

Howard, Ronald and Elizabeth; George Corley Wallace

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English

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University Libraries Division of Special Collections, The University of Alabama

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Summary Information

Repository:	University Libraries Division of Special Collections, The University of Alabama
Source - dnr:	Howard, Ronald
Source - dnr:	Howard, Elizabeth
Title:	Ronald and Elizabeth Howard collection of George Corley Wallace materials
ID:	MSS.1631
Date:	Unknown
Physical Description:	0.4 Linear Feet Includes campaign buttons, pins, bumper stickers, flyers, brochures, and a knit shirt
Language of the Material:	English
Abstract:	Campaign materials and other memorabilia of George Corley Wallace's 1968 and 1972 presidential campaigns.

Preferred Citation

Ronald and Elizabeth Howard collection of George Corley Wallace materials, University Libraries Special Collections, The University of Alabama.

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Biographical / Historical

George Corley Wallace, Jr. was born on August 25, 1919 in Barbour County, Alabama, the first child of George Corely Wallace and Mozell Smith Wallace. Wallace entered law school at the University of Alabama immediately after completing high school. He graduated with a law degree in 1942 and then enlisted in the US Army Air Corps, flying combat missions over Japan during World War II. A serious case of spinal meningitis earned him a medical discharge from the Air Corps and left him with partial hearing loss and nerve damage.

Wallace began his political career shortly after returning to civilian life. In late 1945, he was appointed Assistant Attorney General of Alabama and in May, 1946, was elected to the State House of Representatives. As a delegate to the 1948 Democratic National Convention, he did not join the Southern

walkout at the convention even though he opposed President Harry S. Truman's proposed civil rights program (which he considered an infringement of state's rights).

In 1953 he was elected Circuit Judge of the Third Judicial Circuit of Alabama where he was known as "the little fightin' judge," a reference to his college boxing days. In contrast to his later stance on segregation, he gained a reputation for fairness regardless of the race of the plaintiff.

In 1958, he was defeated by John Patterson in Alabama's Democratic gubernatorial election, which Wallace blamed on race. Patterson had run with the support of the Ku Klux Klan (an organization Wallace had spoken against) while Wallace had been endorsed by the NAACP. In the wake of this defeat, Wallace adopted a hard-line segregationist stance.

After this change in attitude, Wallace was elected governor in a landslide victory in November 1962. In his inaugural speech he first used the line for which he is probably best known, "In the name of the greatest people that have ever trod this earth... I say segregation now, segregation tomorrow, segregation forever." In June of 1963, he stood in the doorway of Foster Auditorium to prevent two African-American students from enrolling in the University of Alabama. This incident has since been known as the "Stand in the Schoolhouse Door."

Besides the segregation issues, Wallace's first term as governor was marked by innovations in Alabama economic development that several other states later adopted. He was the first Southern governor to travel to the northern and northeastern states to offer tax abatements and other incentives to companies willing to locate plants in Alabama. He also initiated a junior college system that is now statewide.

In November 1963, three days before the assassination of President John F. Kennedy, Wallace announced his intentions to challenge Kennedy for the Democratic Party's nomination as the 1964 presidential candidate in the general election. Although he won a third of the vote in the Democratic primaries in Wisconsin, Maryland and Indiana, it was not enough to win the nomination.

Term limits in the Alabama Constitution limited Wallace to a single term as governor. Wallace had his wife, Lurleen, run for the office in 1966 as a surrogate candidate, similar to the 1924 run of Miriam Ferguson for the governorship of Texas on behalf of her husband James Ferguson, who had been impeached and was barred from running. Lurleen won the election but died in office in 1968, during her husband's second presidential campaign. Lieutenant Governor Albert Brewer succeeded Mrs. Wallace until Wallace ran again in 1970.

Almost immediately after defeating Brewer (the single term limit restriction had been changed by this time), Wallace began his second campaign for the United States presidency. He claimed he was no longer opposed to desegregation and that he had always been a moderate. Wallace's campaign went very well for the first four months. Then on May 15, 1972, he was shot four times by Arthur Bremer while campaigning in Laurel, Maryland. One of the bullets lodged in Wallace's spinal column, leaving him paralyzed from the waist down for the rest of his life. Bremer later asserted that the assassination attempt was motivated by a desire for fame and not for any political ideology. In fact he stated that President Nixon had been an earlier target.

Wallace won four primaries after the assassination attempt, and later, from his wheelchair, spoke at the Democratic National Convention in Miami. He lost the nomination to George McGovern, who in turn was defeated by the Republican incumbent, Richard Nixon.

Wallace completed his term as governor and easily won the gubernatorial primary election in 1974. In 1975 he announced his third bid for the presidency, but was dogged by voters' concerns about his health. Jimmy Carter won the nomination and the general election.

Wallace became a born-again Christian and apologized to black civil rights leaders for his earlier segregationist views. His final term as governor saw a record number of African American appointments to government positions.

When Wallace left the governor's office he became something of a fixture at a Montgomery restaurant not far from the State Capitol. In constant pain, but surrounded by an entourage of old friends and well-wishers, he continued this ritual until a few weeks before his death due to septic shock from a bacterial infection on September 13, 1998. He had also suffered from Parkinson's disease and respiratory problems in addition to complications from his gun-shot spinal injury.

Wallace married Lurleen Burns of Tuscaloosa, Alabama in 1943; the couple had four children: Bobbi Jo (1944) Parsons, Peggy Sue (1950) Kennedy, George III (1951) and Janie Lee (1961) Dye. Lurleen died in Houston, Texas after losing a long and, for the most part, private battle against cancer on May 7, 1968. Wallace married Cornelia Ellis Snively in 1971; they were divorced in 1978. In 1981, Wallace married country music singer Lisa Taylor; they divorced in 1987.

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Scope and Contents

This collection contains campaign and other memorabilia of George Corley Wallace collected by Ronald and Elizabeth Howard. The collection includes brochures, bumper stickers, campaign buttons, publications, a poster, a knit shirt, and jewelry (tie clips and lapel pins) of Wallace's 1968 and 1972 presidential campaigns. There is also a letter from George Wallace to John Hooper in 1989 as well as three prints of an official photograph.

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Administrative Information

Publication Statement

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Provenance

Gift of Ronald and Elizabeth Howard; additional materials added 2003, 2004, 2006, 2008 and 2009.

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Controlled Access Headings

- Photographs
- Jewelry
- Political collectibles -- Alabama
- Posters
- Political campaigns
- Bumper stickers
- Campaigns
- Alabama Academy of Honor Inductees
- Letters (correspondence)
- Political campaigns -- Alabama -- History -- 20th Century
- Campaign buttons
- Political collectibles
- Howard, Ronald
- Howard, Elizabeth
- Wallace, George C. (George Corley)

General

To provide faster access to our materials, this finding aid was published without formal and final review. Email us at archives@ua.edu if you find mistakes or have suggestions to make this finding aid more useful for your research.

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Collection Inventory

Correspondence

Physical Description: 0.1 Linear Feet

Scope and Contents

Letter from George C. Wallace to John Hooper, February 23, 1989

Title/Description	Instances
George Corley Wallace - Correspondence - Outgoing	box 1631-001 folder 1

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Campaign Materials

Physical Description: 0.2 Linear Feet

Scope and Contents

Contains brochures, bumper stickers, campaign buttons, a doubloon, a knit shirt, jewelry (tie clips and lapel pins), and publications.

Title/Description	Instances
Brochures	box 1631-001 folder 2
Bumper Stickers	box 1631-001 folder 3
Buttons	box 1631-001 folder 4
Doubloon	box 1631-001 folder 5
Publications - <i>The Eagle</i>	box 1631-001 folder 6
Publications - <i>Earned Years</i>	box 1631-001 folder 7
Publications - <i>The Wallace Stand</i>	box 1631-001 folder 8
Publications - <i>What I Believe</i> Reprint	box 1631-001 folder 9
Vintage Jewelry	box 1631-001 folder 10
Tweedle Dee/Tweedle Dum poster	box 1631-002 folder 1
Wallace '68 knit shirt	box S02-032 6703
Stickers, pamphlets, etc.	box 65

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Miscellaneous Materials

Physical Description: 0.1 Linear Feet

Scope and Contents

Contains a 45 rpm recording of *A Man Named Wallace*, a handbill for a "Get Well" rally, the *Official Inauguration Program for Governor Lurleen Wallace* in 1967, and three prints of an official photograph of George Wallace.

Title/Description	Instances	
45 RPM recording of <i>A Man Named Wallace</i>	box 1631-001	folder 11
<i>Get Well Gov. Wallace Rally</i> handbill	box 1631-001	folder 12
<i>Official Inauguration Program Honoring Governor Lurleen Wallace, January 16, 1967</i>	box 1631-001	folder 13
Photographs	box 1631-001	folder 14
2015 Additions	box 1631-001	folder 15
2015 Additions	box 1631-001	folder 16

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