Guide to the Judge Julian Beck Collection

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Guide to the Judge Julian Beck Collection

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Title: Judge Julian Beck Collection
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Extent: 2.34 linear feet
Date (inclusive): 1926-1986

Abstract: Julian Beck was a teacher, politician, and judge in Los Angeles and was instrumental in the establishment of San Fernando Valley State College, now known as California State University, Northridge. Documented in the collection are Beck's family life, judicial and legislative services, his key role in the founding of CSUN, and his wide-ranging involvement in community activities. Records in the collection include assembly bills, correspondence, identification cards, newspaper clippings, photographs, and scrapbooks.

Biographical Information:
Judge Julian Beck was born on May 13, 1905 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. He moved to California in 1923 and has been a resident of the city of San Fernando since 1935. He obtained an A.B. degree in economics from the University of California, Los Angeles in 1929, followed by an M.A. degree in history from the University of Southern California and an LL.B. degree in law from Loyola University, both in 1935.

Beck was a teacher in the Los Angeles City High School District from 1931 to 1946. During this period, he served on the Board of Directors of the High School Teachers Association and was Director-at-Large of the Association of California Classroom Teachers. He engaged in private law practice in San Fernando after successfully passing the 1935 California Bar Exam.

Beck's political career started with his election to the California State Assembly from the 41st Assembly District in 1942. He was reelected six times and served two terms as the Democratic floor leader in the Assembly. As a member of the State legislature, he orchestrated a number of bills including those which secured the opening and widening of Truman Street, establishment of the first Municipal and Superior Court in the San Fernando Valley, initiation of the San Fernando Fair and the imposition of the death penalty for extreme offenses by saboteurs.

In 1953, Beck was appointed judge of the Los Angeles Municipal Court by Earl Warren, then Governor of California and later Supreme Court Justice of the United States. In November 1958, Beck was handpicked by Governor-elect Edmund G. Brown as Legislative Secretary. Nine months later, Governor Brown appointed him Superior Court Judge of Los Angeles County in the San Fernando court which Beck helped create.

Judge Beck was instrumental in the founding of San Fernando Valley State College, later to be renamed California State University, Northridge (CSUN). An Assemblyman in 1952, Beck arranged a meeting to hear testimony on the need to establish a state college in the San Fernando Valley. The following year, he co-authored a resolution requesting the California State Department of Education investigate sites for the construction of the college. The resolution was approved by both houses of the legislature. Beck was one of the founding members of CSUN's Advisory Board and assumed its chairmanship from September 1958 to May 1975.

Beck was much-admired for his contribution to CSUN by the faculty and student body alike. His generous donation to the college generated many awards and scholarships. In 1965, Beck was presented with the President's Distinguished Service Award. He was made an honorary member of Phi Kappa Phi, the CSUN chapter of the National Honor Society in 1975 and named "Distinguished Alumnus for 1983." The Judge Julian Beck Seminar Room located in Sierra Hall, Room 202 was dedicated in his honor in 1984.

Following thirty-two years of judicial and legislative service, Beck retired from the bench in 1975, but remained active in civic and community affairs. He was a life member of the San Fernando Elks, a past-president of the San Fernando Lions Club, YMCA and Shrine Club. He was also past-deputy district governor of Lions International, past-director of the San Fernando Chamber of Commerce and a former vice-president of the San Fernando Valley Bar Association. Judge Beck passed away in 1992.

Scope and Contents
Julian Beck was a teacher, politician, and judge in Los Angeles and was instrumental in the establishment of San Fernando Valley State College, now known as California State University, Northridge. Documented in the collection are Beck's family life, judicial and legislative services, his key role in the founding of CSUN, and his wide-ranging involvement in community activities. Records in the collection include assembly bills, correspondence, identification cards, newspaper clippings, photographs, and scrapbooks. Judge Beck's accomplishments and popularity are further highlighted with a number of...
certificates and letters of commendation, including those from President Ronald Reagan and Governor George Deukmejian. Of particular interest are the documents pertaining to Beck’s association with CSUN, which record his long-standing service to the University. Also of interest are the related records on the history of CSUN from its infancy.

Electronic Format:
Digital reproductions of selected items in this collection are available electronically as a part of the San Fernando Valley History Digital Library

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Immediate Source of Acquisition

Preferred Citation:
For information about citing items in this collection consult the appropriate style manual, or see the Citing Archival Materials guide.

Processing Information:
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Photographs
Scrapbooks
Audiovisual materials

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