Overview of the papers:
The Benjamin Ward Papers consist of approximately 4 linear feet in 5 boxes. The materials chronologically span his entire professional career, with some gaps. The papers were donated to the Lloyd Sealy Library of John Jay College of Criminal Justice in 2009 with additions to the papers in 2011 and 2012 by his daughter, Mary Ward of Palm Coast, Florida. One item was subsequently donated to the papers in 2014 by Hildy Simmons.

Biographical Note
Benjamin Ward was the first African-American Police Commissioner of New York City, serving from 1984 to 1989. Born in Brooklyn in 1926, Benjamin Ward was destined to be the first African American in several of the appointments.

When he entered the New York Police force in 1951, Ward became the first African-American police officer of Brooklyn’s 80th Precinct. He steadily rose through the ranks of the Police Department for fifteen years before his assignment as Special Legal Counsel to Police Commissioner Howard R. Leary.

By 1968 he was named a Deputy Police Commissioner and became the Chief Hearing Officer in all departmental disciplinary matters. Following this, he was chosen to be the Deputy Commissioner of Community Affairs with responsibilities for the Youth Aid Division and Auxiliary Forces Section. In 1973 Mayor John V. Lindsay appointed Ward to assume responsibility as New York’s Traffic Commissioner. Two years later, Governor Hugh L. Carey elected him New York State Department of Correctional Services Commissioner. He was the first African American to hold the position.

Mayor Edward I. Koch appointed Ward for three different posts during his administration. First, in 1978 he was appointed Chief of the New York City Housing Authority Police. A year later Ward became the Commissioner of the New York City Correction Department; he held this post for four years.

In 1984, Koch appointed Ward as New York City’s 34th Police Commissioner. He assumed this position during a period of racial and civil unrest and high crime rates in the city. During that time he established college credit requirements for NYPD promotions. He also presided over the Department during the 1988 Tompkins Square Riots as well as the 1984 Eleanor Bumpers shooting among other controversial police response incidents.

After retiring, he served on various boards in the private sector and assumed several teaching positions including as Adjunct professor of Criminal Justice at John Jay College of Criminal Justice, CUNY; Adjunct Professor of Law at Brooklyn Law School, and Adjunct Professor at Hudson Valley Community College.
Benjamin Ward passed away in 2002. His funeral mass was held at St. Patrick’s Cathedral.
Biographical Time line:

(*= Benjamin Ward was the first African American to fill position)

August 10, 1926: Born as one of 11 children in the Weeksville (Brownsville) section of Brooklyn.
1944: Graduated from Brooklyn Automotive Trades High School
1944: Drafted into the US Army, Served as Military Policeman and criminal investigator
1951: Enters NY Police Academy
1955: NYPD Patrolman assigned to Brooklyn's 80th Precinct (Crown Heights)
1958: Graduated Brooklyn College, AS in Police Science
1960: Graduated Brooklyn College, Sociology BA, Magna Cum Laude
1962: Patrol Sergeant, 68th Precinct
1962-66: Head of Youth Division, Special Investigations Unit
1967: Brooklyn Law School Doctorate of Law, top 1% of class
1968: Promoted to Lieutenant, and aide to Police Commissioner's Office
1969: Executive Director, Civilian Complaint Review Board
1970: Deputy Police Commissioner*, Chief of Community Affairs Commission
1973: Traffic Commissioner, New York City Department of Transportation
1974: Director of Pretrial Services Agency- Vera Institute of Justice
1975: Commissioner*, New York State Department of Correctional Services
1978: Commissioner, New York City Housing Authority Police Department
1979: Commissioner*, New York City Department of Corrections
1980: Appointed to the Crime Control Planning Board
1984: Police Commissioner*, New York City Police Department (NYPD)
October, 1989: Retirement
   Adjunct Professor of Law at Brooklyn Law School,
   Adjunct Professor of Corrections at the John Jay College of Criminal Justice
   Adjunct professor of the Hudson Valley Community College in Troy, NY

June 10, 2002: died at the age of 75.

References:


Box and Folder Listing:

Box 1: Papers
Correspondence with Police Commissioner 1971-1973
Materials related to Traffic Commissioner NYC Transportation Administration, 1974
Correspondence with Edward Koch 1979-1992
Miscellaneous Correspondence 1980-1989
Speeches by and about Benjamin Ward - 2 folders
Outside employment 1980s
List of NYPD Commissioners since 1901
Manuscript of “Top Cop”, a memoir by Benjamin Ward
Interview Transcript of Benjamin Ward
by the Columbia Oral History Office, Edward Koch Oral History Project
Articles by and about Benjamin Ward - newspapers
Articles by and about Benjamin Ward - other publications

Box 2: Audio Visual materials
Photographs
Micro-cassettes of press conferences, hearings and events
B&W Photographs of Sing Sing Prison
Oversized albums of color photographs of
Noble Conference
Dedication to USS Theodore Roosevelt
VHS tape of Commissioner Benjamin Ward memorial mass,
Saint Patrick’s Cathedral June 14, 2002

Box 3: NYPD Files
Please Note: Researchers using these files must agree to Restrictions related to
Privacy & non-disclosure
1978-1985 Chief Dillon - IAD investigation
1985-1986 Major Case squad organized crime investigation
1987 “New York 8”
1983-84 Disciplinary investigation of the conduct of PO Vincent Caldara- 3 folders
1987-1988 IAD #66s87 investigation into PO Vincent Caldera and Captain Callahan

Box 4: 2011 (and 2014) addition to the Collection
Correspondence
Personal Resume 1/6/1968
Fifteen black and white photographs
10/20/1969 - B.W. with others, shaking hands
10/24/1969 - B.W. pinning policewoman
9/25/1970 - Hispanic Dinner (2 photos)
7/10/71 - 7th PJ Track Meet (2 photos)
1972 - B.W. giving speech at Port Authority annual dinner
8 undated [1960s-70s] and unidentified photos of official functions including
B.W. (1 color)
NYPD Press Releases re: Benjamin Ward
Newspaper Clippings about Benjamin Ward (3 folders)
Newsletter and Magazine Articles about Benjamin Ward
Ephemera
Miscellaneous (2014 addition)

Box 5: 2012 addition to the collection

1956 NYPD *Rules and Procedures* issued to Benjamin Ward, annotated with several inserts


*Trial Hand Book for New York Lawyers* by Aaron J. Broder

*Police Corruption* by Herman Goldstein w/ letter to BW from Pat Murphy

*Canons of Ethics* by Edward Thompson Company 1955 (NY Bar Association)

Benjamin Ward News clippings Files

*Women in Policing* by Catherine Milton

*The New York City Mentor Hand Book* by Judy Breck

-Benjamin Ward Police Commissioner Seventy-Eighth Annual NAACP Convention

(photo album