Descriptive Summary

Title: Staff Secretary Files, White House Special Files, 1969-1974
Dates: 1969-1974
Collection Number: 6004162
Extent: 91 linear feet, 5 linear inches; 209 boxes
Repository: Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum

Abstract: The Office of the Staff Secretary was the main point of contact and coordination for all communications to the President's Office. The files reflect all of the responsibilities of the staff which included ensuring a smooth flow of information to and from the President, communicating Presidential decisions and requests, and allocating funds and office space.

Language of Material: English

Access
Collection is open for research. Some materials may be unavailable based upon categories of materials exempt from public release established in the Presidential Recordings and Materials Preservation Act of 1974.

Publication Rights
Most government records are in the public domain; however, this series includes commercial materials, such as newspaper clippings, that may be subject to copyright restrictions. Researchers should contact the copyright holder for information.

Preferred Citation
Staff Secretary Files, White House Special Files, 1969-1974. Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum

Acquisition Information
These materials are in the custody of the National Archives and Records Administration under the provisions of Title I of the Presidential Recordings and Materials Preservation Act of 1974 (P.L. 93-526, 88 Stat. 1695) and implementing regulations.

Biography/Administrative History
The Office of Staff Secretary served as the main point of contact and coordination for all communications to the President's Office. The mission of the office was: to ensure a smooth flow of information, decision papers, and material requiring Presidential action to the President; to communicate Presidential decisions and requests to appropriate staff offices and Cabinet officers; to maintain the President's confidential files and the President's diary; to coordinate the allocation of the following items: employee slots, personnel funds, travel funds, office space, furniture, White House privileges, such as access to the Mess, the medical unit, and limousine and telephone services; and to supervise the activities of the Chief Executive Clerk and the Visitor's Office. As an administrative guide for the staffing of all paper that went to and from the President on official business, the Staff Secretary's Office had contact with chief personnel within the Executive Branch that included: the White House Staff, Cabinet, Departments, Agencies, and Domestic and National Security Councils; the Legislative Branch; state and local governments; and special interest groups within the private sector. In addition to chief personnel, the Office had contact with those concerned with the President's personal needs, for example, speech writers, public relations people, communications people, scheduling people, as well as advance people. The papers relating to official business can be divided into three types: Presidential papers pertaining to legislation, messages to the Congress, proclamations, Executive Orders, nominations, and commissions; action requests; and briefing papers. These papers concern everything from information items which told what the consumer price index was to decision memorandums on what the President did in a particular situation. The Staff Secretary's Office also functioned as an administrative personnel director for the Office of the President. These personnel functions included: completing all paperwork necessary for recruiting, hiring, and releasing staff as well as monitoring staff performance to make certain that information, answers, and requests were carried out according to White House policy. The office was in charge of all changes in salaries or determination of salary structures and all formulation, regulation, and implementation of the budgets, including the budget for the Republican National Committee funds. The third major division of the Staff Secretary's Office functions involved special projects. There is paper documentation on such special projects as: restoration of the West Wing; adding an auditorium in the Executive Office Building; construction of the health unit; supervising the Archives Unit on the Presidential Papers project; overseeing the White House Summer Intern program; directing the White House Fellows program; sending personal corsages to the women meeting returning Prisoners of War on behalf of the President; and compiling the "Ethnic Census," a Spanish-speaking campaign plan. These materials also include a study of the official titles of the White House staff and a notebook of guidelines on the office's policies and procedures. These functions of the Staff Secretary's Office were carried out under the stewardship of Staff Secretaries appointed by President Nixon. Kenneth R. Cole served as the first Staff Secretary for the Nixon administration. He was appointed in January 1969 as Special Assistant to the President.
and as Staff Secretary. In his capacity as Staff Secretary, he was assigned the responsibility for putting together the administrative procedures in the White House. The blueprint used by Cole to structure the responsibilities of the position were those developed by General Goodpasture, Staff Secretary, in the Eisenhower administration. Cole worked out how the papers flowed to the President, how the President's decisions got implemented, and how the office coordinated the activities of the various members of the White House staff. After Coles' tenure in office ended in approximately November 1969, the Staff Secretary's job description changed or evolved more or less according to the personality appointed to the position. Tenure dates for the different Staff Secretaries overlap and are approximate. John Brown served in a non-commissioned role from 1969 until April 1, 1971. With Jon M. Huntsman's appointment, February 22, 1971, through February 5, 1972, the position was up-graded to a commissioned status in recognition of its two basic responsibilities: supervising all of the paper communications to and from the President and overseeing the administration of the White House complex. The commissioned status broadened the scope of the Staff Secretary's position to a senior level in its own right. Consequently, this allowed Huntsman to interact with the other members of the commissioned staff on an equal basis. He shared with Alexander Butterfield and H. R. Haldeman the responsibility of insuring that the information sent to the President in each instance was complete, that all options were presented, that the positive and negative aspects of each issue were addressed, and finally that the material was in the proper format. Additionally, Huntsman worked in conjunction with John Dean and Alexander Butterfield on the preparation of a rather comprehensive book for new White House employees, covering all of the procedures, services, and organizations within the White House complex. After Huntsman vacated the position, Bruce Kehrli took over as Staff Secretary. He began work on January 1, 1972, in a non-commissioned status. As a result, during Kehrli's tenure the procedures and functions associated with the Special Assistant aspect of the job formerly handled by Huntsman were channeled back to Alexander Butterfield, and the Staff Secretary's Office was organizationally placed under the direction of H. R. Haldeman. On a more informal basis Kehrli kept in practice many of the procedures initiated by Huntsman. He still chaired the 10:00 a.m. meeting with operation heads who worked under Haldeman. The meetings were concerned with Presidential activities: scheduling, news items, personal needs of the President, appointments of staff, and paperwork. Also, he continued to meet each afternoon in Butterfield's office to discuss the President's schedule for the next twenty-four hours. Essentially, this session served as a final review of the schedule and the briefing papers to insure that everything was in order and complete. Beginning in April 1974 Jerry Jones served along with Kehrli as Staff Secretary until Kehrli's departure in June of the same year. Jones continued in the position during the Ford Administration. Documentation of the various activities and responsibilities of the Staff Secretary's Office can be found in related file groups in the Nixon holdings. One such related file group is the President's Office Files, White House Special Files which was apparently created and maintained by Alexander Butterfield, Stephen Bull, and the Staff Secretary's Office. The White House Special Files, Special Files Administrative Files contains a folder labeled "Staff Secretary Lists." These are lists of sensitive materials received by the Special Files Unit from the Staff Secretary's Office beginning September 27, 1973, until August 12, 1974. These lists consist of descriptions of documents, the date of the documents, and, in handwriting, the location of the item–White House Central Files Subject categories, the Top Secret files, Presidential Handwriting, Memos/Memoranda for the President's Files, the files of Bruce Kehrli, or in other files in Special Files. Documents in the Henry A. Kissinger Office Files, HAK Trip Files series and the Country Files-Middle East series supplement materials in the Staff Secretary subject file series on Richard Nixon's Mid-East information.

Scope and Content of Collection

The materials are arranged into five series: Administrative Files, Memoranda Files, White House Budget Files, [Reports Files] – Confidential File, Printed Materials Files.