
Letters of Support
Opposition, Mullikin, Tom:
  General
  Carolina Leadership Academy
  Disclosure Forms
Statistics:
  General
  Election Results
  Polls
Strategic Planning
Volunteers
2000:
  General
Advertising:
  General
  Materials, Miscellaneous
  Print and Radio
Biographical Information
Budget
Calendar
Fundraising:
  General
  Contribution Letters
  Donor Lists
  South Carolina Trial Lawyers List
Issues
Letters of Support
Opposition, Hayward, Barton
Statistics:
  Polls
  South Carolina Election Commission Race Breakdown
2002, Letters of Support
Others’ Campaigns

Church Programs, 1984-2003
Democratic Party:
  1949-1964
  1965-1971
  1972-1980
Holland, Donald H.:
  Events Honoring:
    General
Family:
  General
  Correspondence, 1942-2001, n.d.
History
Letters of Condolence
Memorial Service, Oct. 5, 2003

Law Practice

Travel:
Hawaii, 1979
India, 1973

Clippings:
Awards/Honors
Camden/Kershaw County
Campaigns:
Opponents’
Others’

Chesterfield County
Economy
Education
Elections:
General
Holland:
Family
Obituary/Funeral

Judicial

Law Enforcement
Persons:
Arrants, J. Clator
Brown, Edgar
Clyburn, William “Bill”
Cobb, Ron [Operation Lost Trust]
Gressette, L. Marion
Marsh, Edgar M., Jr. [Kershaw County Magistrate]
Sheheen, Austin, Sr.
West, John C.
Public Service Commission
Reapportionment/Redistricting
Taxes

Audiovisual:
Photographs [CD of images available]:
General
Events:
Campaign
Highway/Historic Marker Dedications
Family
Groups
Portraits
Travel
Audio CDs, Campaign radio commercials, Donald Holland for Senate, 2000:
“Friends,” Sept. 27
“The Equalizer,” Oct. 11
“Tough Issues,” Oct. 20
“For Our Kids,” Oct. 31
Audiocassette, speech, Midway School District, 1977
Microcassette, interview, Linda Franklin, 1996
Slides
Videocassette, Campaign TV commercials, “Holland for Senate 10/24/96, 2:30 spot rough cuts”