Descriptive Summary

Title: Smith (Elden) Papers

Dates: 1927-1967 and undated

Collection number: H.Mss.0854

Creator: Smith, Elden

Extent: 2 linear feet (2 document boxes)

Repository: Claremont Colleges. Library. Special Collections, Honnold/Mudd Library. Claremont, CA 91711

Abstract: This collection contains the papers of Elden Smith, a prominent Los Angeles banker and community leader in the City of Riverside. Smith emphasized leadership, mentorship, and good citizenship, and gained great respect from his colleagues and community. Elden's wife Harriet donated his papers, which include his speeches, administrative papers, notes, and correspondence, to provide students of business and banking access to his business philosophy.

Please consult repository.

Language of Material: Languages represented in the collection: English.

Administrative Information

Access

Collection open for research.

Publication Rights

All requests for permission to reproduce or to publish must be submitted in writing to Special Collections.

Preferred Citation

[Identification of item], Elden Smith Papers (H.Mss.0854). Special Collections, The Claremont Colleges Library, Claremont, California.

Provenance / Source of Acquisition


Accruals

No additions to the collection are anticipated.

Processing Information

Original order of the materials was maintained, and kept in the files as Smith had them. Files were then reversed to put them in chronological order. Occasionally, this order is broken when several letters are clipped together in which case the top letter determines the order in the listing of the group, but the earliest letter in the group is listed first in the group.

Biography / Administrative History

Lewis Elden Smith (1906 – 1964) was a prominent Los Angeles banker who became known for his leadership and emphasis on mentoring new professionals. His concern for matters of public interest, such as the creation of a new library and mall in Riverside, as well as long range water and industrial development projects, earned him the respect and admiration of his community.

Born in Selma, Ohio, Smith and his family moved to California in 1918. He graduated from Whittier College in 1928, and earned an MA from Stanford. In 1961, Whittier College awarded him an honorary Doctor of Laws degree.

Smith began his banking career in 1931 with Security First National Bank in Los Angeles, where he quickly rose to become Vice President. His career was interrupted by World War II, when he served in the Maritime Commission. He was subsequently associated with the construction firm of William A. Johnson, serving as President of Sun Gold, Inc. Smith returned to banking in 1950 as the Executive Vice President of the Citizens National Trust and Savings Bank of Riverside, and in 1951 he was elected its President and Chairman of the Board. The bank expanded rapidly under his leadership, opening many new branches and merging with the Security First National Bank in 1957. Rejoining Security First National Bank as Chairman of the Executive Committee and later as Vice Chairman of the Board, Smith remained with them until his retirement in 1963. Despite his retirement, Smith continued as an active participant in the bank as a member of the board of directors and executive committee, as well as remaining a member of the Inland Division Board and Executive Committee.

Elden Smith's wife Harriet donated her husband's papers to The Claremont Colleges Library in order to make her husband's philosophy of banking to students of business and banking. Smith believed in recruiting both those with proven banking abilities as well as the promising college graduate. His leadership, mentorship, and work for his community led the City of Riverside to dedicate a fountain in his honor in the Downtown Pedestrian Mall on September 9, 1967.

Sources


**Scope and Contents**
The materials contained in this collection are the speeches, papers, correspondence, and notes of Los Angeles banker Elden Smith. Many of these materials contain and reflect Smith's banking and management philosophy. Also contains materials relating to Smith's time at Whittier College and Stanford University.

**Organization and Arrangement**
Items are arranged on a file level.

**Indexing Terms**
The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the library’s online public access catalog.

**Subject Terms**
Banks and banking
Los Angeles (Calif.)
Riverside (Calif.)
Finance

**Genre and Form of Materials**
Correspondence
Speeches, addresses, etc.
Administration

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**Box 1, Folder 1**
Finding aid written by Frances Bernard Drake 1987 May 27

Note
Four leaves of preliminaries including "Index of Folder Titles." Contains 62 pages.

**Box 1, Folder 2**
Memorial Fountain-Riverside, CA 1967

**Box 1, Folder 3**
Speech Notes 1927-1964

**Box 1, Folder 4**
Stanford Graduate School of Business 1934-1964

**Box 1, Folder 5**
Radio 1927

**Box 1, Folder 6**
Speeches, Speech outlines, Reports 1932-1945

**Box 1, Folder 7**
Town Hall 1939-1962

**Box 1, Folder 8**
Town Hall Introductions

**Box 2, Folder 1**
Speech Copy 1940-1963

**Box 2, Folder 2**
Whittier College 1941-1964

**Box 2, Folder 3**
Whittier College, Draft of Laws

**Box 2, Folder 4**
Speech Material 1945-1964

**Box 2, Folder 5**
VIP Letters 1945-1975

**Box 2, Folder 6**
Special VIP Invitations 1956-1964

**Box 2, Folder 7**
Pacific Coast Banking 1957-1961

**Box 2, Folder 8**
General Yee (S.K.) United Chinese Bank, Ltd. 1963-1964

**Box 2, Folder 9**
Miscellaneous-clippings, correspondence, reports, programs; international and U.S. businessmen, Pomona College 1933-1966