Finding Aid for the Thomas Patrick White papers

Finding aid prepared by Saundra Taylor (1968) and Julia Tomassetti (2012), January 2012; machine-readable finding aid created by Caroline Cubé.

UCLA Library Special Collections
Room A1713, Charles E. Young Research Library
Box 951575
Los Angeles, CA, 90095-1575
(310) 825-4988
spec-coll@library.ucla.edu

©2003 The Regents of the University of California. All rights reserved.
Title: Thomas Patrick White papers
Collection number: 1037
Contributing Institution: UCLA Library Special Collections
Language of Material: English
Physical Description: 1 linear ft. (2 boxes, 4 oversize boxes.)
Date: 1906-1961
Abstract: Thomas Patrick White (1888-1968) became the youngest judge in the United States when he was appointed to the Los Angeles City Police Court in 1913. He then worked at a private trial attorney in Los Angeles until he returned to the bench in 1931 when he was appointed as a judge to the Superior Court of Los Angeles County. He then served in the California District Court of Appeal, 2nd Appellate Division as Justice and then Presiding Justice until he was appointed Associate Justice to the Supreme Court of California in 1959. The collection consists of scrapbooks containing clippings, photographs, correspondence, and memorabilia relating to White's judicial career, attorney practice, and participation in civic, religious, and fraternal organizations.
Language of Materials: English.
Restrictions on Access
COLLECTION STORED OFF-SITE AT SRLF: Open for research. Advance notice required for access. Contact UCLA Library Special Collections Reference Desk for paging information.
Restrictions on Use and Reproduction
Property rights to the physical object belong to the UCLA Library Special Collections. Literary rights, including copyright, are retained by the creators and their heirs. It is the responsibility of the researcher to determine who holds the copyright and pursue the copyright owner or his or her heir for permission to publish where The UC Regents do not hold the copyright.
Preferred Citation
[Identification of item], Thomas Patrick White Papers (Collection 1037). Library Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.
Provenance/Source of Acquisition
Gift of Mrs. Grace White, November 21, 1968.
Biography/History
Thomas Patrick White (1888-1968) served as a judge in California for 37 years. He was born on September 27, 1888 in Lincoln Heights, Los Angeles, California and graduated from St. Vincent’s High School in 1904. From 1905 to 1908, White was a railroad clerk with the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railway in Los Angeles. He then attended the University of Southern California Law School, receiving his LL.B. degree and California bar admission in 1911. White began his judicial career in 1913 with his appointment to the Los Angeles City Police Court. At age 25, this made him the youngest judge in the United States. He served on the Police Court until 1919, during which time he married Helen Hickson (1915). Between 1919 and 1931, White worked in private law practice in Los Angeles. Loyola University, Los Angeles awarded him an honorary LL.D. degree in 1925. White was appointed to the Superior Court of Los Angeles County in 1931. He served as a Superior Court Judge from 1931 to 1937, and then on the California District Court of Appeal, 2nd Appellate Division, as Justice (1937-1949) and Presiding Justice (1949-1959). He was appointed as an Associate Justice of California’s highest court, the Supreme Court, in 1959. White continued to hear Supreme Court cases following his retirement from the full-time bench in 1962.

As Police Judge, White started the Women’s Court and probation system, advocated for harsher penalties for those found guilty of domestic violence, hired a public defender, and campaigned against reckless driving. He was an outspoken critic of the LA Police Department Purity Squad’s employment of stool pigeons. White presided over the trial of 25 men, mostly Mexican, caught up in the 1913 Christmas Day riot in Los Angeles Plaza, a disturbance sparked by police who attacked a speaker and spectators at an International Workers of the World (IWW) rally. He sentenced the “Christian Pacifists,” three ministers arrested for unlawful assembly for their attempts to hold an anti-war conference (1918). A fervid nationalist, White frequently censured or punished defendants for making allegedly anti-American remarks or defiling the flag. He was also recognized for his compassion for the indigent and women in difficult circumstances.

As a trial attorney, White represented City Councilman Joseph “Big Joe” Fitzpatrick in a sensational bribery trial (1925); Mose Sheffield, an African American police detective allegedly framed for racketeering (1930); and The Citizen, a paper published by organized labor, in an injunction case (1931). White also defended Los Angeles crime boss and Italian bootlegger, Marco Albori, alias Albert Marco (the “Master pimp”), when Marco was charged for a 1928 Venice bar shooting and for framing city councilman Carl Jacobson who was arrested in a ‘morals raid’ at the home of a woman paid by Marco.
On the Superior Court, White criticized the police for failing to release minor offenders on bail, a practice the City Attorney eventually revised. White’s 1932 Superior Court re-election campaign pitted him against Hearst publications, which supported White’s opponent, a former Hearst reporter. Hearst papers attacked White for his allegedly lenient sentencing of a child molester.

White was active in the Catholic community and numerous civic and fraternal associations, including the Benevolent and Protective Order of the Elks, Fraternal Order of the Eagles, Loyal Order of the Moose, Ancient Order of Hibernians, and Catholic Order of Foresters. He held top leadership roles in several, including the Knights of Columbus, St. Vincent de Paul Society, Southern California Holy Name Union, Boy Scouts of America, Young Men’s Institute, and Catholic Big Brothers. He taught at Loyola University, College of Law and delivered many addresses to civic, religious, fraternal, and business groups in Southern California on patriotism, the dangers of Communism, causes of youth crime, and the deterioration of morals and religion in the home. He supported the Republican Party and President Herbert Hoover’s candidacy, and he was a member of the Progressive League.

Scope and Content
Collection consists of clippings, memorabilia, correspondence, and photographs relating to White’s judicial career, attorney practice, and participation in civic, religious, and fraternal organizations. Clippings are from newspapers and membership organization bulletins, journals, and newsletters. Memorabilia include programs, meeting notices, invitations, and announcements. Collection contains extensive coverage of the Knights of Columbus, White’s speaking engagements, and significant cases from his legal career.

Organization and Arrangement
Almost all of the collection material is organized into 12 scrapbooks.

UCLA Catalog Record ID
UCLA Catalog Record ID: 4233991

Subjects and Indexing Terms
California--Supreme Court--Officials and employees--Archives.
Judges--California--Archives.
Scrapbooks.

| Box 1 | Photograph of Los Angeles Police Court, 1915-19. |
| Box 1 | Scrapbook. 1909-1925. |
| Box 1 | Scrapbook. 1918. |
| Box 1 | Scrapbook. 1914-1923. |
| Box 2 | Photos and memorabilia from Old. St. Vincent’s College reunion, 1947. |
| Box 2 | Photo, memorabilia, and biographical sketch. |
| Box 2 | Scrapbook. 1907-1927. |
| Box 2 | Scrapbook. 1924-1925. |
| Box 2 | Scrapbook. 1925-1926. |
| Box 3 | Scrapbook. 1914-1929. |
| Box 3 | Scrapbook. 1906-1918. |
| Box 4 | Certificate from St. Vincent of Paul Society. 1959. |
| Box 4 | Scrapbook. 1923-1935. |
| Box 5 | Scrapbook. 1931-1936. |
| Box 6 | Scrapbook. 1935-1938. |
| Box 6 | Scrapbook. 1945-1961. |