Eugene Sawyer Mayoral Records
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Finding aid prepared by Meghan Courtney and Dominique Fuqua

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Describing Archives: A Content Standard
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### Summary Information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Repository</strong></th>
<th>Chicago Public Library: Harold Washington</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<td><strong>Creator - Actor</strong></td>
<td>Drake, Anthony</td>
</tr>
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<td><strong>Creator - Actor</strong></td>
<td>Gilliam, Sharon Gist</td>
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<td>Eugene Sawyer Mayoral Records</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Date [inclusive]</strong></td>
<td>1987-1989</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Extent</strong></td>
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**Abstract**

Eugene Sawyer (1934-2008) served as Acting Mayor of Chicago from December 2, 1987 to April 24, 1989. He became active in local government in 1968, serving as 6th Ward Committeeman until his election as 6th Ward Alderman in 1971. After Mayor Harold Washington’s death on November 25, 1987, the Chicago City Council elected Sawyer to serve as Acting Mayor. Though Sawyer ran for a full term as mayor in 1989, he was defeated by Richard M. Daley. The Eugene Sawyer Mayoral Records contain files created by city departments that document Sawyer’s term as Mayor of Chicago.
Biographical Note

Eugene Sawyer was born on September 3, 1934 in Greensboro, Alabama. While attending Alabama State University, Sawyer joined Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, worked as an intern with the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (N.A.A.C.P.) and participated in the Montgomery Bus Boycott. During his summers, Sawyer travelled to Chicago to visit family and work with the Department of Streets and Sanitation. He married Celeste Banks during his senior year at Alabama State. He earned his bachelor’s degree in chemistry in 1956 and briefly worked as a high school teacher in Prentiss, Mississippi. In 1957, he and Celeste permanently relocated to Chicago.

Sawyer became involved with the 6th Ward Regular Democratic Organization and the Young Democrats through family friends, and built his political reputation in Chicago’s 6th Ward. In 1959, Sawyer took a job in Chicago’s Department of Water, where he worked until 1971. Sawyer served as 6th Ward Committeeman from 1968 to his election as 6th Ward Alderman in 1971. During his tenure in the City Council, Sawyer served on the Finance Committee, the Budget Committee, as President Pro Tempore, Vice-Chairman of the Committee on Rules and Appointments and Chairman of the City Council Committee on Committees, Rules and Ethics.

Upon the sudden death of Harold Washington on November 25, 1987, the Chicago City Council struggled to appoint a successor. Tasked with the selection of an Acting Mayor, the City Council was split between Sawyer and 4th Ward Alderman, Timothy Evans. Both men had worked with Harold Washington as City Council allies during his mayoral administration. Sawyer’s detractors expressed concerns that Sawyer might work against Washington’s political agenda because he drew support from many of Harold Washington’s former political opponents in the City Council. After 19 hours of spirited debate, the City Council elected Sawyer with a vote of 29-19 and two absent. Sawyer was sworn into office at 4:01 A.M. on December 2, 1987.

During his time as mayor, Sawyer worked to pass legislation supporting the installation of lights at Wrigley Field and the Clean Indoor Air Ordinance banning indoor smoking. Building on groundwork laid under Mayor Washington, Sawyer also championed the Human Rights Ordinance, passed in 1988, to protect individuals against discrimination. This was the first Chicago city ordinance to assert the rights of gay and lesbian Chicagoans.


After his term as Mayor, Sawyer retired from politics and entered private business, operating an energy company and a wholesale tobacco company. He also served as a Trustee and active member of the Vernon Park Church of God. Sawyer died of heart failure on January 19, 2008 after battling illness for several weeks. He was survived by his three children, Shedrick, Roderick, and Sheryl, and was buried in Oak Woods Cemetery.
Two of Eugene Sawyer’s children followed him into public service. His daughter, Sheryl McGill, became Commissioner of the Chicago Department of Human Services in 2006 and his son, Roderick, was elected Chicago’s 6th Ward Alderman in the 2011 election.

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**Scope and Contents note**

The Eugene Sawyer Mayoral Records range from 1987 to 1989. Documents were generated by city departments and represent the official duties of city government. The Records are arranged into nine series:


The documents include correspondence, memorandums, flyers, articles, event invitations, reports, schedules, briefing notes, press releases, news clippings, photographs, contact sheets and negatives, VHS tapes and U-Matic tapes.

Because much of the collection is arranged to the subseries level, researchers are encouraged to consult the collection broadly.

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**Administrative Information**

**Publication Information**

Chicago Public Library: Harold Washington 10/23/2013
Conditions Governing Use note
Some material has been redacted for privacy reasons.

Processing Information note
Processed by CLIR funded Black Metropolis Research Consortium “Color Curtain Processing Project.”
By Meghan Courtney and Dominique Fuqua on October 23, 2013.

Related Materials

Related Archival Materials note
Chicago Public Library, Special Collections:


Washington, Harold Commemorative Year Archives.

Controlled Access Headings

Personal Name(s)

- Bannister, Leroy
- Sawyer, Eugene, (1934-2008)

Subject(s)

- Chicago, Illinois

Cited Sources


Collection Inventory

Series I. Chief Operating Officer Records, 1987-1989

Scope and Contents note

This series contains files pertaining to the three individuals that worked as Chief Operating Officer (COO) or Deputy Chief Operating Officer (DCOO) during Eugene Sawyer’s mayoral administration. In previous mayoral administrations, the COO had been titled “Chief of Staff.” All City of Chicago Subcabinets reported directly to the COO and DCOO, who then reported to the Mayor. Because of this hierarchy, memorandums from many city departments can be found in this subseries.

The series is divided into three subseries: Sharon Gist Gilliam, Chief Operating Officer; Anthony Drake, Deputy Chief Operating Officer; Leroy Bannister, Jr., Deputy Chief Operating Officer. Sharon Gist Gilliam served as Sawyer’s Chief Operating Officer from December 1987 to April 1989 after working as Budget Director under Harold Washington. Anthony “Tony” Drake served as Deputy Chief Operating Officer from December, 1987 to September, 1988. At that time, Sawyer appointed Leroy Bannister, Jr., former Assistant to the Mayor for the Infrastructure Subcabinet, to take over the Deputy Chief Operating Officer position. The files in this series consist of memorandums, draft departmental reports, fact sheets, recommendations, and personnel policies from city Subcabinets. Memorandums and drafts regarding the city departments’ Annual Accomplishments Plans and Reports can be found throughout the series. This series also contains Mid-Year Review memorandums and drafts for city departments.

This series is arranged to the subseries level. Researchers interested in any specific department or project are encouraged to consult the collection broadly as similar documents can be found in other series.

Boxes 1-31.

Subseries 1. Sharon Gist Gilliam, Chief Operating Officer, 1987-1989

Scope and Contents note
Files in this subseries were created or received by Sharon Gist Gilliam and her staff in the office of the Chief Operating Officer (COO). This subseries contains documents related to the 1988 Mid-Year Report, city departments’ Accomplishment Report memorandums, administrative documents, budget proposals and legislative plans and includes the city’s long-term departmental goals up to 1991. Gilliam’s files also include some carry over from her previous role as Budget Director for the Washington administration, such as reports and memorandums, and several files related to the objectives of Harold Washington’s Policy Advisory Committee. Files are arranged to the subseries level. Researchers interested in any specific department or project are encouraged to consult the collection broadly as similar documents can be found in other series. Boxes 1-6.

Subseries 2. Anthony Drake, Deputy Chief Operating Officer, 1987-1989

**Scope and Contents note**

The subseries contains files that were created or received by Anthony “Tony” Drake, Deputy Chief Operating Officer from December 1987 to September 1988. Drake’s office oversaw the operations of all city departments and reported directly to the Chief Operating Officer. His involvement in the preparation of the 1989 City Budget and the Annual Accomplishments report is represented in this subseries. This subseries contains reports and memorandums from all the city’s subcabinets, but the bulk of the material relates to the Department of Aviation, the Department of Streets and Sanitation, the Department of General Services, and the Department of Personnel. Documents include correspondence, meeting agendas, briefing notes, reports of 1988 Annual Accomplishments Plans as well as legislation related to city ordinances and waste management legislation. The subseries also contains information about city contracts and agreements pertaining to the development of O’Hare International Airport’s Terminal Five, such as proposals for contracts from Matra Transit, architectural services and parking and retail vendors. This subseries contains some administrative items, such as Xerox service proposals, graphics budgets, reports prepared by the federal government and reports of municipal pay rates for other cities in northeastern Illinois. Files are arranged to the subseries level. Researchers interested in any specific department or project are encouraged to consult the collection broadly as similar documents can be found in other series. Boxes 7-25.

Subseries 3. Leroy Bannister, Jr., Deputy Chief Operating Officer, 1987-1989
Scope and Contents note

This subseries contains files that were created or received by Leroy Bannister, Jr. in his role as Deputy Chief Operating Officer. Bannister had been First Deputy Purchasing Agent in the Purchasing Department in late 1987, which enabled him to work with the Committee on Finance on legislative concerns and contract awards presented by the city. After this, Bannister was promoted to Assistant to the Mayor for Infrastructure in early 1988, supervising the daily operations of city infrastructure departments. He was quickly promoted to Deputy Chief Operating Officer in September, 1988. As DCOO, Bannister oversaw all City of Chicago Subcabinets and reported directly to the Chief Operating Officer, who reported to the Mayor. Bannister’s files reveal a focus on the city’s affirmative action plans and procedures, Department of Streets and Sanitation contracts, O’Hare Development Program functions, and departmental budgets. This subseries also contains the City of Chicago Third Quarter Review for 1988. The documents in this subseries consist of memorandums, reports, correspondence, drafts and press clippings from various city departments. Files are arranged to the subseries level. Researchers interested in any specific department or project are encouraged to consult the collection broadly as similar documents can be found in other series. Boxes 25-31.


Scope and Contents note

This series contains documents created by the Mayor’s Press Office. This series is divided into two subseries: Press Clippings; and Press Releases. The Press Office managed Sawyer’s public image through press conferences, public remarks, event preparations, briefing notes, press releases and photographs. The Press Office also monitored Sawyer’s public image by collecting newspaper clippings related to Sawyer, his legislative efforts as mayor, and Chicago aldermen’s political alliances. This series is arranged to the subseries level. Researchers interested in any specific department or event are encouraged to consult the collection broadly as similar documents can be found in other series. Boxes 31-95, 168.

Subseries 1. Press Clippings, 1987-1989

Scope and Contents note

This subseries documents Eugene Sawyer’s public appearances as Mayor of Chicago. Events range from visits with Chicago youth programs to receptions for international dignitaries and community organizations. Also documented in this subseries are several of Sawyer’s campaign fundraiser events in preparation for the 1989 Democratic Primary. Each folder represents an event attended by Sawyer and contains a combination of photographs, press releases, event briefing notes, remarks and schedules. From time to time, event programs or promotional materials are also included in the folder. Files are arranged to the subseries level. Researchers interested in any specific department or event are encouraged to consult the collection broadly as similar documents can be found in other series. Boxes 55-95.

Series III. Schedules and Briefing Notes, 1987-1989

Scope and Contents note

This series represents the functions of the Mayor’s Scheduling Department, which received event invitations on behalf of the mayor, created the mayor’s schedule and prepared briefing notes containing event details. Approximately half the files in this series are labeled by event title and contain briefing notes, detailing the audience, timeframe and activities for each event attended by Mayor Sawyer. Many
of these events also include copies of public remarks and speeches delivered by Sawyer. Remaining files in this subseries contain event invitations extended to Mayor Sawyer and were filed by the Scheduling Office according to date. Files are arranged to the series level. Researchers interested in any specific department or event are encouraged to consult the collection broadly as similar documents can be found in other series. Boxes 95-134.

Series IV. Community Services Subcabinet Records, 1987-1989

Scope and Contents note

Files in the Community Services Subcabinet consists of records from people-oriented city departments, such as programs for elderly or disabled Chicagoans, library services, health services, equal opportunity and special interest group services, neighborhood forums and citizen information. This series is divided into eight subseries: Community Services Subcabinet; Department of Aging and Disability; Department of Human Services; Chicago Public Library; Health Subject Files; Commission on Human Relations; Mayor’s Advisory Commission on Latino Affairs; and the Mayor’s Office of Inquiry and Information. Files are arranged to the subseries level. Researchers interested in any specific department or event are encouraged to consult the collection broadly as similar documents can be found in other series. Boxes 134-139.


Scope and Contents note

This subseries contains files that represent the functions of the Community Services Subcabinet as a whole, including budget information, memorandums, briefings, marketing plans, and accomplishments reports. Files are arranged to the subseries level. Researchers interested in any specific department or event are encouraged to consult the collection broadly as similar documents can be found in other series. Box 134.

Subseries 2. Department of Aging and Disability, 1987-1989
Scope and Contents note

This subseries consists of memorandums and correspondence to and from the Department of Aging and Disability (DAD). Documents included in these files refer to equal employment programs and budget documents for the department. Files are arranged to the subseries level. Researchers interested in any specific department or event are encouraged to consult the collection broadly as similar documents can be found in other series. Boxes 134-135.


Scope and Contents note

This subseries consists of documents that focus on the budget and expenditures of the Department of Human Services during 1988. This subseries also contains reports and news clippings related to the Chicago Intervention Network, an anti-gang task force created during the Harold Washington administration. These documents include memorandums, fact sheets, reports, notes and news clippings. The subseries is arranged to the subseries level. Researchers interested in any specific department or event are encouraged to consult the collection broadly as similar documents can be found in other series. Box 135.


Scope and Contents note

This subseries is composed of files about an expected budget increase for Chicago Public Library in 1989. The subseries also contains documents about the Design/Build Competition for the new Central Library, the Harold Washington Library Center. These files contain memorandums, notes, evaluations, forms, news clippings, meeting agendas, recommendations and an operating manual. The subseries is arranged to the subseries level. Researchers interested in any specific department or event are encouraged to consult the collection broadly as similar documents can be found in other series. Box 135-136.
Subseries 5. Health Subject Files, 1987-1989

Scope and Contents note
This subseries contains files related to the Chicago Department of Health and its programs during the Sawyer administration. Some files include interdepartmental communications, memorandums, meeting agendas, promotional materials and reports. Others refer to specific Department of Health programs related to HIV/AIDS and lead poisoning. This subseries is arranged to the subseries level. Researchers interested in any specific department or event are encouraged to consult the collection broadly as similar documents can be found in other series. Boxes 136-137.


Scope and Contents note
The Commission on Human Relations aimed to ensure fair treatment to Chicago citizens regardless of race, ethnicity, religion, age, veteran status, sex or gender. This subseries consists of memorandums, budgets, correspondence, photographs, promotional materials and departmental plans created by the Commission on Human Relations under the Eugene Sawyer administration. Files are arranged to the subseries level. Researchers interested in any specific department or event are encouraged to consult the collection broadly as similar documents can be found in other series. Boxes 137-138.


Scope and Contents note
This subseries contains documents created by the Mayor’s Advisory Commission on Latino Affairs. Materials include memorandums, position papers, lists of appointed officials, departmental proposals and reports. Files are arranged to the subseries level. Researchers interested in any specific department or event are encouraged to consult the collection broadly as similar documents can be found in other series. Box 138.

Scope and Contents note

This subseries consists of documents created by the Mayor’s Office of Inquiry and Information, a city agency formed during the Harold Washington administration, which aimed to distribute information on city programs and neighborhood information directly to citizens. The subseries contains memorandums, community forum documents, notes, promotional materials and Accomplishment Plan status reports. Files are arranged to the subseries level. Researchers interested in any specific department or event are encouraged to consult the collection broadly as similar documents can be found in other series. Boxes 138-139.

Series V. Finance and Administration Subcabinet Records, 1987-1989

Scope and Contents note

The City of Chicago’s Finance and Administration Subcabinet served to keep the city running through the creation of a budget, distribution of funds to all city agencies, maintenance of a legal department and the collection of taxes and fines. The Subcabinet also handled personnel issues for city employees. City Comptroller files can be found in this series and include departmental budget forms, expenditure forms, position request justification forms, and cost allocation worksheets. Mayor’s Office petty cash receipts, 1989 budget memorandums, warehouse reduction fact sheets and CityNet telecommunications provider fact sheets are also available in this series. Files are arranged to the series level. Researchers interested in any specific department or event are encouraged to consult the collection broadly as similar documents can be found in other series. Boxes 139-140.

Series VI. Infrastructure Subcabinet Records, 1987-1989

Scope and Contents note
This series contains files created by the Infrastructure Subcabinet, including reports from the Departments of Aviation, Public Works, Sewers, Streets and Sanitation and Water. This series is divided into three subseries: Department of Aviation; James Flagg, Department of Public Works; Eric Griggs Papers. Files are arranged to the subseries level. Researchers interested in any specific department or event are encouraged to consult the collection broadly as similar documents can be found in other series. Boxes 141-145, 168-169.

**Subseries 1. Department of Aviation, 1987-1989**

**Scope and Contents note**

This subseries contains plans and reports related to the construction of O’Hare International Airport’s new international terminal, Terminal Five. Proposed plans, including architectural drawings, measurements, runway layout diagrams and estimated costs for construction, can be found in this subseries. Files are arranged to the subseries level. Researchers interested in any specific department or event are encouraged to consult the collection broadly as similar documents can be found in other series. Box 169.

**Subseries 2. James Flagg, Department of Public Works, 1987-1989**

**Scope and Contents note**

This subseries contains materials from James Flagg in his role with the Department of Public Works, though his official title is unclear. It includes Flagg’s personal documents such as correspondence, business cards and appointment book as well as more general Department of Public Works documents, such as memorandums and reports. Files are arranged to the subseries level. Researchers interested in any specific department or event are encouraged to consult the collection broadly as similar documents can be found in other series. Box 141, 169.

**Subseries 3. Eric Griggs Papers, 1987-1989**
Series VII. Development Subcabinet Records, 1987-1989

Scope and Contents note
This series contains files created by the Development Subcabinet. This Subcabinet focused on economic development issues in the city, such as employment, housing development, real estate development and zoning. This series is divided into three subseries: Department of Employment and Training; Department of Housing; Department of Planning. This series contains correspondence, reports, forms, notes, memorandums and meeting agendas. This series is arranged to the subseries level. Researchers interested in any specific department or event are encouraged to consult the collection broadly as similar documents can be found in other series. Boxes 145-146.


Scope and Contents note
This subseries contains files on employment and training programs in Chicago, including a job training program conducted by the Safer Foundation. The subseries contains correspondence, reports and notes. It is arranged to the subseries level. Researchers interested in any specific department or event are encouraged to consult the collection broadly as similar documents can be found in other series. Box 145.
Subseries 2. Department of Housing, 1987-1989

Scope and Contents note
This subseries contains files created by the Department of Housing, including information programs for the homeless and financial forms related to the Development and Housing Coordinating Committee. The subseries consists of correspondence, notes, articles, vouchers and forms. It is arranged to the subseries level. Researchers interested in any specific department or event are encouraged to consult the collection broadly as similar documents can be found in other series. Box 145.


Scope and Contents note
This subseries contains files created by staff of the Department of Planning as they negotiated real estate development and zoning issues. Subjects include the Block 1 Committee and the Miles Square Health Center development project. This subseries contains memorandums, notes, reports, meeting agendas and copies of ordinances. It is arranged to the subseries level. Researchers interested in any specific department or event are encouraged to consult the collection broadly as similar documents can be found in other series. Boxes 145-146.

Series VIII. Photographs, 1987-1989

Scope and Contents note
This series contains photographs of Eugene Sawyer in his role as Acting Mayor. Taken by Press Office photographers, these photographs document community meetings, celebrity and dignitary visits, parades, dedications, speeches, and campaign coffee sips. Each folder titled “Press Office photographs” contains a combination of photo negatives and contact sheets for the event date listed. Each folder titled “Eugene Sawyer Photographs” contains photographs, press releases, photo captions and contact sheets for events attended by Eugene Sawyer. These photographs are not identified by date or title of event. This series is
arranged to the series level. Researchers interested in any specific department or event are encouraged to consult the collection broadly as similar documents can be found in other series. Boxes 146-164.

**Series IX. Videotapes, 1987-1989**

**Scope and Contents note**

This series contains video recordings of Mayor Sawyer giving interviews on television programs including “City Desk” and “Chicago Tonight.” Additional recordings in this series include media training sessions with Eugene Sawyer as well as public service announcements titled “Immunization and AIDS.” The series also contains unidentified video recordings titled by date. The majority of tapes are VHS format, though the series does include some U-Matic tapes. Many recordings correspond to topics found elsewhere in the collection. This series is arranged to the series level. Researchers interested in any specific department or event are encouraged to consult the collection broadly as similar documents can be found in other series. Boxes 165-167.