Isadore E. Lourie was honored at a reception on October 30, 1996 when the University of South Carolina’s Thomas Cooper and University South Caroliniana societies recognized him for the gift of his personal papers to the Modern Political Collections Division of the South Caroliniana Library. The gala affair held in the Graniteville Room of Thomas Cooper Library, drew a standing room only crowd that included family, friends, and members of the societies, as well as legislators and attorneys with whom Lourie has been associated over the years. The event was highlighted by a surprise visit from Lourie’s close friend, United States Secretary of Education, Dick Riley.

The University is fortunate to receive Lourie’s collection because his life and career span a remarkable period of change in South Carolina’s government and he was among the key players in instituting change. 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.

In his 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.”

THE FOLLOWING ARE EXCERPTS FROM LOURIE’S REMARKS:

“My parents came to this country at the turn of the century, traveling to a place of new frontiers in pursuit of religious freedom. It made a tremendous impression upon me as they discussed these efforts with me. My mother in particular had a social conscience as wide and as long as this wonderful state. She, more so than any other person, instilled in me a sense of caring for the needy and the underprivileged, which I hope was a mainstay of my political life.

“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.

“My heritage as an American, as a Jew, and as a South Carolinian, has been the nourishment of my life. These heritages were the cornerstone of my public service. I continue to be very proud of, and cherish all three of these great heritages... I do not want to close my remarks without saying a word about America... We are able to pursue to the heights of our abilities the opportunities pre-
sent to us because of freedom in America — freedom to worship, to speak, to read what we want to. And for that we are all freedom to think of great ideas for blessed. You can feel the freedom in America and South Carolina. And for that we are all freedom to think of great ideas for blessed.