
Overview of the Collection
Collection Title: Judge Earl Ben Gilliam Papers
Dates: 1945-2011
Bulk Dates: 1965-1981
Identification: MS-0494
Creator: Judge Earl B. Gilliam, 1931-2001
Physical Description: 10.84 linear ft
Language of Materials: English
Repository: Special Collections & University Archives
5500 Campanile Dr. MC 8050
San Diego, CA, 92182-8050
URL: http://library.sdsu.edu/scua
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Phone: 619-594-6791

Biographical Information:
Earl Ben Gilliam was born in Clovis, New Mexico on August 17, 1931. At age 10, Gilliam and his parents, James Earl and Lula Mae Gooden Gilliam, moved to San Diego. Gilliam attended Memorial Jr. High and San Diego High School where he played football and ran track. He graduated high school in 1949 and then attended San Diego State College where he studied business with an emphasis in accounting and a minor in economics. During college, Gilliam helped to establish the Delta Epsilon Chapter of KAP Fraternity. In 1953, he was accepted to Hastings College of the Law in San Francisco and passed his Bar Examination in 1957. In the 1940’s, Gilliam’s family had opened the Seafood Louisiana Market on Imperial Avenue where Gilliam worked as a clerk during high school, college, and while on vacation from law school. While in law school, he also worked as a janitor and a playground director. Gilliam married Barbara Jean Crawford in 1956 and had two children, Kenneth Earl and Derrick James Gilliam. Gilliam and Barbara Jean divorced in 1975.

Gilliam began practicing law in 1957 as a deputy district attorney and entered into private practice in 1961. In 1963, he became the first African American Judge of the Municipal Court in San Diego County. In 1975, he was elevated by Governor Jerry Brown to the U.S. Superior Court. Afterwards, President Jimmy Carter appointed Gilliam to the federal bench of the United States District Court of Southern California.

Besides his legal practice, Gilliam gave much of his time to serving the San Diego community. He was active in the following organizations: Traffic Committee for the California State Bar Association; National Association for the Advanced Colored People (NAACP); Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA); Senior Housing Charity; Salvation Army; Boys' Club; Urban League; Navy League; Southeast Chamber of Commerce; and the Junior Chamber of Commerce. He was also a law instructor for ten years at Western State College.

Gilliam received many awards and accolades from the community. In 1981, he was the recipient of the Golden Man and Boy Award for the Boys’ Club of San Diego. Additionally, the Association of Black Attorneys of San Diego County changed their name to the Earl B. Gilliam Bar Association in 1982 in honor of his professional accomplishments as an African American lawyer and judge. After Gilliam’s death, the city named the Imperial Avenue post office in Gilliam’s name.

In 1978, Gilliam met his second wife, Rebecca Prater. They married in 1993. After two weeks of marriage, Gilliam had elective heart surgery. Complications during the surgery left him paralyzed and dialysis-dependent. Gilliam then retired to Senior Judge Status and continued his legal work part-time. Earl Ben Gilliam passed away on January 28, 2001. Upon his death a sculpture of him was placed at the San Diego Court’s Hall of Justice.

Access Terms
This collection is indexed under the following controlled access subject terms.

Topical Term:
African American civic leaders -- California -- San Diego -- Biography -- Sources
African Americans -- California -- San Diego
Accruals:
2011-067

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Preferred Citation:
Identification of item, folder title, box number, Judge Earl B. Gilliam Papers, Special Collections and University Archives, Library and Information Access, San Diego State University.

Related Materials:
Alpha Pi Boule Records
Reverend George Walker Smith Papers
Carlin Integration Case Records
Citizen Coordinate for Century 3 Records
Harold K. Brown Papers, 1956-2000

Arrangement of Materials:
I. Personal Files (1946-1999)
II. Professional Files (1956-2011)
III. Memorial Files (2001)
IV. Scrapbooks (1945-2001)
V. Audio/Video Files (1979-2004)

Scope and Contents
The Earl B. Gilliam Papers document five decades of Gilliam’s career as a judge in San Diego County. The collection includes news clippings, photos, correspondence, invitations, federal bench nominations, court cases, class notes, scrapbooks, award certificates, court dockets, and judicial questionnaires. The majority of the material dates from around the 1940’s to the late 1990’s, and highlights Gilliam’s community service, as well as his appointments to local, state, and federal judgeships. The collection is divided into five series: Personal Files (1945-1999), Professional Files (1956-2011), Memorial Files (2001), Scrapbooks (1945-2001), and Video Files (1979-2004).

The Personal Files (1945-1999) document Gilliam’s high school experience and achievements, as well as his community involvement. This series includes personal photographs of his childhood, friends’ memorial programs, San Diego High School programs, personal correspondence, certificates of achievement, the Sun Reporter newspaper, the Lighthouse newspaper, the San Diego Observer newspaper, and materials regarding Gilliam’s hospitalization in the 1990’s. The files are arranged in alphabetical order with minimal documentation regarding his early childhood.

The Professional Files (1956-2011) largely document Gilliam’s career as a municipal court and federal bench judge. The series includes congratulatory correspondence, court dockets, appointment books, news clippings, biography for federal judgeship, courtroom procedures, judicial questionnaires, photographs, federal bench petition, retirement documents from U.S. District Judgeship, and judicial application. Highlights include correspondence and news clippings of Gilliam’s appointment to the federal bench. The series is arranged alphabetically by folder title.

The Memorial Files (2001) document Gilliam’s passing. These files include letters of condolence, obituaries, and information regarding funeral arrangements gathered by Gilliam’s wife, Rebecca Prater. These files are the smallest of the series and are arranged alphabetically.

The Scrapbook Files (1945-2001) consist of five scrapbooks, two of which that document a trial of 197 counts of federal tax evasion and fraud by Nancy Hoover Hunter. The files include newspaper clippings and correspondence regarding the trial.
Much of the correspondence is unsupportive of Gilliam’s final verdict. The rest of the scrapbooks include news clippings of Gilliam’s appointments from Municipal Judge to Federal Bench judge, news articles of personal interest, and personal photographs.

The Video Files (1979-2004) contain video tributes to Gilliam, reunion ceremonies, an interview of Gilliam on audio cassette tape, and oral histories. The series is in chronological order.

**Personal Files (1945-1999)**

- Box 1, Folder 1: Alpha Pi Boulé Sigma Pi Phi Fraternity 1965-2002
- Box 1, Folder 2: Bar Examination Pass Letter November 29, 1957
- Box 1, Folder 3: Biographical Information
- Box 1, Folder 4: Biographical Sketches and Resumes
- Box 1, Folder 5: Boys’ Club of San Diego Gourmet Dinner Benefit 1981-1987
- Box 1, Folder 6: Boys and Girls Club 1989-1991
- Box 1, Folder 7: California Center for Judicial Education and Research: Certificate 1974, 1978
- Box 1, Folder 8: Catfish Club 1995
- Box 1, Folder 9: Certificates 1966-1976, 1980; 1995
- Box 1, Folder 10: City Council Adjournment in Memory of James Earl Gilliam August 29, 1974
- Box 1, Folder 11: College and Law School Transcripts
- Box 1, Folder 12: Correspondence: African Arts Committee April 3, 1987
- Box 1, Folder 13: Correspondence: Personal 1975-1993
- Box 1, Folder 14: Distinguished Alumni Awards, San Diego State University College of Business Administration
- Box 1, Folder 16: Fifty-Second Anniversary Citation Dinner June 11, 1980
- Box 1, Folder 17: Fight for Freedom Celebration June 26, 1957
- Box 1, Folder 18: “For the Love of Earl” September 9, 1994
- Box 1, Folder 19: Funeral Programs of Deseaced Friends 1995-1999
- Box 1, Folder 20: Gilliam, Lula Mae 1977-1988
- Box 1, Folder 21: Hastings College of Law: Acceptance Letters and Correspondence 1953-1957
- Box 1, Folder 22: Hastings Community Commencement 1993
- Box 1, Folder 23: Hospitalization 1994
- Box 2, Folder 1: Just the Beginning Foundation (JTBF) November 19, 2001
- Box 2, Folder 2: Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity Certificate August 22, 1951
- Box 2, Folder 4: Mailing List
- Box 2, Folder 5: Correspondence: "Outstanding Man of the Year Award" 1966
- Box 2, Folder 6: Memorial Junior High School - Promotional Services June 20, 1946
- Box 2, Folder 7: Memorial Services of the late James Earl Gilliam August 26, 1974
- Box 2, Folder 8: Naval Training Center Guest of Honor at the Recruit Brigade Review 1971
- Box 2, Folder 9: Navy Guest Cruise, USS Kitty Hawk July 7-12, 1965
- Box 2, Folder 10: Navy Guest Cruise, USS Kitty Hawk July 7-12, 1965
- Box 2, Folder 11: Newscclippings: Personal 1946, 1995-1999
- Box 2, Folder 12: "Personal Reflection on Thirty Years of Legal Education for Minority Students" by Harry T. Edwards
- Box 2, Folder 13: Photograph Album 1986
- Box 2, Folder 14: Photographs: Jerusalem
- Box 3, Folder 1: Photographs: Jenco and the Dead Sea
- Box 3, Folder 2: Photographs: Judge Turrentine’s Birthday Party 1984
- Box 3, Folder 3: Photographs: Mount of Olives
- Box 3, Folder 4: Photographs and Negatives: Alps
- Box 3, Folder 5: Photographs and Negatives: Geneva, Germany, Israel
- Box 3, Folder 6: Photographs and Negatives: Unidentified
- Box 3, Folder 7: Photographs: Personal
- Box 3, Folder 8: Photographs: Tiberia
Box 3, Folder 9  Photographs: U.S. Naval Training Center, 1969
Box 3, Folder 10  Presidential Inaugural Committee January 20, 1993
Box 3, Folder 11  Proclamation Earl B. Gilliam Day October 29, 1994
Box 3, Folder 12  San Diego Black History Calendar 1985
Box 3, Folder 13  San Diego County Black Chamber of Commerce - 20th Century Excellence Awards March 4, 1995
Box 3, Folder 14  San Diego High School 1948-1949
Box 3, Folder 15  San Diego High School Football Programs 1947-1948
Box 3, Folder 16  San Diego High School Foundation, 1995
Box 3, Folder 17  San Diego High School Homecoming 1974
Box 3, Folder 18  San Diego High School, The Russ Newspaper
Box 3, Folder 19  San Diego High School Yearbook 1949
Box 3, Folder 20  San Miguel Memorial Junior High School 1946
Box 3, Folder 21  Sawyer, Kenneth: Drawings (Former Police Officer)
Box 3, Folder 22  Southeast Awareness and Support Coalition Testimonial Dinner for Earl B. Gilliam January 30, 1976
Box 3, Folder 23  Special Tribute Dinners 1994-1995
Box 4, Folder 1  Speeches
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Box 4, Folder 3  University of Oklahoma 68th Annual Commencement June 5, 1960
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Box 4, Folder 5  Victories of Spirit Sharp Healthcare Rehabilitation Services - Patient Achievement
Box 4, Folder 6  W.J. Oakes Boys and Girls Club Alumni Association 2003
Box 4, Folder 7  “We had a Dream: Contributions of Black Americans” 1976
Box 4, Folder 8  “What the San Diego Negro is Thinking” San Diego and Point Magazine September 1965
Box 4, Folder 9  Young Man of the Year Award 1966
Box 15  The Ebony Tribune, v.2, no. 2 November 13, 1987
Box 15  The San Diego Light House, v.16, no.12 June 21, 1957
Box 15  The San Diego Light House, v.16, no.19 August 16, 1957
Box 15  The San Diego Light House, v. 16, no.1920 November 8, 1957
Box 15  The San Diego Light House, v. 16, no.24 December 6, 1957
Box 15  The San Diego Observer, v.2, no.49 December 7, 1957
Box 15  The Sun Reporter v.15, no.46 December 7, 1957

Professional Files (1956-2011)

Box 4, Folder 10  Annual Bar Dinner Committee 1981
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Box 4, Folder 12  Anecdotes about Gilliam for San Diego Lawyer Magazine 2001
Box 4, Folder 13  Appointments of African-American Article Judges 2001
Box 4, Folder 14  Appointment to Federal Judge 1980
Box 4, Folder 15  Articles of Partnership of BI-RA Company: A General Partnership Agreement July 1965
Box 4, Folder 16  Assemblyman Larry Stirling
Box 4, Folder 17  Dicta: The Lawyer’s Magazine June 1974, November 1978
Box 4, Folder 18  California Association of Black Lawyers 1980-1998
Box 4, Folder 19  California Bar Examination Questions September 1957
Box 4, Folder 20  Certificates 1980
Box 4, Folder 21  Conflict of Laws: Class Notes 1956
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Box 5, Folder 3  Correspondence: Congratulations letters for Superior Court Judge 1975
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Box 6  Court Docket of Judge Earl B. Gilliam: Municipal Court, no.3 April 17, 1964
Box 7  Court Docket of Judge Earl B. Gilliam, v.3 April 4, 1977-June 15, 1978
Box 7  Court Docket of Judge Earl B. Gilliam, v.4 June 16, 1978-February 13, 1980
Box 8  Court Docket of Judge Earl B. Gilliam, v.5 February 4-June 5, 1980
Box 8  Court Docket of Judge Earl B. Gilliam, v.6 June 6-August 27, 1980
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Box 9, Folder 3  Correspondence: Support Letters for Federal Bench 1979-1980
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Box 9, Folder 6  Court Decisions with Judge Gilliam's Notes 1978-1980
Box 9, Folder 7  Directory of Black Judges, Black Lawyers and Black Bar Associations 1970
Box 9, Folder 8  Earl B. Gilliam and Geraldine Moses Community Access Law Library 1995
Box 9, Folder 9  Earl B. Gilliam Bar Association 1995-2008
Box 10, Folder 1  Earl B. Gilliam: Class Notes 1954
Box 10, Folder 2  Earl B. Gilliam Moot Courtroom Dedication - Thomas Jefferson School of Law 2011
Box 10, Folder 3  Earl B. Gilliam Post Office Dedication; Hall of Justice Earl B. Gilliam Bust 2002-2008
Box 10, Folder 4  "Federal Bench Candidates" - U.S. Senator Alan Cranston Reports to Californians August 1979
Box 10, Folder 5  Federal Bench Materials 1974-1979
Box 10, Folder 6  For the Defense Magazine November 1993
Box 10, Folder 7  Federation of Women Lawyers' Judicial Screening Panel Information Request Response
Box 10, Folder 8  Grand Jury Nominations 1980
Box 10, Folder 9  Information Sheet on Courtroom Procedures to Clerk 1980
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Box 10, Folder 11  Judicial Council of the National Bar Association, 31st Annual Meeting July 31, 2002
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Box 10, Folder 13  Judge Artemis Henderson's Federal Appointment Application 1978
Box 10, Folder 14  Judge Earl B. Gilliam Address Book
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Box 12, Folder 10  Newsletter: Federal Lawyer, vol. 25, no. 1 July, 1993
Box 12, Folder 11  Nursing and the Law 1984
Box 12, Folder 12  Osuna, Jesse - County Clerk 1972
Box 12, Folder 13  Outstanding Alumnus Award Plaque from San Diego State University 1979-1980
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| Box 13, Folder 9 | Schedule of Real Estate owned by Earl B. Gilliam |
| Box 13, Folder 10 | Scrapbook |
| Box 13, Folder 12 | Spirits in Stone Galleries - Retirement Gift, 1994 |
| Box 13, Folder 13 | Stationary |
| Box 13, Folder 14 | Thomas Jefferson School of Law 1996, 2001-2002 |
| Box 13, Folder 15 | Travel Voucher December 6, 1975 |
| Box 13, Folder 16 | U.S. District Court, Southern of California: Criminal Case March 10, 1989 |
| Box 13, Folder 17 | U.S. Senate Committee on the Judiciary - Commission on Judicial Qualifications |
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| Box 14, Folder 2 | Witness List - Confirmation Hearings May 15, 1980 |
| Box 20 | Court Docket of Judge Earl B. Gilliam, v.1 January 5-October 12, 1976 |
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| Box 19 | Tribute to Honorable Earl B Gilliam October 1994 |
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| Box 19 | Sharp Healthcare Foundation "Victories of Spirit Awards" May 11, 1995 |
| Box 19 | San Diego Reunion 1997 |
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| Box 19 | Gilliam Bar 30th Association |
| Box 19 | Paul Harvey-KSON-AM: Judge Earl B. Gilliam June 28, 1979 |
| Box 19 | California Association of Black Lawyers Pioneers |
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| Box 19 | Bob Filnder/Earl Ben Gilliam Post Office Speech November, 17, 2004 |
| Box 19 | The Heart of San Diego: Guest Honorable Earl B. Gilliam |

Scope and Contents

http://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL548A929D17484EEA&feature=view_all