

Collection #
M 1468
BV 5477
OM 0739

**JUDGE RUFUS C. KUYKENDALL
COLLECTION, CA. 1902-1980**

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Processed by

Maire Gurevitz
October 2019

Manuscript and Visual Collections Department
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Indiana Historical Society
450 West Ohio Street
Indianapolis, IN 46202-3269

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COLLECTION INFORMATION

VOLUME OF COLLECTION: 2 manuscript boxes, 1 oversize manuscript folder, 1 bound volume, 1 half size box of photographs, 3 folders OVA photographs, 6 folders OVB photographs, 4 flat files, 1 lateral file, 1 printed item

COLLECTION DATES: ca. 1902-1980

PROVENANCE: Robert F. Ransom, Indianapolis, IN

RESTRICTIONS: None

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ALTERNATE FORMATS:

RELATED HOLDINGS: C. Ethel Ransom Kuykendall Collection, M1469

ACCESSION NUMBER: 2019.0243

NOTES:

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Rufus Calvin Kuykendall (September 24, 1903-November 4, 1977) was born to John Kuykendall and Belle Jackson Kuykendall in Indianapolis, Indiana, joining his older sister, Almyra. Rufus attended Booker T. Washington School #17 and graduated from Shortridge High School. He went on to attend college at Indiana University, where he trained to be a History and Government teacher. However, he could not get a job at Crispus Attucks due to his lack of experience, so he worked as a waiter at the Athenaeum until his wife, Ethel, encouraged him to go back to school and get his law degree at Indiana University. He finished law school fifteen years after he had earned his bachelor's degree. Upon passage of the bar exam in April 1942, he opened a practice in the Walker Building, downtown Indianapolis. He went on to work for the City of Indianapolis in a few capacities- deputy prosecutor, public defender, and finally as the assistant city attorney. A lifelong supporter of the Republican Party, Kuykendall attended National Conventions and Inaugurations and was appointed by President Eisenhower to serve as a consultant to the National Commission of UNESCO in 1954. In 1958, Kuykendall was identified and vetted for a position as assistant staff director for the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, where he served for almost a year, from April 1959 to February 1960. In 1970 he served in the Nixon Administration as the presiding officer of the U.S. State Department's Advisory Council on African Affairs.

Kuykendall also spent time lending his expertise to community organizations. He served on the board of directors for the Indianapolis Urban League, the Indiana Civil Liberties Union, the Indianapolis Legal Aid Society, Family Service Association of Indianapolis, and the Indianapolis Citizen's School Committee. In 1957, Kuykendall was named as NAACP Indiana Civil Rights 'Man of the Year'. Additionally, he was a member of the Kappa Alpha Psi and Sigma Pi Phi fraternities, national and local bar associations, the Republican Party, the Masons, the Elks, the Owls, and the Bethel AME church. He married Ethel Ransom, a teacher at Crispus Attucks High School, on April 1, 1939 and the couple resided at 2202 Capitol Avenue for the entirety of their married life.

Sources:

Materials in the collection.

"Law Offices Opened." *Indianapolis Recorder*. 10 October 1942.

"Kuykendall Named to High Post by Pres. Eisenhower." *Indianapolis Recorder*. 8 May 1954.

"Capacity Crowd Sees Kuykendall Sworn in As Judge." *Indianapolis Recorder*. 7 January 1967.

"Who's Who in the Community." *Indianapolis Recorder*. 1 July 1972.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

This collection contains correspondence, scrapbooks, political ephemera, newspaper clippings, and photographs relating to Judge Rufus Kuykendall's professional life and civic activities. This includes correspondence relating to Kuykendall's time with the U.S. Civil Rights Commission and the political correspondence and ephemera that was compiled into a scrapbook documenting his interactions with the Republican Party and the Eisenhower and Nixon Administrations.

The collection also contains three images of Dr. Rufus B. Kuykendall, the Judge's uncle and probable namesake, a dentist who had a practice on Indiana Avenue, Indianapolis. Two of the images are portraits and one is a group photograph of the Indiana Dental College, Class of 1902, of which Dr. Kuykendall was a member.

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Group Portrait, Indiana Dental College Class of 1902
[Dr. Rufus B. Kuykendall]

Portraits, Rufus Kuykendall, ca. 1910s-1970s

First Book of Bar Questions, 1924

The Arbutus, Indiana University, 1927

Bachelor of Arts Degree, Indiana University, 1927

Transcripts, Indiana University, 1927; 1942

Group Portraits, Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, ca.
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Group Portraits, Unidentified Receptions/Events, ca.
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| Correspondence, Sen. Capehart Civil Rights Voting Record, 1960 | Box 2, Folder 4 |
| Correspondence, U.S. Civil Rights Commission, 1960 | Box 2, Folder 5 |
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| Newsletters, Bar Association, 1961 | Box 2, Folder 7 |

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