Donald S. Macrae Papers

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Descriptive Summary

Title: Donald S. Macrae Papers

Dates: 1958-1977

Collection Number: 2008-84

Creator/Collector: Macrae, Donald S.

Extent: 6 linear feet

Repository: History San Jose Research Library
San Jose, California 95112

Abstract: Professional papers of former San Jose Personnel Director Donald Macrae, including Personnel Department and Civil Service Commission departmental files, as well as records of the Pacific Neighbors organization.

Language of Material: English

Access
The collection is available to the public for research by appointment.

Publication Rights
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Preferred Citation
Donald S. Macrae Papers. History San Jose Research Library

Acquisition Information
The files were donated to History San Jose in 2008 by Donald Macrae

Biography/Administrative History
Donald S. Macrae served as Personnel Director of the City of San Jose between 1950 and 1973. He attended San Jose State College and the University of California Los Angeles between 1937 and 1941, before joining the Army Air Corps in 1941. He served with the U.S. Air Force in World War II as a bomber pilot in the Middle East and North Africa, attaining the rank of captain. After the war he returned to San Jose State and then to Stanford University, where he earned his bachelor’s and master’s degrees. Macrae began his career with the City of San Jose in 1949 as an administrative assistant in the San Jose Public Works Department. In 1950, city manager O. W. (Hump) Campbell appointed him as personnel director. According to the San Jose Mercury News, Macrae’s staff grew from one secretary to 55 by the time he retired in 1973; the city had grown from 600 employees with a population of 85,000, to 4000 employees, with a population of 550,000. Macrae retired on July 15, 1973, after City Manager Ted Tedesco stripped Macrae of his job and offered him the choice of retiring or accepting a lesser position. Macrae agreed to step down to an administrative assistant role, but then changed his mind after discovering the pay would be too little, and not covered by classified (civil) service. According to the Mercury News (May 31, 1973), Macrae was “long the target of minorities who claim he is the roadblock in their effort to gain city employment and hasn’t been committed to the Affirmative Action Program adopted in 1970. His ouster was applauded by groups that have urged his resignation...The Civil Service system used by the city is generally regarded as much more rigid and difficult to enter than the county’s more liberal merit system”. After he retired, Macrae worked as a management consultant and as the assessment laboratory coordinator for West Valley Community College. He ran for San Jose City Council in 1974. In January 1973 he was named to the board of directors of the Northern California Industrial Relations Council. He also worked as an instructor while personnel director, teaching at San Jose State School of Business from 1960-71.

Scope and Content of Collection
The bulk of the papers are official files of the San Jose Personnel Department and the Civil Service Commission between 1958 and 1973, including personnel department activity reports, commission minutes and agendas, annual reports, and recruitment files for a new Chief of Police in 1970. In addition, one linear foot comprises records of the Pacific Neighbors organization and the Sister Cities activities between San Jose and Okayama, Japan.

Indexing Terms
Personnel departments
Municipal officials and employees
Civil service positions
Sister cities
Nineteen sixties
Pacific Neighbors
San Jose (Calif.). Personnel Department