Whitman Knapp Papers: [Knapp Commission on Police Corruption]

Preliminary Finding Aid

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Special Collections Librarian
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Received: April, 2015, gift of Ann Knapp (wife of Whitman Knapp)
Size: 6 manuscript boxes, 3.5 linear feet
Preferred citation: Whitman Knapp Papers, Special Collections, John Jay College/CUNY
Access: Open to researchers by appointment by contacting lbspcoll@jjay.cuny.edu

Preferred Citation – Whitman Knapp Papers
Lloyd Sealy Library Special Collections
John Jay College of Criminal Justice/CUNYE

Related Collection – Please also see the Records of the Knapp Commission, also in our Special Collections.

Biographical note:
Percy Whitman Knapp was born February 24, 1909 in New York City. He was educated at Yale and Harvard Law School. He worked as at Caldwalader, Wikersham and Taft (NYC) and in 1938 became an Assistant District Attorney under Thomas E. Dewey. In 1941 he joined the law Firm Donovan, Leisure, Newton and Lumbard for a year but returned to the district attorney’s office under Frank Hogan becoming chief of 3 bureaus of appeals, indictments and fraud. In 1950 he returned to private practice while serving as special counsel to the Waterfront Commission of New York Harbor, which investigated corruption on NYC docks. (1953-54). In the Spring of 1970 Whitman Knapp got a phone call from Mayor John Lindsay asking him to become chairman of a commission to investigate police corruption. So began his most well-known role as director The Commission to Investigate Allegations of Police Corruption and the City's Anti-Corruption Procedures, popularly known as the Knapp Commission. In 1972 Knapp was appointed as Judge of the Southern District by President Richard Nixon, where he served until his death. He died June 14, 2004 in Manhattan and was survived by his wife, Ann and 4 children.

Bibliography:

Wikipedia Whitney Knapp.

Box and Folder Listing

Box 1: Personal and Professional Papers

Correspondence and other documents
1. Whitman Knapp appointment certificate to Chairman, Commission to Investigate Alleged Police Corruption, May 12, 1970
2. Letter of Thanks Mayor Lyndsay to Knapp December 27. 1972
3. Police Corruption Commission, Congratulations 1970-
4. Police Corruption Memoranda, file and report
5. NYPD Corruption control manual (was in a file labelled 'lecture series;)
6. Communications with Mayor's office 1970
8. Applications (to work for commission)
9. Police corruption commission Plans and information
10. Police corruption complaints by Rubeen Gordon
11. Police complaints, folder II
13. Police Commission, people we have promised to keep informed 1971-72
14. Police account, notices to commissioners 1972
15. Special prosecutor, Knapp Commission, correspondence 1972-1979
16. Knapp commission, member list
17. Miscellaneous lists
18. Annual progress report, July 1, 1976
19. WNBC TV Newsnight transcript of show with W. Knapp, Gabe Pressmann, David Burnham, Johannes Sprean (John Jay College) October 24, 1971
20. Correspondence re: Bill Phillips 1985
22. Correspondence re: Scoppetta 1999

Box 2: Writings by and about Whitman Knapp
2. “Knapp Commission: Knapp” unidentified and undated typescript
3. Knapp “How I got to be a Judge” Tape 1
4. Knapp “How I got to be a Judge” Tape 2-3
5. Knapp Commission published reports: Summary and Principal Recommendations (August 3, 1972) and Commission Report (December 16, 1972) and errata sheet. [reports also available in the library stacks]

Knapp Commission Administration Documents

Box 3: Police Department Correspondence
1. Police Department – correspondence Volume I to 12/1/1971 (in two folders)
3. Police Department – correspondence Volume III 8/1/1975 to end (in one folder)

**Box 4: Subject and Research files related to Knapp Commission**

**Volume I – folder A**
1. Master index to files relating to Vol. I and Vol. II relating to report
2. Index vol. I folder ‘A’
4. A-2: American Bar Association *Standards Relating to THE POLICE FUNCTION* working draft December 24, 1970 (in three folders) [see also final publication in bibliography]

**Volume II Folders ‘B’ through ‘J’**

*Note: folder B – Lisa Barrett Papers mentioned in index not present*

12. Folder C – Legislation
13. Folder D – Public Relations, etc.
14. Folder E – Herman Goldstein

*Note: folder F – Background Material mentioned in index, not present & For Folder G – please see Box 4 Knapp Commission Records.*

**Box 5:**
1. Folder H – State Commission on Investigation
2. Folder I – Police Documents
3. Folder J – Communications with Murphy
4. Folder K – Armstrong Folder, annotated outline of reports, handwritten suggested program for public hearings.
5. Folder L – Staff reports
6. Folder N - Money Raising Letters, 1972
7. Folder O – Public Hearings Mat

**Box 6: Newsclippings**
1. 2nd phase of Hearings of Knapp Commission at Great Hall Tuesday 12/14 – Monday 12/20
2. clippings, 1971-72 related to NYPD, Knapp commission