Timothy K. Fitzgerald Papers

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Descriptive Summary
Title: Timothy K. Fitzgerald Papers
Dates: 1965-2004
Collection Number: 2008-83
Creator/Collector: Fitzgerald, Timothy K., 1946-2014
Extent: 3 linear feet (3 boxes)
Repository: History San Jose Research Library
San Jose, California 95112
Abstract: Correspondence, newsletters, and other ephemeral publications of Timothy K. Fitzgerald (1946- ) relating to San Jose State campus politics in the 1960s, local Democratic politics, evolution of the Green Party in Santa Clara County, and rights of the handicapped.
Language of Material: English
Access
The collection is open to the public for research by appointment with the Curator of Library & Archives.
Publication Rights
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Preferred Citation
Timothy K. Fitzgerald Papers. History San Jose Research Library
Acquisition Information
Fitzgerald stored and restored his papers several times in various locations. He gave the contents of his storage locker, largely unsorted and including unopened mail, to History San Jose in 2008.
Biography/Administrative History
Timothy Kevin Fitzgerald (1946-2014) grew up in Santa Clara County, California -- the oldest of 3 boys to Ralph and Bernice Fitzgerald -- and attended Los Gatos Union High School. He was admitted to San Jose State College in 1963, where he studied until 1970; during his summers he worked in food services at Yosemite National Park. An accomplished climber, Fitzgerald bagged several first ascents in his free time. During his tenure at San Jose State, Fitzgerald was heavily involved in student government and the campus civil rights movement, serving as student-body treasurer and head of the campus Young Democrats. After experiencing a mental breakdown in the early 1970s and going through subsequent rehabilitation after a bipolar diagnosis, Fitzgerald returned to San Jose State in 1977, graduating with a degree in history in 1980, and continuing on to post-graduate studies in Marxian economics. He entered local politics in 1982 at the age of 36, running against Susan Hammer and Tony Estramera for the District 3 seat in the San Jose City Council on a platform to revitalize downtown. His loss apparently precipitated a second breakdown, and he retreated to Lake Tahoe and Mammoth Lakes to work for three years. When he returned again to San Jose, he re-entered politics, now as a Green Party member. He ran unsuccessfully for State Assembly (1994) against incumbent Dom Cortese as the Party’s only major Santa Clara County candidate; however, that loss was tempered by the fact that Fitzgerald received 8% of the district’s vote -- the Green Party declared it a satisfactory number for a party less than 3 years old, fielding statewide candidates for the first time. Fitzgerald then ran unsuccessfully for the Trustee Area 1 seat on the San Jose Unified School Board (1996). He was also appointed to the San Jose Disability Advisory Commission under Mayor Susan Hammer, working for the rights of the mentally disabled. Fitzgerald struggled for most of his adult life to secure steady employment and financial stability, while also maintaining a community activist voice in local politics; in 1997 he moved back to Mammoth Lakes and worked as a part-time community college instructor. After poor investments in real estate left him (by his accounts) nearly broke, he returned to San Jose and enrolled in a senior education program at San Jose State to work towards a master’s degree in philosophy (2010). Fitzgerald continued to submit to publishers accounts of his experiences at San Jose State and his political career. He published three volumes of memoirs between 2008-2012; in 2011 he returned to the Sierras and started working as a columnist for DailyPost.org while continuing to work on his publications regarding economics and polemics. Fitzgerald’s publications include Twilight in the Afternoon: The War at Home (1964-70); Wawona Brotherhood: The San Jose State Campus Revolt; A Diamond in the Rough; The Pursuit of the Dragon Fly; and The Addendum -- The Quest: Volume Four. He passed away in Sonora, California, in 2014.
Scope and Content of Collection
The papers are arranged in three boxes and include both personal and political papers. Because Fitzgerald’s personal life was intertwined with his political life, there is very little separation between the two. Papers have been organized by
correspondence, political campaigns and organizations, San Jose State student materials, and publications. They roughly document an arc of left-leaning political awakening and activity in the 1960s through the 1980s and 1990s as Fitzgerald tried different methods of engaging with local politics. Included is correspondence with his family, as well as local confidantes and politicians; his campaigns for City Council and other offices; and his work with the Associated Student Body while a student at San Jose State. See attached inventory for full description.

**Indexing Terms**

College student government  
Authors, American--Archives  
Political campaigns  
Mental health policy  
Nineteen sixties  
California--Santa Clara County--Politics and government  
San José State University  
San Jose (Calif.)

Box Inventory of Timothy Fitzgerald Papers