OVERVIEW OF THE RECORDS

Series Title: Warren Spannaus files,
Abstract: Files of Warren Spannaus as Minnesota Attorney General, documenting the administration of and certain issues facing the office. Although a few files contain items dating earlier, the majority date from 1971 through 1982, Spannaus’ years as Attorney General.
Quantity: 14.0 cu. ft. (14 boxes).
Location: See Detailed Description section for box locations.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF WARREN SPANNAUS

Warren Spannaus was born in St. Paul, Minnesota on December 5, 1930. After graduating from high school, he served in the United States Navy (1951-1954); then attended the University of Minnesota (1954-1958) and the University of Minnesota Law School (J.D. 1963). Spannaus was a special assistant in the Attorney General’s Office (1963-1965) before joining the staff of U.S. Senator Walter Mondale (1965-1966). During the campaign of 1966, which resulted in Mondale’s re-election to the U.S. Senate, he served a Mondale’s campaign director. Spannaus then entered private law practice in Minneapolis and was active in the Minnesota Democratic-Farmer-Labor Party (DFL). He was chairman of the DFL State Central Committee from December 1967 to December 1969.

In November 1970, he was elected Minnesota Attorney General. Re-elected in 1974 and 1978, he eventually served twelve years as Attorney General (January 1971 - January 1983). During 1982, Spannaus and running mate Carl Johnson, sought the DFL Party endorsement for Governor and Lieutenant Governor. In the September primary they lost to the Rudy Perpich-Marlene Johnson ticket by slightly over 27,000 votes (51% to 46%).

Besides being a member of the American Bar Association and the State Bar Association, Spannaus served a term as chairman of the Midwest Association of Attorneys General. He also served on the boards of the United Cerebral Palsy of Greater St. Paul, School for Social Development, Inc. of Minneapolis, and Amicus, Inc., a program working with inmates at the Minneapolis Workhouse and Stillwater State Prison.
Spannaus is married to the former Marjorie Clarkson of Minneapolis. They have three children and reside in Minneapolis.

SCOPE AND CONTENTS OF THE RECORDS

The subject files contain correspondence and minutes from a number of organizations for which Spannaus served as director, including Amicus, Inc., a mentoring program between citizens and inmates at the Minneapolis Workhouse and Stillwater State Prison, and the School for Social Development, Inc. of Minneapolis, which worked with mentally retarded and handicapped children. Other topics dealt with in the files include Spannaus’ tough stance on gun control, enforcement of liquor control laws, protection of the consumer, and environmental protection.

The appearance files detail arrangements for public appearances by Spannaus as Attorney General and/or DFL politician between 1974 and 1980. The files are arranged roughly by date of the appearance, although correspondence often begins well before and continues after the specific event.

The correspondence files are arranged into two large series. The first contains single letters between individual citizens and Spannaus, including letters of congratulations, get well, and sympathy from Spannaus to members of the general public; incoming letters (with no replies); and answered correspondence, with Spannaus’ reply stapled to the original letter. These files are arranged chronologically under each particular type of letter. The second series, arranged alphabetically by the citizen’s last name, contains more substantial correspondence between Spannaus and individual citizens.

The case files, two of which reached the United States Supreme Court, deal with such topics as the constitutionality of Minnesota’s six month residency requirement for voting, claims against a hearing aid company, consumer fraud, illegal employment practices, and construction in an historic district.

ORGANIZATION OF THE RECORDS

These records are organized into the following sections:


INDEX TERMS

These records are indexed under the following headings in the catalog of the Minnesota Historical Society. Researchers desiring materials about related topics, persons or places should search the catalog using these headings.

Topics:
ATTORNEY GENERAL.
Warren Spannaus files.
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Attorneys general--Minnesota--Administration.
Civil procedure--Minnesota.
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Criminals--Rehabilitation--Minnesota.
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Voter registration--Minnesota.

Persons:
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Organizations:
Amicus, Inc.
Democratic-Farmer-Labor Party.
Minneapolis (Minn.). City Workhouse.
Minnesota. Attorney General--Constituent services.
Minnesota. Attorney General--Relations with constituents.
Minnesota State Prison (Stillwater).
School for Social Development, Inc.

ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

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See the Chicago Manual of Style for additional examples.

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DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE RECORDS

Note to Researchers: To request materials, please note both the location and box numbers shown below.

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Administration, 1975-1976.
Amicus minutes, 1971-1982. 4 folders.
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Cavalier Corporation, proxy statement, 1974.
Consumer Division, 1975-1976.
Corrections Department, 1975-1976.
Criminal Division, 1975-1976.
Employment Services, 1975.
Gun Control:
Legal Research, Memos, and Background Material, 1971-1972.
   Preliminary Drafts, 1972.
   Right to Bear Arms Amendment, 1972.
   Miscellaneous, 1972.
Hare Krishna, 1981.
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Legislative Reference Library, 1971.
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Mental Health - Bill concerning constitutional rights of institutionalized persons, 1977.
Minneapolis Police Department, 1971-1980.
Minnesota Civil Liberties Union, 1971.
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Minnesota Public Interest Research Group (MPIRG), 1971-1975. 2 folders.
Minnesota Taxpayers Association:
  Fiscal Review of the 1974 Minnesota Legislative Session.
  Newsletters and correspondence, 1980.
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Truck Broker Investigation, 1979.
Truckers’ Boycott, 1974.
Truth in Lending, 1972.
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United States Senate, 1970.
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University of Minnesota Hospitals, 1971.
University of Minnesota Law School, 1971-1978. 2 folders.


    Congratulatory letters (from Spannaus), 1971-1982.  5 folders.
    Get well letters (from Spannaus), 1972-1982.  1 folder.
    Sympathy letters (from Spannaus), 1970-1982.  4 folders.

    Contains Spannaus’ reply stapled to the original letter; filed
    by reply date.

    Cain, Orville, 1972.
    Carlson, Ken, 1972.
    Challenger, Rod, undated.
    Concerning environmental protection.
    Chilstrom, Bishop Herbert W., 1982.
    Connelly, John, 1975.
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    Davis, Harry, 1971.
    Dawson, Mahtomedi Mayor Jean, 1974.
    Denzer, Peter, 1977.
Dunphy, Tom, undated.
Durda, Honorable Chester, 1974.
Ehlmann, Win, 1980.
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Finley, John T., 1976.
Concerning Fighting Saints Hockey Club.
Fitzgerald, Bob, 1972
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Ford, President Gerald, 1974-1975.
Forsythe, Robert, 1970.
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   Dinner speech.
   Referrals.
Mondale, Joan and Walter, 1974-1980.
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Turmer, Mrs. Herbert, 1972-1975.
Vento, Representative Bruce, 1976-1981.
Vershel, Larry, 1974-1978.
Concerning the Wilder Foundation.
Zak, Dr. Solomon J., 1971-1975.
  Jurisdictional Statement (printed) before the United States Supreme Court, October Term 1970, No. 1324. Concerns the constitutionality of Minnesota’s six month residency requirement for voting.
Maki, a highway department employee, is killed by Burke in an auto accident; contains Spannaus correspondence.

Concerns consumers suing drug company to recover money overcharged in the purchase of tetracycline; includes a cover letter to Spannaus, with copies of memoranda and opinion.

Galway believes he has been illegally discharged as Director of the Minnesota Restitution Center, Department of Corrections; includes photocopies of U.S. District Court of Appeals documents, with some Attorney General memoranda.

Concerns a suit to stop construction of condominiums on Summit Avenue which could destroy part of an state historic district; includes petitions, accompanied by Attorney General office correspondence and miscellany.

Concerns claims against a hearing aid company; the case reached United States Supreme Court. Includes Lyon County District Court and U.S. Supreme Court documents, with Attorney General office correspondence, memoranda, and miscellany.

Concerns claims rising from construction of a sludge processing building, the 408 project; includes photocopies of two court documents.