

Collection #
DVD 1793
CT 2572

**MAYOR REGINALD H. SULLIVAN
ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW, 1976**

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Processed by

Jonnie Fox
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Manuscript and Visual Collections Department
William Henry Smith Memorial Library
Indiana Historical Society
450 West Ohio Street
Indianapolis, IN 46202-3269

www.indianahistory.org

COLLECTION INFORMATION

VOLUME OF COLLECTION: 1 audio DVD; 1 audio cassette tape

COLLECTION DATES: 1976

PROVENANCE: Reginald Hall Sullivan

RESTRICTIONS: None

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ALTERNATE FORMATS:

RELATED HOLDINGS:

ACCESSION NUMBER: 1976.0813

NOTES: Please pull the DVD for patron use.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Reginald H. Sullivan (1876–1980) was born in Indianapolis to Thomas Lennox and Alice D. Sullivan (née Moore). He served as Mayor of Indianapolis, representing the Democratic party, from 1930–1935 and 1939–1943. Sullivan came from a long line of politicians. His father served as Mayor of Indianapolis from 1890–1893. His great-grandfather, Jeremiah Sullivan, was a state legislator and later Supreme Court Justice, and his maternal grandfather served as a United States Senator prior to the Civil War.

Sullivan attended the private Classical Boys school and was an 1897 graduate of Wabash College. He proceeded to study law, graduating from the Indiana University Law School in 1899. Upon graduation, he began practicing law in Indianapolis. Together he, Frank Ross, and Edward Knight created the firm Ross, Sullivan, & Knight.

Sullivan served as a State Senator from 1911–1913 and was elected Indianapolis controller in 1916. In the 1929 Indiana mayoral election, he ran and won against Republican candidate Alfred M. Glossbrenner. During his first term as mayor, Sullivan implemented methods to alleviate unemployment and economic setbacks from the Great Depression. These included the “Made Work Program,” building of the Weir Cook Municipal Airport (now Indianapolis International Airport) and acquiring Citizens Gas and Coke Utility for the city.

Marion County Democratic Party Chairman E. Kirk McKinney started a petition for Sullivan to run again in 1938. He ran and won, defeating candidate Herman C. Wolff. Under his second term, Sullivan served as Indianapolis Civilian Defense Council Chairman, removed approximately 40 miles of streetcar tracks to install a citywide air raid warning system, and launched a smoke abatement drive to improve the city’s air quality.

Sullivan returned to practicing law at the end of his second term. A lifelong resident of Indianapolis, he was a member of organizations such as the Indianapolis Athletic Club, Athenaeum Turners, Indiana Democratic Club, and St. Paul’s Episcopal Church. He was inducted into the Indiana Democratic Hall of Fame in 1974. Upon his death in 1980, Sullivan was interred in Crown Hill Cemetery.

Sources:

Boomhower, Ray, “Reginald H. Sullivan,” *The Encyclopedia of Indianapolis*, ed. David J. Bodenhamer and Robert G. Barrows (Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1994) 1308–1309.

Ancestry, Library Edition, Accessed 7 December, 2018.

Information in collection.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

This collection contains an oral history interview on cassette tape as well as on audio disc. The interview was conducted by James Glass on August 13, 1976. Sullivan discusses his family, their home on Capitol and Michigan which no longer stands, and his time in the Boys Classical School. Additional topics include prominent figures in and from Indiana during Sullivan's lifetime such as Senator Beveridge, President Harrison, Mayor Caleb Denny, the Lilly family, John T. Brush, William Fishback, Stoughton Fletcher, John Calvin Parry, Admiral George Brown, David McClean Parry, Major Hervey Bates, Thomas Taggart, the L.S. Ayres family, H.P. Wasson, Booth Tarkington, the Van Camps, Burford Printing, Charles Meyer and Sons, Captain English, James Whitcomb Riley, Meredith Nicholson, George Eade, and Vice President Fairbanks. Sullivan also discusses Morton Place (the former state fairgrounds), previous methods of transportation, the first street paving, and the English Opera House.

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Interview with Mayor Sullivan, 1976

Interview with Mayor Sullivan, 1976

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