

William R. "Bill" Vance papers.
Inclusive: 1972-2009, undated, Bulk: 1990-2003, undated.
Baylor Collections of Political Materials, W. R. Poage Legislative Library

Summary Information

Creator	Vance, William R., 1939 -
Extent (quantity/size)	2 document boxes 1 oversized box 2 oversized signs
Language	English
Abstract	The William R. "Bill" Vance papers offer a sampling of media and personal interaction with Vance during his time as justice for the 10th Court of Appeals in Waco, spanning from 1989-2009. The collection is primarily press clippings, with some correspondence, campaign materials, and administrative documents.

Administrative Information

Restrictions on Access and Use	All requests for copying of materials must be submitted to the W. R. Poage Legislative Library in writing. Please use the Request Form for Copying Materials sheet. Unpublished materials authored or otherwise produced by the creator (s) of this collection are in the public domain. There are no restrictions on use. Copyright status for other collection materials is unknown. Transmission or reproduction of materials protected by U.S. Copyright Law (Title 17, U.S.C.) beyond that allowed by fair use requires the written permission of the copyright owners. Works not in the public domain cannot be commercially exploited without permission of the copyright owners. Responsibility for any use rests exclusively with the user.
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Use/Reproduction Restrictions: The collection is open for research

Preferred Citation	When quoting material from this collection, the preferred citation is: William R. "Bill" Vance papers, Accession #102, Box #, Folder #, Baylor Collections of Political Materials, W. R. Poage Legislative Library, Baylor University.
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Processing Information	Described by Mikah Sauskojus.
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Scope and Content

The William R. "Bill" Vance papers range from 1972-2009, and cover a portion of Vance's public life as a court justice and candidate for state office. Included are a number of press clippings from throughout Vance's career. Correspondence related to campaigns for both the 10th Court and Court of Criminal Appeals, as well as some correspondence from Vance's time on the 10th Court, provide additional context for some of the clippings. Also enclosed are several awards and honors Vance earned over the course of his career.

The 1990 campaign was not particularly ideologically driven and focused instead on the disparity between the qualifications of the two candidates. In contrast, Vance's 2000 campaign was framed heavily around broader discussions of the state of the American justice system. The clippings and letters in the collection display the negative view Texas media held toward the Court of Criminal Appeals, characterizing it as a partisan body so obsessed with "law and order" that it ignored evidence that might exonerate (or at least demand a new trial for) its appellants. Of particular interest are the campaigns' existence in the context of debates surrounding the usefulness of DNA testing for overturning convictions (the Roy Criner case, in which the CCA explicitly ignored DNA evidence, is mentioned multiple times). Vance's opponent, Sharon Keller, was indicted as the ringleader and mouthpiece for this unsympathetic court.

Vance's time in court was mostly productive, and his statements to the press consistently emphasize his ability to work through his assigned caseloads. However, with the ascension of Tom Gray to the position of chief justice in 2003, tensions began to show in the court's internal workings. Gray was consistently critical of the number of cases being overturned by the court, noting that a number of these overturned cases were also being overturned by higher courts. His dissenting opinions took jabs at the other sitting justices, eventually drawing significant attention from the popular press.

Administrative/Biographical History

William R. "Bill" Vance was born in Bryan, Texas, in 1939. He received a Bachelor of Arts in Economics from Texas A&M before attending the University of Texas School of Law, from which he graduated in 1963. Having been admitted to the bar the year of his graduation, Vance worked as the Assistant District Attorney for Brazos County from 1964-1967, and as County Judge from 1967-1978. From 1978-1990, Vance engaged in private legal practice, founding his own firm in 1982. In 1990, Vance defeated incumbent Terry Means to assume a seat on the 10th Court of Appeals, the first native of Brazos County to achieve the office. He won unopposed reelection twice, additionally making an unsuccessful bid for the presiding judgeship of the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals. His last term was marked by accounts of discord and strife within the 10th Court, as Chief Justice Tom Gray became notorious for his markedly uncivil dissents. Vance retired from the court in 2009.

In addition to his court activities, Vance was active in both regional and statewide organizations. He organized and chaired the Brazos Valley Mental-Health-Mental Retardation Board of Trustees while serving as County Judge in Brazos County, and was director/chairman of the Brazos Valley Development Council. While practicing law privately, he served as a member of the State Depository Board (1982-1985) and State Finance Commission (1985-1986). He was elected president of the Bryan-College Station Chamber of Commerce in 1988 after two years as its Treasurer.

Vance married Barbara Thomas and the couple have three children: Bill Jr., Karen (Atkinson), and Brett.

Related Resources

Related citations

William R. "Bill" Vance papers, Accession #102, Box 1, Folder 12, Baylor Collections of Political Materials, W.R. Poage Legislative Library, Baylor University.

William R. "Bill" Vance papers, Accession #102, Box 2, Folder 3, Baylor Collections of Political Materials, W.R. Poage Legislative Library, Baylor University.

Archival Arrangement

The William R. "Bill" Vance papers were received in 2018. They were arranged in no apparent order.

The papers are arranged first by primary correspondents and then chronologically. There are three series: I. General, II. Campaigns, III. 10th Court of Appeals.

Series II, Campaigns, has two subseries: I. 10th Court of Appeals, II. Texas Court of Criminal Appeals.

Series 1: General. 1972-1978, undated

Administrative/Biographical History

The General series contains a pair of articles related to the "Outstanding Young Man" competition in the 1970s. Also included are a mention of the 4th Annual Memorial Day and a calendar ad for Vance's campaign to become district judge.

Box 1. Folder 1. Outstanding Young Man Competition, Memorial Day Clipping, 1972, undated

Box 1. Folder 2. County Judge Calendar Ad, 1978

Series 2: Campaigns. 1989-2003, undated

Summary Information

Media

Photographic print

Administrative/Biographical History

The Campaign series is composed of campaign materials for Vance's 1990 run for the 10th Court of Appeals and the campaign for the presiding judgeship of the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals in 2000. Most of the series consists of clippings related to the two campaigns, though a few examples of official campaign-related materials (including 3-D artifacts) and campaign correspondence are also included.

Subseries 1. 10th Court of Appeals. 1989-2003, undated

Box 1. Folder 3. Campaign Announcements, 1989-1990, undated

Box 1. Folder 4. Campaign Materials, 1990

Box 3. Campaign Materials, 1990

Box 3. Folder 1. Oversize Poster, 1990

Box 1. Folder 5. Photos, 1990

Box 1. Folder 6. 1990 Election Press, 1989-1990, undated

Box 1. Folder 7. Correspondence, 1989-2003, undated

Subseries 2. Texas Court of Criminal Appeals. 2000, undated

Box 1. Folder 8. Fundraiser Invitations/General Campaign Materials, 2000
Box 3. Campaign Materials, 2000
Box 1. Folder 9. Photos, 2000
Box 1. Folder 10. Newspaper Ads, 2000
Box 1. Folder 11. Print Voter Guides, 2000
Box 1. Folder 12. Materials Sent to Newspapers, 2000
Box 1. Folder 13. Editorial Endorsements, 2000, undated
Box 1. Folder 14. Anti-Keller Articles, 2000, undated
Box 1. Folder 15. General Campaign Articles, 2000, undated
Box 1. Folder 16. Campaign Correspondence, 2000

Series 3: 10th Court of Appeals. 1990-2009, undated

Administrative/Biographical History

The 10th Court of Appeals series is composed of documents related to Vance's time as a justice. Most of the series is press clippings ranging in topic from Vance's first term to his acrimonious relationship with Tom Gray and subsequent retirement, though an assortment of correspondence and official documents is also included.

Box 1. Folder 17. Election Certificates and Oath of Office, 1990-1997
Box 1. Folder 18. Swearing-in Speech and Program, 1990
Box 1. Folder 19. Swearing-in Clippings, 1990-1991
Box 1. Folder 20. Appearances, Events, and Conventions, 1991-2001
Box 3. Folder 2. American Board of Trial Advocates Waco Chapter Charter, 1999
Box 3. Court Nameplates, undated
Box 1. Folder 21. General Court-related Clippings, 1993-circa 2003, undated
Box 1. Folder 22. Court Cases/Court Visits, 1991-2008, undated
Box 2. Folder 1. Personnel Lists, 1995-2007
Box 2. Folder 2. Court History and Lines of Succession, 2004, undated
Box 2. Folder 3. Vance/Gray Discord Clippings, 1/2, 2007-2008
Box 2. Folder 4. Vance/Gray Discord Clippings, 2/2, 2008-2009
Box 2. Folder 5. Final Term and Retirement Clippings, 2003-2009
Box 2. Folder 6. Former Staff List, circa 2009
Box 2. Folder 7. Honors/Awards, 1995-2008
Box 3. Folder 3. Judicial Committee on Information Technology Certificate, 1999
Box 2. Folder 8. Correspondence, 1991-2007, undated