“Performance is better than promise.”

For Fritz Hollings, this is more than a campaign motto—it is his calling card and the reason he has been so successful in politics and government.

Hollings’ papers comprise an invaluable portion of the South Caroliniana Library’s Modern Political Collections because of the remarkably substantive record they provide about his varied political career. Encompassing Hollings’ service in the General Assembly, where he authored a major anti-lynching bill which was passed into law in 1951, his landmark term as governor of South Carolina (1959–1963), and his distinguished service in the United States Senate, 1966 to the present, the Hollings Collection is the largest collection of personal papers ever received by the University of South Carolina.

**The Gubernatorial Series**

Processing of the collection will occur over a period of years, with major series such as gubernatorial papers, Senate papers, campaign records, etc., being opened for study as processing is completed. It is fitting that the Gubernatorial Series will be available first. Hollings’ governorship not only represents a major transition period in state government, but his service as governor also set the tone for his subsequent career. Hollings proved to be an energetic, forceful, and progressive leader who altered both the face of South Carolina and the fabric of the governor’s office itself. His term was characterized by unrelenting efforts to improve the state’s educational system at all levels, to develop industry, and to create jobs for South Carolinians. Speaking at the Governor’s Conference on Business, Industry, Education, and Agriculture, held in Columbia in October 1961, Hollings proclaimed, “Today, in
our complex society, education is the cornerstone upon which economic development must be built—and prosperity assured.”

Hollings maximized the authority of the office of governor and used that power to work with the General Assembly in developing the state’s resources and programs. His legacy includes the establishment of the state’s technical education system and educational television network. While helping prepare a skilled labor pool attractive to business, the technical education system also generally improved employment opportunities in the state. Furthermore, Hollings called for and saw sweeping changes enacted in the state’s educational system including significant increases in teacher salaries which brought them closer to the regional average.

As it became clear that the courts would mandate that

South Carolina bring an end to segregation in its schools, Hollings worked to ensure that integration would occur without the bloodshed and hostility that characterized this transition in some other Southern states. Against the advice of close associates who argued that he should leave this “hot potato” to incoming governor Donald Russell, Hollings used his final address to the General Assembly on January 9, 1963, to urge that the state move ahead and accept integration of higher education peacefully. In one of the best-remembered and most important addresses ever made before the General Assembly, Hollings stated, “This Assembly must look at South Carolina’s role in the nation if it is to do its job well. Whether it realizes it or not, it is a part of the Space Age. And if we are to compete, if our people are to have a chance at good jobs, if the communities are to continue to attract new industry, if our children are to be educated and skilled, and if we are to retain these children as useful leaders for the State—then it will be because this Assembly had courage. A call on this courage is imminent … If and when every legal remedy has been exhausted, this General Assembly must make clear South Carolina’s choice, a government of laws rather than a government of men.” Harvey Gantt, a black student, was admitted to Clemson University before the month was out. The University of South Carolina was integrated in the fall of the same year.

John West helped draft Hollings’ famous speech. In reflecting on it during an oral history interview for Modern Political Collections, West characterized the speech as, “a turning point. and it was a stupid political move for the immediate
situation ... It was really one of the most courageous and one of the most dramatic things I've seen in public life ... He made it because he thought it was the right thing to do. He was convinced that we shouldn't go the route of the Faubuses [Governor Orval Faubus of Arkansas] and the Wallaces [Governor George Wallace of Alabama]. And he was just stubborn enough to want to get himself on the record.

Don Fowler, political scientist and former chairman of the national Democratic Party, has described Hollings the governor as, "The leader who best exemplified the creativity and leadership that transformed the South to a new era of progress and prosperity. ... While many have improved and added to the programs that he created, we still work with the basic institutional arrangements he created and we still benefit from them."

Senator Hollings is currently participating in an extensive oral history interview with Modern Political Collections, and he has spoken at length about his campaign against the

"A DEFINING COLLECTION ... "

Once, perhaps twice, during an archivist's lifetime, he or she has the opportunity to work with a collection that will define a career. The Ernest F. Hollings Collection will surely be my defining collection. First, the collection itself is extraordinary, both in content and in size. It documents well the long career of one of South Carolina's most thoughtful and thought-provoking public figures. Among personal collections, it is probably second in size in South Carolina only to the Strom Thurmond collection at Clemson University, and ranks among the largest collections held by any repository in America. In addition, as Hollings' archivist, I have been accepted into the extended family of Hollings associates and staff, have formed several lasting friendships, and have spent many hours with the senator recording an oral history which will build upon the documentary record chronicling his role in a period of spectacular change.

The third and final aspect of the Hollings Collection as a defining collection for me is the intellectual challenge of working with Hollings and his collected record. I’ve had to become familiar with disparate issues with which Hollings is and has been involved such as hunger, the complexities of the federal budget process, telecommunications, foreign affairs, environmental issues affecting the country's coasts and oceans, and the space program. The experience has changed me and forced me to grow both personally and professionally.

*Herb Harstuck, Modern Political Collections*
Hollings campaigned on a multifaceted platform for South Carolina focusing on balancing the state budget, bringing new industry to the state, improving public education at all levels, and promoting technical education. This 1962 report detailed the extensive progress toward these goals that Hollings had made during the first three years of his term as governor.

legendary Olin Johnston, whose papers also are preserved at the South Caroliniana Library. On the eve of the election, some pundits felt that the race was too close to call. In fact, Johnston out-polled Hollings two to one. Hollings enjoys telling a story on himself in recounting his 1962 concession to Johnston and ably mimics Johnston's deep sonorous voice as, in thanking all of those who contributed to his victory, he noticed Hollings edging forward through the crowd, "and Olin looked over and pointed. He said, 'Yeah, and don't forget old Fritz Hollings there. He was a big help, too.' I never knew Olin Johnston had a sense of humor ... I congratulated him and made a little talk and what have you. I told him we were going to get out and get all our friends to work for Olin Johnston." Johnston's Republican opponent in the general election was journalist Bill Workman, whose papers are held by the South Caroliniana Library. The 1962 campaign is a fascinating one and the subject of regular study as both the Democratic primary and general election featured fierce races and intriguing candidates.

One unique aspect of the documentation of Hollings' career of public service is that his gubernatorial papers are split between Modern Political Collections and the South Carolina Department of Archives and History. The Gubernatorial Series consists of 43.75 linear feet of material of which 28.75 feet are held by the library, and 15 feet by the archives. A single finding aid describes the gubernatorial collection in its entirety. These records offer scholars the opportunity to study the contributions of a remarkably active and visionary governor whose term came during one of the most dramatic periods of South Carolina history.

Herbert J. Hartsock is curator of the South Caroliniana Library's Modern Political Collections.